

27-30 – Isn't it interesting the reaction of the town to this woman's news? They must have known about the coming of the Messiah and were eagerly awaiting his arrival because they streamed out of the town to go and meet Jesus. How eager are we to receive news of Jesus' Second Coming?

31-38 – God calls each of us who have trusted in Christ for salvation to plant seeds of truth about what God has done to save the world from sin through Jesus. If we look around, we will find people who are ready to hear the Good News about Jesus. God really showed me this recently when I went over to National Health Care on Parklane Road to visit with some of our members who are there for rehab.

As I approached the front door, I notice a man and a woman sitting on a bench talking. I was going to say "hello" until I realized that they were deeply focused on one another, and seemed to be very intentional in their communication. As I got closer, I heard the man say to the woman, "Listen, you need to ask Jesus to be your Savior and Lord so that you are forgiven of your sins and have God's promise of eternal life when Jesus comes back. This is serious!"

I could tell by the look on the woman's face that she was on the precipice of a huge decision. You could tell that she was giving careful consideration to what he was saying. I silently thanked God for that man's courage to share the good news with that woman, and then, I asked God to help me to be more aware of opportunities I may be given to share the good news too. If we look around, we **will find** people who are ready to hear the Good News about Jesus.

39-42 - The Samaritan woman immediately shared her experience of Jesus with others. Despite her reputation, many took her invitation and

came out to meet Jesus. Perhaps there are sins in our past of which we are ashamed. Remember, trusting in Jesus changes us from the inside out. As people see these changes, they become curious, and we can use these opportunities to introduce them to Christ, and his transforming power.

You know, some people base what they believe about God and Jesus on what someone else says about God and Jesus. However, God calls each of us to know him personally – like the townspeople came to know Jesus when they went out to meet him, and heard what he had to say. To know God and Jesus personally, we must spend time with Him in His Word.

43-45 – Was the only reason Jesus was welcomed was because they had seen him do miracles previously? I wonder???

46-49 – It seems that this government official, who, by the way, had authority over Jesus, recognized who Jesus truly was because he addresses him as “Lord.” The official showed humility and faith, and for this, let’s see what happened...

50-54 - This government official not only believed Jesus could heal; he also obeyed Jesus by returning home, thus demonstrating his faith. It isn’t enough for us to say we believe that Jesus can take care of our problems. We need to act as if he can. When we pray about a need or problem, we need to live as though we believe Jesus can do what he says, right?

Chapter 5

1-7 - After 38 years, this man's problem had become a way of life for him. No one had ever helped him. He had no hope of ever being healed, and seemingly no desire to help himself. The man's situation looked hopeless. However, no matter how trapped any of us feel in our infirmities, God can minister to our deepest needs.

Don't let a problem or hardship cause you to lose hope. God may have special work for you to do in spite of your condition, or even because of it. Many people have ministered effectively to hurting people because they themselves have triumphed over their own hurts with God's help. I know I certainly have!

8-13 - A man who had not walked for 38 years had been healed, but the Pharisees seemed more concerned about their petty rules, than the life and health of a human being. It is easy for us to get so caught up in our man-made structures and rules that we forget the people involved. Do our "guidelines" for living a godly life help people, or are they needless stumbling blocks?

Our church's Natural Church Development Health Team recently had a discussion about an article entitled, "14 proven ways to reach the un-churched," written by Hal Youngblood. Point #1 was titled, "Major on Majors." And, he goes on to say, "Though I remain an obnoxious optimist about the future of the American church, I admit that I have my concerns. In my roles, past and present, as a pastor, and as a church consultant, I have seen church members focus their energies on some of the most *insignificant* issues.

“Some members demand their brand of music. Others get irritated when the order of worship is changed. Some members will complain when a minister does not make every telephone call he is expected to make. Others fuss when the sermon goes five minutes too long. Some members seem to worship their buildings and location. Others seem to have forgotten how to worship God. And in the meantime, tens of thousands struggle to find meaning in life, and so few church members seem to care.

“The experience of listening to the formerly un-churched, and of studying churches that reach the un-churched was a joy, because these churches that tend to reach the un-churched, major on majors. Other issues are treated, as they should be, as minor. Churches that reach the un-churched keep their priorities in order, and their goals in clear view.”

This tells me that we need to constantly have our church’s mission statement before us as we seek to set goals for our church’s ministry, and as we evaluate the effectiveness of our ministry. Our new mission statement is: *Knowing, Loving, Serving... so that the world will experience Christ's love!*

14 – What in the world did Jesus mean by that? This man had been lame, or paralyzed, and suddenly he could walk. This was a great miracle. But he needed an even greater miracle—to have his sins forgiven. The man was delighted to be physically healed, but he had to turn from his sins and seek God’s forgiveness to be spiritually healed. God’s forgiveness is the greatest gift we will ever receive. We can all receive a miracle of physical healing, but what we need more than anything is spiritual healing.