

(John 5:1-9, NIV84)

Some time later, Jesus went up to Jerusalem for a feast of the Jews. Now there is in Jerusalem near the Sheep Gate a pool, which in Aramaic is called Bethesda and which is surrounded by five covered colonnades. Here a great number of disabled people used to lie—the blind, the lame, the paralyzed.

One who was there had been an invalid for thirty-eight years. When Jesus saw him lying there and learned that he had been in this condition for a long time, he asked him, "Do you want to get well?" "Sir," the invalid replied, "I have no one to help me into the pool when the water is stirred. While I am trying to get in, someone else goes down ahead of me." Then Jesus said to him, "Get up! Pick up your mat and walk." At once the man was cured; he picked up his mat and walked. The day on which this took place was a Sabbath.

I was looking the other day to buy some disinfecting wipes for weekly cleaning duties around the house. In the store where I was, I looked in the place where I usually found them; and I looked, and looked and thought to myself: "Where in the world did they move these things!" Finally, in the middle of the aisle sitting in a grocery cart, was a display of an off-brand of disinfecting wipes, along with a sign that said "limit one per customer". It was then that I laughed out loud, because I remembered that we are now living in a COVID-19 world.

We see it all around us: shortages of things that used to be readily available, along with personal protective paper masks, and bucket-sized containers of hand sanitizer. These are clear signs that people are living with a lot of fear.

In the midst of this crazy world in which we live, let us never forget that our Lord is in control and He assures us: "Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine" (Isaiah 43:1b). Rest assured that our God is with us to watch, guide and preserve us in all that we do.

In Christ's hands with you,
Pastor Golm

July 17

Afraid of Serious Illness?

When I awake, I am still with thee. Psalm 139:18

A distressed patient in a hospital was being prepared for her operation. A

Christian attendant took her hand, and whispered: "Madam, you have nothing to fear. Only one of two things could possibly happen, and both of them are good. If you should die, you will be with Jesus. If you should live, Jesus will be with you. In either case, both of you will be together."

What a precious thought! In health or in sickness, in joy or in sorrow, in life or in death, both of us (Jesus and I) will always be together.

"When I awake, I am still with thee", says David. That is the comfort of every Christian sickbed. The night may be long and trying, the sleep feverish and fitful, the body faint, and the heart anxious, but no matter what the trials of the night may be-"when I awake, I am still with thee"! And to be with Christ--what greater comfort could there be!

Even after the night of "life's little day" is over, when the curtains of eternity are lifted and the Sun of righteousness beams forth in all his healing brilliance-even in death, "when I awake, I am still with thee"! Can we ever sufficiently thank our heavenly Father for this glorious assurance?

There is nothing in sickness which can harm us if through faith in Christ we have placed ourselves, for time and for eternity, securely into the Father's hands. His presence will go with us in sickness or in health-and in his presence no evil dare come near us!

It was this sure conviction of the Christ's healing presence in every scene of life, and of his saving presence at the very door of death, that inspired Horatius Bonar to write:

I lay my wants on Jesus, All fullness dwells in Him;
He healeth my diseases, He doth my soul redeem.
I lay my griefs on Jesus, My burdens and my cares;
He from them all releases, He all my sorrows shares.

(Devotion from: Daily Walk With God - Meditations for Every Day, by Herman W. Gockel)