



Sermon Outline

POOL'S CLOSED

John 5:1-15

COME
And **SEE**
FOUNDATION

The
CHOSEN®



Pool's Closed

This resource helps you tell the story of John 5:1-11. It includes a clip from Season Two, Episode 4, to show to the congregation, a suggested script for setting the scene before you show the clip, and a short sermon outline with main teaching points and pastoral prompts.

Sermon Title: Pool's Closed

Text: John 5:1-15

Dominant Thought: There's only one in whom healing is found for the one who is hurting.

[Download the Episode Clip](#)

Setting the Scene (suggested script)

There's a wonderful detail in the scene we're about to watch from Season Two of *The Chosen*. The scene shows Jesus performing a miracle, and in a blink-and-you'll-miss-it moment, you see that one of his disciples is writing about it in a diary. That disciple is John, and the miracle that is being depicted is, in fact, *only* recorded in John's Gospel. Scholars often refer to this event as "The Healing at the Pool." Let's watch things unfold together...

***If you've never introduced your congregation to *The Chosen*, here is a slightly different**

script: The creators and cast of the television series *The Chosen* portray several miracles of Jesus. One miracle is on display in the fourth episode of Season Two, and I want us to watch it together. But before we do, I do want to point out that there's a wonderful blink-and-you'll-miss-it moment as the miracle unfolds. Right in the middle of the action, there's a cut-away scene in which you see that one of Jesus's disciples is recording the event in a diary. That disciple is John, and the miracle that is being depicted is, in fact, only recorded in John's Gospel. Scholars often refer to this event as "The Healing at the Pool." Let's watch together...

Sermon Outline

Introduction

*Show the clip from *The Chosen*, using the suggested script above to set the scene.

*After showing the clip, consider reading the text on which it's based – John 5:1-15. You could transition from the showing of the clip to the reading of the text by saying something like: "As I mentioned already, this miracle is only recorded in John's Gospel. I know we just watched the miracle unfold, but let's listen to it, too. Here's the story as told by John in John 1:1-15."

*After reading John's account, you could transition to the sermon proper with a simple word, like: "While the man is paralyzed, he is not blind. But the story tells us that with the sight he has, he's looking for healing in the wrong places."

Sermon Body

I. The one who is hurting is one who wants healing, and they will look anywhere and to anything to find it.

Main Teaching Point: For *thirty-eight years* this man has been an invalid – partially paralyzed, if not completely. Is it due to an accident? Was he born that way? Is it the result of some grave sickness? We don't know! But we do know he had suffered for thirty-eight years. It surely goes without saying, but: *he longed to be well*. In the earliest years of his condition, perhaps he had family members or friends carry him from doctor to doctor, looking for healing. But – *nothing*. Somewhere along the way he heard of a mysterious pool down by the old Sheep Gate in the eastern wall of the city of Jerusalem. On occasion the waters would be stirred, and rumors

swirled that the first person to enter them would be healed. Perhaps he had family members or friends carry him there. Life on the daily for him was as follows: Lay by the pool. Eyes on the water. Wait for movement. Hope for healing. But – *nothing*. Trouble was, once someone carried him to the pool, they went about their day, and there was no one to help him into the waters, should they stir. And even if he did have someone to help, he might not have stood a chance anyway. John writes “a great number” of people were gathered all about, all of them with the same daily tasks: Lay by the pool. Eyes on the water. Wait for movement. Hope for healing.

Pastoral Prompt: It doesn't matter when we read this story, every time we do, each of us are not well in each our own way. And so often our first inclination is to look to some “pool” for healing. We look to some thought leader or some writer or some politician. Or perhaps we look to our work or our marriage or even our good deeds. Where do you look for healing? And how has it failed you? What are the “pools” of wider culture? How have they failed us all?

II. The one who is hurting is one who wants healing, and they mustn't look *everywhere* and to *everything* to find it, but rather to *someone*.

Main Teaching Point: When Jesus encounters the man at the side of the pool, he has a question for him: “Do you want to get well?” It seems cold, really. The man has been an invalid for *thirty-eight years*; of course he wants to be well! But the question is anything but cold. “Do you want to get well?” is just another way of saying, “I can make you well.” Jesus isn't being cold; he's being kind. But being kind doesn't mean the absence of confrontation. Remember, for years this man's eyes have been faithfully and expectantly locked on the waters of the pool – locked on what he thinks offers his best chance at healing. In asking this question Jesus is asking the man to take his eyes off the pool and put them on *him*, the only one who can truly make him well. And not just physically well, but *spiritually* well. Notice in John's account that Jesus later tells the man, “See, you are well again. Stop sinning or something worse may happen to you.” It's possible for the man to walk again, only to remain paralyzed in sin. Jesus invites the man to look to him for the redemption that comes through the forgiveness that only he can provide.

Pastoral Prompt: When we look to some “pool” for healing, do we hear the voice of Jesus over our shoulder: “Do you want to get well?” It sounds so cold at first, but it’s kind. The only one who can heal us wants to heal us. But even in the kindness of the question, it’s confrontational. “Stop looking to the ‘pool’! Look to *me*!” Jesus says. He pits himself against the pools and demands allegiance. The places and people you’ve looked to for healing have failed you. What might it look like for you to look to Jesus now?

III. The one who is healed must remain with the One who healed.

Main Teaching Point: Just after the story of this man being healed, John records these words (v. 16): “Because Jesus was doing these things on the Sabbath, the Jewish leaders began to persecute him.” It’s probably safe to assume that the man who was healed was persecuted, too – for his *being* healed on the Sabbath and maybe even for carrying his mat on Sabbath, which would have been considered “work” (never underestimate the legalism of the Pharisees). Perhaps this is why Jesus finds him at the Temple. Maybe the poor man has been convinced by the religious leaders that he has violated the Law in grave ways, and by the Law he must be saved. Maybe the man has traded his hope in one pool for hope in another – and this despite his having had his hopes met and even exceeded in Jesus. Given Jesus’s firm words to him in the Temple, that’s exactly what the man is tempted to do. But the one who is healed must remain with the One who is healed. The pool is closed, and along with it, anything else that contends with healing that comes from Jesus alone.

Pastoral Prompt: Despite the healing we experience in Jesus, the temptation to look to other sources of hope and healing remains. Our first inclination can *still* be to look to some “pool” for healing. How do we keep our eyes locked on Jesus *alone* as the source of our hope and healing? How do we push away the voices that promise healing – and never deliver – so that they might not drown out his voice with the promise of healing that *does* deliver? And in light of where the story goes, let’s think more particularly about this. It appears that the man who was physically healed still placed his ultimate hope for healing – for spiritual healing – in the Law. We might think there are miles between us and this man, but it’s quite easy one moment to believe we are saved by the life and work of Jesus, and then in the very next moment, to fret over what we must *do* to remain saved. That’s nothing more than another “pool.” In what ways do we struggle to believe we are saved? Are there things we’re doing to try to maintain our salvation? How do we keep our eyes locked on Jesus *alone* as the source of our salvation?

Conclusion

*As the preacher sees fit, the conclusion of the sermon can be used to lead the congregation in two directions. A more traditional invitation could be offered to those who need healing of the deepest order. The congregation could also be led into a time of Communion – led “to a table where the only One who offers healing gathers with all who are hurting.”

