

21. SAYING YES TO JESUS (JOHN 5:2-9a) 07/15/12  
 FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH, ATCHISON, PASTOR LEE HENDON

MY OLDER BROTHER, RAYMOND, HAS WATCHED OUT OVER ME FROM EARLY CHILDHOOD - HE HAS COME TO MY RESCUE ON MORE THAN ONE OCCASION. I HAVE ALWAYS LOOKED UP TO HIM WITH ADMIRATION & RESPECT. I HUMOROUSLY NOTICED WHILE HE WAS REGIONAL VICE PRESIDENT WITH CITI BANK THAT HIS EMPLOYEES HAD AFFECTIONATELY (OR NOT) GIVEN HIM A BIRTH-DAY PRESENT OF A PERSONALIZED WESTERN BELT - HE LIVED IN TEXAS AT THE TIME. HIS NICK NAME "DR. NO" WAS BOLDLY IMPRINTED ON THE BACK OF IT. HE WORE IT PROUDLY - "DR. NO!" I ASKED HIM WHAT THE DEAL WAS & HE REMARKED THAT AS SENIOR UNDERWRITER ON MILLION DOLLAR PLUS CREDIT LOAN APPLICATIONS HE WAS KNOWN TO ACT SWIFTLY WITH A "NO" & ANOTHER LOAN REP'S DEAL WAS SHOT DOWN. HE WAS QUICK TO PROTECT CITI BANK FROM SHAKY LOAN DEALS. MANY PEOPLE LIVE THEIR LIVES WITH A "DR. NO" POSTURE & ATTITUDE - SAYING "NO" TO MOST ANYTHING COMING DOWN THE TURN PIKE OF LIFE - IT CAN SO EASILY BECOME A HABIT, A KNEE JERK REACTION TO LIVING LIFE - A ROAD BLOCK TO LIVING LIFE TO THE FULLEST - NO!

ARE YOU A YES OR A NO KINDA PERSON??? HMMMM???

PERHAPS YOU HAVE SEEN THE MOVIE, "YES MAN," STARRING JIM CAREY? IN THE MOVIE, CARL ALLEN'S LIFE (PLAYED BY JIM CAREY) IS GOING NOWHERE FAST - HIS LIFE IS A REAL DRAG WITH A RECENT DIVORCE & IN A DEAD-END JOB. CARL BASICALLY HAS ONE WORD FOR EVERYTHING, "NO!" I KNOW SOME PEOPLE LIKE THAT, YOU? WELL, ONE DAY CARL IS DRAGGED TO ONE OF THOSE SUPER POSITIVE, SELF-HELP SEMINARS THAT FORCES HIM TO SAY "YES" TO EVERYTHING & ANYTHING OR FACE DIRE CONSEQUENCES. HE MAKES THE COMMITMENT TO SAY "YES" TO EVERYTHING & PLAY OUT THE PENDING RESULTS. THING IS, IT WORKS. BUNGEE JUMPING? YES. INCONVENIENCED BY HELPING OTHERS? YES. SHAKY LOAN APPLICATIONS AT THE BANK. YES. CARL'S NEW FOUND, AGREEABLE SELF GAINS HIM MORE THAN HE EVER IMAGINED - A NEW LIFE FORCE IS SET LOOSE - GETTING HIM PROMOTED AT WORK & HE EVEN FINDS THE LOVE OF HIS LIFE, A KOOKY MUSICIAN/AMATEUR PHOTOGRAPHER NAMED ALLISON.

UNLEASHING THE POWER OF “**YES**” BEGINS TO TRANSFORM CARL’S LIFE IN AMAZING & UNEXPECTED WAYS. SAYING “**YES**” BECOMES A REALLY GOOD THING FOR HIM - HESITATION OR “**NO**” LED TO DIRE, OPPRESSIVE CONSEQUENCES. IT IS REALLY QUIET AMAZING TO NOTICE & CONSIDER THE DOMINO EFFECT OF SEEMINGLY LITTLE OR MINOR CHOICES AS THEY IMPACT A PERSON’S LIFE. TAKE A RIDE ON A MOTOR BIKE WITH A KOOKY FEMALE STRANGER - “**YES**” & LOVE COMES CRASHING IN. THE MOVIE OPENED MY EYES TO HOW WE CAN SO EASILY GET STUCK IN RUTS OF HESITATION & “**NO**” TYPE LIVING. NOT GOING ANYWHERE IN LIFE? MAYBE IT IS TIME FOR TAKING ON MORE “**YESES**” IN YOUR LIFE - NO MATTER THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE YES! SOUND RISKY? YOU BET IT IS BUT LIVING ON THE CUTTING EDGE OF LIFE & ADVENTURE CAN TAKE YOUR BREATH AWAY & GET YOUR HEART TO RACING! GOD INTENDS THERE TO BE SUCH TIMES IN OUR LIVES.

**JESUS WAS IN JERUSALEM AT THE SHEEP GATE POOL.** AS IN ANY SOCIETY THERE WERE PEOPLE CLUTTERING UP THE PLACE WITH VARIOUS HANDICAPS - EACH & ALL WITH GOOD EXCUSES & REASONS FOR LIVING ON THE *EDGE OF LIFE* RATHER THAN JUMPING INTO THE INVIGORATING *FLOW OF LIFE* - I HOPE YOU KNOW THE DIFFERENCE! WELL, EVERY HANDICAP PARKING SPACE WAS TAKEN AT THE SHEEP GATE POOL. THERE WAS THIS ONE GUY THERE WHO WAS A REGULAR - BEEN SHOWING UP FOR 38 L-O-N-G YEARS - THAT IS A LONG TIME - EVERYBODY KNEW HIM - WHO HE WAS & WHY HE WAS SO DOWN & OUT ON LIFE - THEY KNEW HIS STORY WELL - HOW PITIFUL HE WAS & HOW DESERVING OF THEIR COMPASSION & SYMPATHY. HE WAS STUCK IN A DEEP, DEEP RUT & GOING NOWHERE FAST. NO MATTER HOW DEEP & WIDE OTHER’S COMPASSION & SYMPATHY MIGHT BE IT WOULD NOT REMEDY THE MATTER. SOMETHING ELSE WAS NEEDED.

**ENTERS EACH OF US WITH OUR OWN STORIES** - WE EACH COME BEFORE GOD WITH OUR OWN MANY & VARIOUS WOUNDS & AFFLICTIONS - OUR FAULT OR NOT - **NOT A ONE OF US HAS BEEN SPARED!** SOME WOUNDS MAY BE DEEPER & MORE OBVIOUS - YET WHEN THEY ARE PERSONAL TO US THEY ARE MAJOR & APPEAR TO BE MORE PRONOUNCED. WE HAVE EACH BEEN TO THE SHEEP GATE POOL TO SEEK REDEMPTION & HEALING - NO MATTER THE MASKS WE WEAR & THE GAMES WE PLAY & THEY ARE MANY. WOUNDED & AFFLICTED EACH & EVERYONE OF US - HOW LONG YOU BEEN IN

YOUR RUT? CHURCH IS CORRECTLY UNDERSTOOD TO BE A HOSPITAL FOR LOST & AFFLICTED SOULS WHO REQUIRE GOD'S HELP TO GET OUT OF OUR RUTS!

**JESUS DRAWS NEAR** - SURELY HE DID NOT PASS THIS WAY BECAUSE OF THE SCENERY - WHEN SICK & WOUNDED PEOPLE START CLUTTERING UP THE PLACE - WHY WE DRIVE OUT OF THE WAY TO NOT BE BOTHERED BY SUCH - THEY CAN BE UNSIGHTLY, STINKY & MAKES US DOWN RIGHT UNCOMFORTABLE. CAN'T YOU JUST FEEL THE STRENGTH - THE POWER - THE BRIGHTLY BEAMING HEALING PRESENCE OF THIS SON OF MAN - JESUS! WHEN A DOCTOR ENTERS THE PATIENT'S ROOM - HOPE & EXPECTATION OF HEALTH & WHOLENESS LOOM LARGE. THE DOCTORS OF THIS MAN'S DAY HAD LONG TIME GIVEN UP ON HIS RECOVERY - NOTHING ELSE COULD BE DONE FOR HIM - EVEN WHEN OTHERS GIVE UP ON US, JESUS DRAWS NEAR - **EXPECT A MIRACLE!** NO MATTER THE DIAGNOSIS OR PROGNOSIS - EXPECT A MIRACLE - DOCTORS & MEDICINE, FRIENDS & RELATIVES ARE ONLY HUMAN - **JESUS IS GOD!**

THIS 38 YEAR VETERAN OF HARD TIMES HAD A MIRACLE COMING HIS WAY. JESUS ASKED HIM, "**DO YOU WANT TO BE HEALED?**" WHAT A PERTINENT, PENETRATING & PROBING MISSILE OF A QUESTION! LET IT BE AN EYE OPENER FOR YOUR OWN LIFE SITUATION & CIRCUMSTANCE. MATTERS NOT THIS MAN'S RESPONSE - BLAH, BLAH, BLAH - WHEN ENCOUNTERED BY JESUS, THE VERY FORCE OF GOD, HE HESITATED & THEN THE LONG LIST OF EXCUSES ROLLED OFF HIS TONGUE - LONG REHEARSED & TREAD BEAR, HE GAVE HIS LOUD & LONG, "**NO.**" OH, HE DID NOT THINK OF HIS RESPONSE AS A "**NO**" BUT IT WAS. CRIPPLED & LIMPING ALONG IN LIFE - NO TO THIS - THAT - THE OTHER - **NO, NO, NO!**

WHAT WE ARE TO NOTICE & RECOGNIZE IN OURSELVES (THAT WE SO EASILY SEE IN OTHERS) IS THAT MOST ANY & EVERY UNHEALTHY CONDITION IN LIFE IS SELF-PERPETUATING! LEFT TO OUR OWN **NO'S** & WE ARE DOOMED, EXCEPT FOR THE MIRACLE OF JESUS - ALL THE WHILE THIS MAN WAS GIVING THE EXCUSES & REASONS FOR HIS **NO**, JESUS WAS GIVING HIM A HUGE & LIFE CHANGING **YES!** OH, YES YOU CAN! EXPECT A MIRACLE OR NOT - IT BEGINS WITH JESUS AS OUR LIFE FORCE!

JESUS SAID TO HIM (OVER, ABOVE & BEYOND HIS BLAH, BLAH, BLAHS), "***RISE, TAKE UP YOUR PALLET & WALK.***" AT ONCE

HE WAS HEALED.... HE TOOK UP HIS PALLET & WALKED. JESUS DID NOT WAIT FOR ANY MOMENT OR PERMISSION OF FAITH RECOGNITION. JESUS SPOKE, THE MALADY WAS CURED, NOW WHAT WAS THE MAN LEFT TO DO BUT GET UP & WALK. JESUS TOOK HIS **NO** & TURNED IT AROUND INTO A GREAT BIG **YES!** JUST IMAGINE THE SURGE OF ENERGY & STRENGTH TO HIS LEGS & FEET! NO NEED FOR PHYSICAL THERAPY, JESUS HEALED HIM - ZAP!

ENCOUNTERED BY JESUS, WE EACH MUST WRITE THE NEXT CHAPTER OF OUR LIVES. JESUS FREES US TO CHANGE THE STORIES BY WHICH WE LIVE. WE ARE LEFT & EMPOWERED BY JESUS TO REDIRECT OUR DEFINING STORIES. FEW THINGS ARE AS ENCOURAGING AS THE REALIZATION THAT THINGS CAN & WILL BE DIFFERENT FOR US & THAT WE HAVE A MAJOR ROLE IN MAKING THEM SO! IT IS NOW YOUR TIME & MINE TO VENTURE FORTH WITH JESUS. SHOUT OUT, "**YES, YES, YES!**" LET IT BE LOUD & CLEAR!