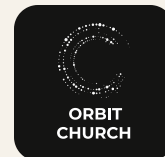


What Could Be Worse Than This?

2025-02-24 • PASTOR MATT ROSE



John 5

FOR THE LEADER

These questions help you run the conversation. They are not your study. Get into the passage yourself first, because your group needs what God taught you, not just a list of questions. These also lean on Sunday's message, so a few will not land for anyone who missed it. Watch it before you lead.

WHAT THE MESSAGE WAS ABOUT

A man had been lying by the pool at Bethesda for thirty-eight years when Jesus asked him a strange question: do you want to get well? Pastor Matt showed how John always writes on two levels, the paralysis you can see and the spiritual condition you cannot. After the healing, Jesus warns him that something worse could happen. Worse than thirty-eight years on a mat? Yes: staying on the same trajectory away from God. The invitation to change keeps coming, even after fifty refusals.

To get started

- What is something in your life you got used to that you once wanted changed?

Looking back at the message

The doughnut story about his son makes the point that pain is subjective. Use it before anyone downplays their own.

- 1 Pastor Matt said we shrink our own pain because someone always has it worse. How do you do that?
- 2 Pastor Matt said John treats physical suffering as real but keeps pointing at something deeper: being disconnected from God. Did that feel dismissive of pain or clarifying, and why?
- 3 The writer Cornelius Plantinga called sin a parasite, an uninvited guest that sickens its host. What does that picture add for you? OPTIONAL

Looking at the passage

Read John 5:1-15. Verse 6 is the question the whole message hangs on.

- 4 Read John 5:1-9. Jesus asks a man who has been sick thirty-eight years if he wants to get well. Why ask that?
- 5 The man answers in verse 7 by explaining he has no one to help him into the pool. How is that not an answer to the question Jesus asked?
- 6 Read verse 14. What worse thing does Jesus warn about, and what does that tell you he was really after?
- 7 Read Romans 7:15-20. How does Paul describe the same stuck condition? OPTIONAL

Bringing it home

The Peloton story is about wanting the result without the obstacle. Most people will recognize it.

- 8 Pastor Matt admitted he wanted the fit lifestyle without the 5:30 alarm that produces it. Where is that pattern in your life, wanting the result without the change?
- 9 If Jesus asked you today, do you want to get well, what would he actually be asking about?
- 10 Where have you been explaining why change is impossible instead of saying yes?
- 11 Pastor Matt said Jesus keeps offering even after fifty refusals. What have you refused more than once?

The group together

The man had no one to carry him. A group is the answer to that sentence.

- 12 The man said he had no one to help him. Who in your life would carry you?
- 13 Who in this group needs help getting to something they cannot reach alone?
- 14 How could this group pay attention to each other's spiritual condition, not just circumstances?

BEFORE YOU FINISH

What trajectory are you on right now, and what one change would alter it?

You might pray about

- For anyone in the group whose pain has been dismissed
- For willingness to actually be changed
- For the person who has said no more than once and is being asked again