

Every time I hear today's reading, I always think it's counter-intuitive to what I preach. I'm always telling everybody to go out and ask for help. I'm telling everybody that we're meant to be together that we're meant to help one another. You know, Genesis 2, it says God created a companion for man. Noah had his sons. Moses had Aaron and Joshua. Jesus had the disciples. Ruth had Naomi. Paul had Phoebe and Tekula, and now Jesus is going to this man and saying quit feeling sorry for yourself, get up and go. That doesn't seem right, right? That's how I always hear this the first time I read this one. That's how I read this one is that Jesus is saying quit feeling sorry for yourself and move on. Is that what he's really saying, or is that just what I'm hearing? Because in my mind, that's how I feel a lot. I feel like I have to be that person that has to do everything .I have to be the one that has to do it on my own.

Let's talk about today's reading. Let's go into it a little bit more. John makes a point of telling us the name of the fountain in the old language. Why is he telling us that? Why is he telling us that this place is called this in the old language? And what does old language mean, right? To us, Hebrew is Hebrew. But it isn't. He's telling us that this fountain has been there for a long, long time. This language was used in the days before the flood is what he's saying. This place has been here before the flood. It has survived all of the Exiles.

And we know how that's important because, as we come together, over time, we kind of merge our cultures together, right? Like the Samaritans? (Side comment interjection) But our cultures come together. Our language is merged together. I mean, look at the Samaritans. The Samaritans are the same people. They're the same Jews as we started with originally before the time of the floods. But their culture combined with the Babylonians. Remember, Jeremiah told them go and marry. Make sure you do everything you can to keep yourselves going true.

They married the others. They marry Gentiles. They continue to make sure they would survive and continue on. So, that's why John's making a point of how old this fountain is. It surpasses time as most of them know it and can even picture. They talk about it being a sheep, about the sheep.

John's, always referring to Jesus as the sacrificial lamb and going into this fountain, the idea is that .When they would go to Jerusalem for Passover, they would take the sheep there to wash them off after they were slaughtered so then there'd be no blemishes on the fur. So it's just another idea of the sacrifice going on, and that how long this has been there.

And now the bubbles. The bubbles are being created by an angel, and what the man is telling him is that he's going, and he's asking all of these people to come and help him because the bubbles will heal him. But the idea is that the angel isn't really an angel. The story is that it's a fallen angel who's coming down, and he's trying to represent to be greater than God. And that he makes this bubble fountain to heal, to show people that it's more than just God can do it.

Nobody actually ever gets healed in this fountain. Nobody ever does, but they all want to believe that they can. And Jesus is telling the man why? You want to be healed. Why are you wasting your time with this? Why are you wasting your time with people who aren't going to help you?

Now, two weeks ago, we were talking about the goats and the sheep. I talk frequently about the goats and the sheep because they looked the same right? When they're little, they all have the same ideas. They all look like they want to behave the same. They all want to be the thing, And so many times people are there, and they tell us what we want to hear. They act

faithfully so they can be seen acting faithfully. They're there at this fountain, and they want to help, and they want to act like they're helping everybody but they really don't care.

That's the problem. The man is asking for help, but he's not asking the right people. Jesus isn't telling him quit feeling sorry for yourself. Get up and move on. He's telling him the exact opposite. He has found a prisoner. A man who is sick; a man who is trapped within himself. And Jesus is telling him it's okay to ask for help, but you can't expect it from people who don't want to help you. You can sit there and feel sorry for yourself, but you don't have to keep doing it.

I have a friend this week. I have a lot of friends, I know. But this week, I have a friend who reached out to me, and he shared this video that's infamous now. That was posted about our former president and his wife being not pictured in a positive way. And he sent it to me. And he says, happy birthday. I think you'll enjoy this laugh. And I said, why? Why do you think I would enjoy that? He's like, it's funny. It's not funny.

You go to church every Sunday. You sit in the pew, and you hear God's word. You hear God's love. You hear how we're supposed to feed the hungry, give water to the thirsty, take care of the sick, visit the prisoner, and you think that's funny? Nowhere does God say, make fun of somebody who's different.

He is one of those people that would stand there, and say I'll help you to the water. And then, soon as it starts bubbling, he's the first to jump in. Jesus isn't meant for that. God's love isn't meant for that. We are meant to be better than that. Jesus reminds us that God works for us every day. Their love is there for us every day. It doesn't matter if it's the Sabbath. If somebody needs help, we need to help them whenever they need it. We need to help them because it's the right thing to do, not because it makes us look better, not because we can benefit from it, not because it's convenient, but because it's what he would do for us. What Jesus would do for us. What they would do every day, every minute throughout time. And it's a wonderful, wonderful present.

I know I'm making it about birthdays again, but it's a gift. It's a gift that God has given all of us that Jesus has given all of us to sacrifice that he makes to share that love for all eternity. Let us remember that with all the negative going on in the world right now, let us remember the gift that Jesus has. The love that we have together.

Let us pray.