True Hope for the Broken

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[0:00] John chapter 5. John chapter 5. You know, when I read stories like the one that we're going to read today, it tends to tug at my heartstrings a little more than a lot of the other.

Other stories that we read in the Gospels, because I can think back to the numerous people that have been in my life that have been physically handicapped or mentally handicapped, whether they be friends at school.
My uncle who was wheelchair bound for his whole life, my other uncle with Down syndrome. Or maybe you can even think of those that have just kind of been on the fringe of society.
Maybe those that just don't really fit in anywhere. Those that are kind of the outcasts, if you will. And when I look back on these people, I can think of just the profound impact that they have had on my life and how I'm a better person for having known them.
And when I read encounters like the one that we're going to have today with Jesus, I just fall even more in love with the person of Christ.
[1:25] Because in Christ, we see his care, not just for the physically broken, but also for those that are spiritually broken, the physically and the spiritually broken. And as we observe this in the text today, what I want us to do is inform the way that we interact and respond to the broken and the hurting that are around us, whether it be physically or spiritually broken.

These people, they were not a burden to Christ. They were not an obstacle to his ministry. Instead, they became objects of his mercy, of his compassion.
And reflected his glory as the true son of God. If you would, let's stand together as we read the word of the Lord today. John chapter five, verses one to 18.
Says after this, there was a feast of the Jews and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. Now there is in Jerusalem by the sheep gate, a pool, an Aramaic called Bethesda, which has five roofed colonnades.
In these lay a multitude of invalids, blind, lame and paralyzed. One man there who had been an invalid for 38 years.
[2:44] When Jesus saw him lying there and knew that he had already been there for a long time, he said to him, do you want to be healed?

The sick man answered him, sir, I have no one to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up. And while I am going, another steps down before me. And Jesus said to him, get up, take up your bed and walk.
And at once the man was healed and he took up his bed and walked. Now that day was the Sabbath. So the Jews said to the man who had been healed, it is a Sabbath and it is not lawful for you to take up your bed.
And just keep that reaction in mind in your back pockets for a little bit, because we're going to come back to that here in a minute. But he answered them, the man who healed me, that man said to me, take up your bed and walk.
And they asked him, who is this man who said to you, take up your bed and walk? Now the man who had been healed did not know who it was, for Jesus had withdrawn as there was a crowd in the place.
[3:54] And afterward, Jesus found him in the temple and said to him, see, you are well. Sin no more, that nothing worse may happen to you. The man went away and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had healed him.

And this was why the Jews were persecuting Jesus, because he was doing these things on the Sabbath. But Jesus answered them, my father is working until now and I am working.

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And this is why the Jews were seeking all the more to kill him. Because not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own father, making himself equal to God.
This is the word of the Lord. Church, you may have a seat. So up to this point in Jesus' ministry, there's been a lot of speculation.
There's been a lot of hesitancy about the person and the work of Jesus and what he was doing. Because if you look back at the Gospel of John, just in the first four chapters that John has outlined for us, he's done some pretty radical things.
[5:02] The first person he revealed his identity as the Messiah to was this Samaritan woman who Jews didn't associate with. And to take it a step further, he even spends a few days in Samaria preaching the good news to these people.

He's healed a Roman official's son. The Romans, the ones that were their overseers, the occupying force. He healed a Roman official's son. He cleared out the temple. He told a prominent Jewish leader that he needs to be born again.
So Jesus has been making some waves in the Jewish community. And in our story today, what we really see is this first blatant hostility towards Christ from the religious leaders.
And our story opens up with Jesus coming into Jerusalem because there was a feast going on. Now, we don't know which feast was being celebrated. If it was important, John would have included it in his Gospel.
But the overall reason for these feasts, there were numerous feasts that Jews celebrated or festivals, if you will. And these were all designed to do one thing, to draw the hearts of God's people back to a time of great deliverance in their life.
[6:17] So that their affections and their worship would be stirred for God all the more remembering what he had done for them when they were the broken ones. When they were the ones that were in need.

Which I love scenes like this from the Gospel. Because you see Jesus observing these customs. You see him doing things that normal people would do. The Son of God.
He's observing these festivals. He's going to Jerusalem just like the law says that he should. Because Jesus has not come to do away with the law. He has not come to break the law.
He has come to fulfill the law. And Jesus does that in everything that he does. Including going to these festivals. So you just see Jesus' humanity here as he's doing these things. But while in Jerusalem, he goes to a place where normal devout Jews would not go.
Which was the Pool of Bethesda. This is the Pool of Bethesda. If you go to modern day Jerusalem, these are the ruins of the Pool of Bethesda. Biblical archaeology is such a cool thing.
[7:21] Because the more they dig up in Jerusalem, the more they are finding out that what the Bible says is true. There is nothing that has been dug up in Israel that proves the Bible wrong.

And this is the Pool of Bethesda. These are just a couple of pictures. And they know it's the Pool of Bethesda. One, it matches the location. It's by the Sheep Gate. There's also five-roofed colonnades that you can look at as you go around the Pool of Bethesda.
And also, you know, like any religious site that has meaning, the Catholics built a church on top of it that's been there for generations. So we're pretty sure that this is a place. And also, underneath the Catholic church is a Byzantine church, which is a lot older.
So there are so many things that point to this being the Pool of Bethesda. But there's places like this all over Israel, all over Jerusalem, that have been dug up that point to what the Bible says it is true.
So these are real places. These are real people where real activities and things have taken place. Now, the Pool of Bethesda. Why a normal, devout Jew would not go there?
[8:24] There was a lot of superstition that surrounded this place. People believed that these waters, that they held some sort of mystical healing properties.

One historian has even quoted saying that the waters even had a reddish tint to them, probably having to do with something mineral or geological that was going on there. So Jesus, being a devout Jew, coming to celebrate one of the high holidays that is commanded in their scriptures, could not have picked a more awkward place to go visit.
But here's the thing. Jesus is not coming to these waters searching for hope. He is coming to these waters searching for the hopeless to bring living water to them.

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So the main idea of our text and of our sermon today is this, that Jesus is the source of true hope. Jesus is the source of true hope.
Now, this scene is so dramatic in every way. This was not a small place. So just picture this. You have a pool of water surrounded by cripples, by the blind, the injured, everyone that has been rejected in society.
[9:38] And these people were probably not clean. So the smell of this place was probably somewhat atrocious. These people are literally just rotting away at this pool, waiting for some sort of miracle to take place.

And then all of a sudden, Jesus enters the picture. The light of the world steps into this darkness. As Isaiah 9-2 says, this passage came to mind as I was studying this.
It says, The people who walked in darkness, they have seen a great light. Those who dwell in a land of deep darkness, on them light has shone. In a city that was the capital of Jewish worship in the world, there could not have been a darker place for the light of the world to step into.
But all the same, here we see Jesus. The light of the world stepping into this darkness to bring living water to these people that are suffering, that are broken, that have been forgotten.
From our text today, we're going to look at three truth claims about hope. And the first one is this, that true hope is not found in the world.
[10:50] True hope is not found in the world. So let's look at the man from our story today. This man is broken. He has been crippled for 38 years.

And in this time in history, it is amazing that he has lived this long. Because handicapped people back then, they were not valued. If you were physically handicapped, you were seen as a burden. And you depended completely on the mercy of your family. Or the generosity of strangers from begging. There was no welfare system. There was no nursing home.
There were no food banks. There was no homeless shelter. This man's condition was hopeless. And the one source of false hope that he had in this world was just feet away from him, but always out of his reach.
In verse 7, the man said this. The sick man answered him, Sir, I have no one to put me in the water when the water is stirred. And while I am going, another steps down before me.
[11:55] So even amongst those who were forgotten, even amongst those who were broken and hurting, this man was being stepped over. This man was being forgotten and overseen.

I cannot imagine a more hopeless state for this man to be in. Not only this, if you were someone that was physically handicapped in this time, it was also seen as an act of God's judgment on your life.
Either for some sin that you may have committed, or maybe some sin that your father committed before you were even born. You see this attitude come out in John chapter 9, verse 1.
It says, As he passed by, that's Jesus, As he passed by, he saw a man blind from birth. And his disciples asked him, Rabbi, who sinned? This man or his parents that he was born blind.
Some physical circumstances were seen as a sign of God's judgment. A lack of God's favor on your life. Which is why I'm so grateful that Jesus didn't immediately scold these people.
[12:57] Instead, he answered them with this in verse 3. Jesus answered, It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in him.

So I think you can glean from this scripture that God's glory in the lives of his people and the lives of others is best displayed when there is no glory that we can take for ourselves.
Hope is best received by those without hope. Some things could not get any worse for this man. He was surrounded by people in the exact same position.
As we see, he was even a little worse off than the people that were in the same position as him. He is a forgotten, dying man amongst forgotten, dying people. And he needs real hope. And this is a picture of where we all find ourselves before Christ.
Before Christ, we find ourselves in a similar spiritual circumstance, entrenched in a reality of spiritual death. And the world is going to try to tell you that you need to find some sort of counterfeit hope to make you feel better about your circumstances and where you are.
[14:11] But in the end, that hope, like this man's, it's always going to be just out of reach. And it's going to leave you no better off for eternity. In Ephesians 2, verses 1 through 3, the apostle Paul describes our condition as this, And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked.

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Following the course of this world, following the prince of the powers of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience, among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.
So dead in our sins. Surrounded by other people with the same problem. That was our condition of hopelessness. Before Christ, the light of the world, stepped into our darkness.
And just like this man, many of us are going to try to create our own source of hope or find another source of hope. We are going to work as hard as we can to fix everything but our greatest problem. Now I've said this before, that our greatest problem is always going to be between our sinfulness and God's holiness. And that is the problem that Jesus has stepped in the world to fix.
[15:36] Unless a sinless savior intervenes, we are always going to be without hope. So this brings us back to our man that we have been reading about. Society has failed him.

Obviously his family is nowhere to be seen, otherwise he wouldn't be rotting away at this pool. Religion hasn't really worked out that well for him, judging by the Pharisees' reaction to his healing. So what does a good shepherd do when a sheep is lost or injured? He goes after it. Of all the places Jesus could have gone, of all the religious leaders he could have been mingling with on this high holiday, the good shepherd goes looking for the lost sheep.
This is our second point that we're going to look at, that true hope is offered by Jesus alone. True hope is offered by Jesus alone.
So this man, doing what he does every day, has this encounter with Jesus. And like everyone who responds in faith to Christ, this encounter leaves him changed forever.
[16:46] Not just for this life, but for the life to come that's in eternity. I told you earlier that there are many counterfeit hopes that Satan will try to feed us, to keep us away from the true hope that is in Christ.

And there are a couple in this story that I want to highlight. The first is this. And this sounds kind of weird saying this, but here it is.
Religion. Religion was the first false hope that this man had clung to that had failed him in every way. And we know this by the response of the religious leaders. What was the first response of these leaders when they saw this man?
They were just completely put out. They were upset. They should have been in the streets dancing with this man. That his handicap, that his crippleness was gone. It had been healed.
This life of bondage was no longer wrapped around him. But instead, here they are scolding him. Because he has broken the traditions that they have held to for so long.
[17:53] I told you earlier that in another passage that Jesus works these miracles so that the works of God might be displayed in these people. Now, one of the works that is being displayed here is Jesus is exposing these false teachers for who they really are.

Loving God properly should lead to loving his people properly. And these false teachers have just shown their true colors in all of this. Now, I want to explain kind of what's going on here, what the mindset is.
Now, there's the Mosaic law that we read in our Bibles in the first five books of the Old Testament. This is the law that was handed down to Moses. So this is from God.
Now, as far as the Sabbath goes, it says, remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy. And there's also some instructions there and other places about not doing any work on the Sabbath.
But these rabbis and these Pharisees, what they had done is they had added their own traditions. They had added their own rules to it called the rabbinic law. And what the rabbinic law was, it was a man's interpretation of how the law should be lived out in your daily life.
[19:06] It was not scripture. It was not at the same level as the Mosaic law. But what had happened over time is the Pharisees had focused so much on the rabbinic law that the real law of Moses, the one that says that you should love justice and pursue mercy, that law, it had taken a back seat to the traditions of the elders and the Pharisees.

Jesus said in Mark 2, 27, that the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. In other words, what is going on here is that the Sabbath was meant to be a time of rest, a time where we put aside our toils, our labors, and that we can focus on being renewed by focusing on Christ, by focusing on God and worshiping him and loving him.

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But one thing that these Pharisees were really good at is making rest really laborious. It was harder to keep the Sabbath than it was to rest on the Sabbath.
So as we look at this, I think that this should inform the way that we share our faith with people. Being a Christian is not about living a certain code and forcing other people to live by that certain code.
It is about a relationship with Christ, a relationship that he has invited us to. My greatest prayer for my children isn't that they would just live like Christ.
[20:38] My greatest prayer is that they would love Christ, that they would love him with all their heart. Because when you love God properly, you will live for him properly.

And that is my prayer. But this is something that was completely lost on the Pharisees. So yes, in this instance, religion had failed this man. The next false hope that we see is the world itself.
What were elements of the world that had failed this man? First of all, you have this pool that was surrounded by superstition that was always just out of his reach.
That obviously was no longer a hope for him. His family was content to just leave him there. We don't see his family anywhere in the picture. Society had forgotten him.
We even see that by those that were stepping over him to get to the pool before him. So the world doesn't offer much in the way of loving the broken. But watching Jesus' interaction with the physically broken, it should dictate our responses to the broken that are around us.
[21:47] I want to tell you where the world is at as far as how they treat the broken and the hurting. And why Christians need to step up and be the hands and feet in Christ in this world.

One illustration that I pointed back to before was when Oklahoma outlawed abortion. What you really saw was people's heart condition come to light.
I saw people that thought that they were Christians on Facebook blasting the governor because our system was now going to be flooded with children. children that were hurting, children that were broken.
They were upset about that. I saw pictures of homeless people that were being posted on Facebook saying that this is what the lack of abortion is going to lead to.
The hurting and the broken in our world have become something to eradicate rather than to love and to bring up and to show the love of Christ to. Another one that hits kind of close to home in the Netherlands they boast about the fact that they have almost no people with Down syndrome.
[23:06] And I've even seen news articles touting this as some kind of cure for Down syndrome. but what it was is that they have learned how to genetically screen pre-born children for the gene of Down syndrome so that they can keep them from being born.

That is not a cure. That is not love for the broken. That is not something to be celebrated. Church, if we are going to be the hands and feet of Christ, it is going to be seen most plainly in our care for the hurting and the broken that are amongst us.
I wanted to read a passage to you from Matthew 25 verses 31 through 40. This is again Jesus talking about the final judgment with his disciples.
He's preparing them again for his departure and he leaves these words about his final judgment that is to come. He said this, when the Son of Man comes in his glory and all the angels with him, then he will set on his glorious throne.
Before him will be gathered all the nations and he will separate people one from the other as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats and he will place the sheep on his right but the goats on his left.
[24:31] Then the king will say to those on his right, come you who are blessed by my Father inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundations of the world for I was hungry and you gave me food.

I was thirsty and you gave me drink. I was a stranger and you welcomed me. I was in prison and you came to me.
Sorry, I skipped this line. I was naked and you clothed me. I was sick and you visited me. I was in prison and you came to me. Then the righteous will answer him saying, Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you or thirsty and give you drink?
And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you or naked and clothe you? And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you? And the king will answer them, truly I say to you, as you did to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.

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The world is not going to see Christ through a life of white-knuckled obedience and rule-keeping, but through a love for the broken that mirrors our savior.
[25:55] These people have been surrounded by religious leaders their whole life that cared nothing for them. As a matter of fact, this pool that we were reading about, it was almost literally in the shadow of the temple.

And the shepherds claiming to represent God ignored those made in his image who were broken, leaving the hurting to continue to long for a hope that is not going to leave them where they are, but is going to meet them where they are.
That is a hope that the world needs. And that hope is seen in Christ. In every unclean leper that he touched, every dead person that he raised, every demon-possessed person he freed, and every outcast, he is welcome in and even greater still in every sinner that he has forgiven.
For hope to be real, it cannot be grounded in the things of this world. It needs to be grounded in the one that has come to save the world, that has overcome the world. That is where real hope is found.
If we only look to the things of this world for hope and healing, we will stay lost in this world just like this poor man was before meeting Christ. Which is why Jesus, the only true source of hope, he was the one that sought this person out.
[27:16] The man on the mat, if you think about this, he wasn't crying out to Jesus. He wasn't looking for Jesus. The text doesn't even say that he was praying to God for anything. But again, that is why Jesus came to him.

That is why Jesus had to seek him out. And Jesus encounters him and asks him, do you want to be healed? As if asking this man, are you done settling for false hope?
Are you ready for something real? I said earlier that this hope, it has to be offered by Jesus. It is something that Jesus has to seek us out and we receive from him.
1 Peter 1, verses 3-5 says, Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.
the true hope that Jesus offers is a living hope because it is a hope that finds its complete fulfillment in him, our living and risen again Savior.
[28:52] And what he has already done on the cross like we talked about earlier where he died for our sins and conquered our sins by coming back to life and what is already waiting for you in heaven.

I love the way that Peter describes that hope. He says it's imperishable, it's undefiled, it's unfading, and it's kept in heaven for you. The hopes of this world, it had left this man perishing.
It had left this man defiled and it had left him fading away. This man before Christ is a picture of our greatest problem.
But when Jesus enters the picture, when he intervenes, miracles happen. In verse 7 and 8 of that same story that we just read, I want to read this again.
The sick man answered him, Sir, I have no one to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up, and while I am going in other steps before me. Jesus said to him, Get up, take up your bed and walk.
[29:59] And at once the man was healed and he took up his bed and he walked. Because Jesus came into the picture. Because this broken soul had an encounter with the light of the world.

His life has been changed. He has received a completely new life. And this points to an even greater spiritual reality that has taken place in this man's life and that can also happen in ours when we encounter Christ.
The third claim that we're going to look at about hope is that true hope solves our greatest problem. I read to you earlier Ephesians 2 verses 1 through 3 that in no uncertain words described our circumstances before Christ.
Dead in our sin, without hope, children of wrath, but it goes on in verse 4 in Ephesians chapter 2. But God, being rich in mercy because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ.

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By grace, you have been saved and raised up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus so that in the coming age he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace and kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.
[31:26] When you have a saving encounter with Jesus, you have gone from being a child of wrath who was dead in sin to a child of God, made alive in Christ.

the whole trajectory of your life and your eternity has changed because of this encounter with Jesus Christ. And that happens when you call on Jesus for salvation, when you repent of your sins, when you submit to him as Lord of your life.
Now let's look back at this former cripple again. We see this great difference in his life almost immediately. Before the healing take place, where did Jesus find him? He found him at this pool surrounded by other people that were crippled, that were dying.
He was still lost in his own sin and in his own misery. This is where Jesus found him. And in verse 14, where does Jesus find him then? Afterward, Jesus found him in the temple and said to him, see, you are well, sin no more that nothing worse may happen to you.
Listen, meeting Jesus, it will change you. You will not be the same. This man was at the temple where every child of God should have been in the presence worshiping their heavenly father.
[32:50] He is truly gone from death to life. We see this transition in his life. And this healing that we saw, the miracle, you know, people like to marvel at the miracles that Jesus performed.

And those are things that only God can do, yes. But these are meant to lead to the even greater miracle that we see in this man's life, which is a spiritual healing.
Jesus was not just showing care for the physical condition, but the spiritual condition as well. The beautiful truth of Jesus is that he does not see the broken as repulsive, but as opportunities for redemption.
The main application that I want to send you all away with is this, that we need to be agents of true hope to the physically broken and the spiritually broken.
son, if the likeness of Christ is our goal, then there's an application here for all of us.
[34:02] Anytime we see Jesus' interaction with those that are hurting and those that are broken, there's always something that we can take away from that to apply to our lives and how we respond to those that are hurting and broken.

the first is this, this informs how we should love the physically broken. Church, we cannot expect a world that rejects God to show his love for the hurting and broken that are around us.
We don't have the luxury of just waiting for somebody else to do it. We live in a world that encourages genetic screening for the pre-born to determine if they're worth being born or not.
We live in a world where euthanasia is on the rise in other countries and rather than caring for those in their final stages of life, we would just seek to cut their lives short. There are children in the world in need of homes that many would just turn a blind eye toward because of how that might affect their lives.
Christian, are you tempted to keep your lives free from the burdens of the broken that are amongst you? I want to share with you how our Heavenly Father responds to these broken.
[35:19] In Psalm 9, verse 9, it says, the Lord is a stronghold for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble. In other words, the broken are supposed to run to God.

Are we somebody that the broken and hurting feel like they can run to? You might be concerned about the emotional toil that comes with caring for those in need. Well, Psalm 34, 18 says, the Lord is near the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit.
Are you someone that the hurting can come to, expecting comfort, expecting godly love? James 2, verses 14 through 17.
It says, what good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, and one of you says to them, go in peace, be warmed warmed and filled without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that?
So also, faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. Listen, the message of faith that we proclaim needs to be followed up by the works of faith.
[36:39] And maybe you are here today and you're feeling like you are the one that is broken. Maybe you are the one that is hurting. Maybe you are the one that is in need. And you know, that's okay.

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We've all been there. The passage I read about earlier with doing unto the least of these, we have all been the least of these at some point in our life. We've all been a sinner in need of grace. We've all had periods in our lives where we've undergone physical trials, emotional toils. And there is no better place for the least of these than in the body of Christ.
So believer, don't feel like you have to put on a strong face. Don't feel like you have to pretend like your life is all together. That's why you have the body of Christ. That is why he has given us the church.
1 Corinthians 12, 26 said, if one member suffers, all suffer together. If one member is honored, all rejoice together. Galatians 6, 2 says, bear one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ. [37:51] You are not alone. You have a church to love you through this. And even more importantly, as we have read in the Psalms, you have a God that is near the brokenhearted and is a place of refuge for you to run to.

the last part of this is this also informs how we love the spiritually broken. The spiritually broken. Church, the spiritually broken are even more plentiful than those that are physically broken in this world. And when I say spiritually broken, what I am talking about is those that are without Christ that are still lost in sin.
Jesus was always more attentive to the spiritual needs of those that he was ministering to than their physical needs. And Mark 1, 38 started Jesus' ministry. He said to them, let us go to the next towns that I may preach there also, for that is why I have come.
we love the lost by sharing with them how they can be found. How they can become a child of God. Look, if we neglect the gospel when we are doing good works, then we have left people no better off for eternity than when we found them.
[39:02] We've done nothing of eternal significance. The world's greatest need is to be made right with God and we have that truth inside of us through God's word.

So we're going to have the altar open for a few moments. And if you are needing the true hope of Jesus in your life, if you are wanting to know how to have a relationship with God through Jesus Christ, then my call to you today is to come.
Talk with me. Talk with one of our elders, our Sunday school teachers. Repent and believe. You have a good shepherd that has come to seek you out to.
Now maybe you are a Christian who has never really given much thought to the needy, who has never really given much thought to the broken and the hurting that are around us. My call to you today is to spend time in prayer.
Ask God to lay someone on your heart. Ask God to lead you in a way that can help this person, that you can show the love of Christ to those that are hurting that are around you.
[40:13] finally, maybe you are a believer that has adopted the attitude of the world. Maybe you see them as a burden.

Or maybe your faith is like the Pharisees, where you see the goal of your faith as to live a certain way, all the while not seeing how that is supposed to impact the world around us.
Your faith is based more on what men value than what God values. And my call to you today is to come to the altar and repent and pursue the likeness of Christ and how you love the hurting that are around you.
Let's pray and then we will open up the altar. Father, I just thank you for the example that we have in Christ. Lord, thank you for how we see that even though he is God in and of himself, Lord, he does not see the needy and the broken as beneath him.
He sees them as opportunities to show the work of you. And Lord, I pray that we would see the broken and hurting in the same way. Lord, that we would see them as opportunities for grace, as opportunities to share hope, Lord, that we would love them as Christ has loved them.
[41:39] And Lord, for those that are here, Lord, that have never come to faith in Christ, Lord, I pray that today would be the day of salvation for them.

Lord, that they would realize that their spiritual condition is the same as this man in the story before he met Christ. Lord, that they would realize their need for true hope and that they would come to a saving faith in Jesus.
And Lord, finally, I pray for those believers that are here today. Lord, maybe they have fallen into the trap, too, of legalism, of just seeing religion as a way to live by a certain code, all the while forgetting those who are made in your image.

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Lord, I lift them up to you today, and Lord, I pray that you would perform a changing work in their hearts. Lord, that they would love Jesus, that they would marvel at him and long to show Christ to those that are around them, to those that are hurting.
Lord, I pray that you would move today and I pray for all these things in Jesus' name. Amen.

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