



Getting Off The Porch!

A Talk by Jill Grimes, C.S.

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When I visited Desert View recently, I had the privilege of meeting those who were using its services – and guess what? Each one I met was reading the Lesson sermon.

That's when I knew that I wanted to share with you today: my love of the Bible Lesson.

Because it is the Bible Lesson that clothes our thought, grows our spiritual understanding and heals our lives. The Lesson is the highest quality of thinking in the world today. And everyone at Desert View realizes its healing power.

Mary Baker Eddy explains its value in the Manual of The Mother Church:

- *A lesson on which the prosperity of Christian Science largely depends. (p. 31)*
- *As adherents of Truth, we take the inspired Word of the Bible as our sufficient guide to eternal Life. (p. 15)*

Some months ago I found myself studying the Lesson, reading for what felt like the millionth time, the story of the man who sat by that pool at Bethesda. You know the one – it's in this week's Lesson – the pool that has five porches. He'd been there for thirty-eight years -- he was waiting for the waters in the pool to be troubled and then to be carried in.

I don't know about you, but sometimes I gloss over familiar Bible stories. Just reading words. And it was happening with this story. When I realized it, I stopped and prayed, asking God to show me His message. I listened beyond the literal details I knew so well and discovered a powerful metaphor for spiritual healing. I'd like to share it with you.

The story tells us these porches are in Jerusalem. So using the great tool for Bible Lesson study, the Glossary, I read Mary Baker Eddy's definition of *Jerusalem*: "Mortal belief and knowledge obtained from the five corporeal senses;" S&H 589:12

That's when I realized the porches represented the five physical senses and how they try and paralyze our thought and activity.

So let's get off that porch!

It doesn't matter which one of those porches, those five physical senses, we're sitting on...their stories never change. They always suggest delay, disappointment, relapse, stagnation, frustration or just more conversation. You've heard it and maybe even thought it: "this problem has gone on so long I'm afraid I can't be healed" or "I'm too old to feel God's love or make this demonstration."

The mental conversation on this paralyzing porch argues that it can incapacitate our ability to heal, cripple our walk, render useless the normal functions of our body and immobilize our finances. NO!

It can't be done. It's not true, it's not you. It's not personal. It's a lie about God's presence and power. It's just porch-talk. We can and must "[s]peak the truth to every form of error." SH418:28

Now what about that pool, the one the man had been staring at for thirty-eight years? Was his healing about getting into it? He sure thought it was. But we know it wasn't.

No, the pool had no part in that man's freedom. And no physical condition or human situation has any part in giving us our freedom either. The pool was irrelevant to that man's healing.

So I've taken the liberty to rename this pool -- the Pool of Irrelevancy. It represents all the distractions of the material senses, the human view, that wants us to focus on a physical condition or human situation. Always suggesting we need to do something humanly. We need to fix it, change it or talk about it. Keeping our thought fixated on matter instead of Spirit, on person instead of the healing Principle, Love.

Let's ask ourselves, what have we been staring at, waiting for a change? Maybe not for 38 years, but what is trying to restrict our walk? No matter what it is - it's just the mesmerizing Pool of Irrelevancy. We can't be fooled.

Okay, since this man's healing wasn't about waiting to get into the pool, what was his healing about? What did Jesus ask him, the question that IS relevant, even today? "Wilt thou be made whole?" Did the man answer Jesus' question?

No, not really. I used to think this man was ignorant, unappreciative of Jesus. No, he didn't answer the question; he just explained his problem in detail. But then it hit me - he was obedient. Obedience enabled him to immediately rise, pick up his bed and walk. No conversation, no "Yes, but..." -- just rise. And today we can hear that Christ command, we can rise, lift our thought, get off the porch.

That wasn't all. This man was a Jew, he knew Hebrew law. This was the Sabbath and it was unlawful to carry a bed on the Sabbath. But that didn't prevent his obedience to Jesus' command. I have a much deeper appreciation for the man now.

But going back to that question, "Wilt thou be made whole?" Have you thought about that question this week when you were studying the Bible Lesson? What does it mean? What does it feel like, look like, talk like to you?

As students of Christian Science, this should be an easy question to answer. Certainly we are made whole. In Science and Health, Mrs. Eddy confirms that "...infinite Mind made all and includes all." SH 206:28.

We're made by Mind, whole. Our completeness isn't conditional on what we can or can't do, but being whole right this moment. Think whole. Listen whole. Talk whole. Pray whole. Accept being whole - not because of matter, but in spite of matter. Being whole from within, not dependent on outward circumstances to give permission. It's our birthright.

There's no one outside of this divine Mind - no child, man or woman or circumstance that can possibly be left out of the complete, all encompassing and knowing of God's love and care.

Then can we agree that it's never about making sick matter well or a paralyzed body move? It's never about waiting for someone to help us or someone to make a decision or to change. It's not even about waiting for inspiration. We're whole because we're God's spiritual idea, the reflection of Love. We include every right idea for expressing this completeness. We are inspired. Right now.

So let's stop waiting. Let's start moving - mentally - rise up, walk off, leave that paralyzing porch. You're not distracted or mesmerized by any pool. Your focus is on God. Christ is here declaring your wholeness, your holy relationship to Life and Love.

That paralyzing porch and mesmerizing pool have no hold on your spiritual dominion and holy peace.

This is the truth – you're unbroken, undamaged, un-divorced, unscarred. You're intact, whole, wholly ageless and perfect, not fragmented by fear or depleted by disease.

No longer are you paralyzed by that mesmeric pool of "selves" -- self-pity, self-doubt, self-criticism, self-justification, self-righteousness or self-indulgence.

You are whole - wholly loved, wholly good, wholly innocent. God needs you for His creation to be complete. You're included in this permanent Love. Think about it. Claim it. Declare it. Glory in it.

This fresh understanding of being whole has practical, healing results in every aspect of our lives. I've seen it mend the fabric of a family paralyzed on the porch of selfishness and blame. I've experienced it restore a broken bone to its original wholeness. And understanding this spiritual wholeness will transform branch church work, too. How? By refusing to be mesmerized by the pool of personal sense that looks like lack. Lack of desire, members, Sunday school students, visitors at the Reading Room, or lack of money or time.

Look up. Church is whole, it's complete, it's THE structure of Truth and Love. Holding to this fact you will walk off the paralyzing porch of opinions, criticism and judgment. The result? The affluence, the abundant supply of our Maker, God's healing love, will be felt and sought.

This expression of individual spiritual wholeness is not a struggle. It's never about getting it all together humanly or holding human thought on God. It's never about perfect matter, enough matter or changing matter.

Regularly ask yourself that question, "Wilt thou be made whole?" Then hear the Christ, that divine influence, declare... Thou art whole ~ thy faith hath made thee whole ~ be whole.

Now you're off the porch - No more porch-talk - No mesmerizing Pools of Irrelevancy - You're MADE whole. Be whole! Because you are wholly good, wholly at peace, and wholly loved by God. The holy child of God.

It's in the Bible Lesson, our Pastor, the Bible and *Science and Health*... We're whole. Live in our Bible Lesson and let the Lesson live through you. Walk like the Lesson. Talk like the Lesson. Pray with the Lesson. It will always be the source of your prosperity and healing!