

“Waiting for the Waters to Stir; a Morning Encounter with John 5”

Special Edition

John 5:1-18

The Rev. Ted Wood

June 14, 2019

Ted: Fire and ready, Gridley! Does anybody know where that quote came from: “Fire and ready, Gridley?”

Don Maurer: No.

Ted: It was from Admiral Schley on the battle cruiser *Brooklyn*. He ordered his underling to start firing at the Spanish fleet on the Santiago Bay in Cuba in 1898. Did you know that? (*Laughter*)

Brave Man: We weren’t there. (*Laughter*)

Ted: One of my penances. So I didn’t have any material to fall back on to teach today. So what I did was, I said that I was going to go back to my journal. As you know, I journal every day, practically every day. And I read the Scriptures and I write down verses from a section of what?, four, five, six, seven verses. I take out a verse that kind of strikes me. It can strike me intellectually, spiritually, in most any of a different variety of ways. I don’t try to have it set. So I set out the verse and comment on what happened the day before. And then I take and read the Scripture and I take a verse and I comment on that verse.

So I went back to my journal for today and I came across John the fifth chapter. I went back ten years in all my journaling to find out the books of the Bible that I covered. And amazingly enough, I found that in the last ten years I had never included the Gospel of John in my morning devotions. But I worked my way through it. I’m on chapter 14 now. But back a number of months ago during a three-day period I covered John the fifth chapter. So let me read that to you, and let me just share some thoughts that I got from that chapter. You can read along if you want.

“After this there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. Now there is in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate a pool, in Aramaic called Bethesda, which has five roofed colonnades. In these lay a multitude of invalids—blind, lame and paralyzed. One man was there who had been an invalid for thirty-eight years. When Jesus saw him lying there, and knew that he had already been there a long time, He said to him, ‘Do you want to be healed?’

“The sick man answered him, ‘Sir, I have no one to put me into the pool while the water is stirred up. And while I am going, another steps down before me.’

“Jesus said to him, ‘Get up, take up your bed and walk.’ And at once the man was healed, and he took up his bed and walked.

“Now that day was a Sabbath. So the Jews said to the man who had been healed, ‘It is the Sabbath, and it is not lawful for you to take up your bed.’

“But he answered them, ‘The Man who healed me, that Man said to me, ‘Take up your bed and walk.’

“Waiting for the Waters to Stir; a Morning Encounter with John 5”

“And they asked him, ‘Who is the man who said to you, ‘Take up your bed and walk?’” Now the man who had been healed did not know who it was, for Jesus had withdrawn, as there was a crowd in the place.

“Afterward Jesus found him in the temple and said to him, ‘See, you are well. Sin no more, that nothing worse may happen to you.’ The man went away and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had healed him. And this is why the Jews were persecuting Jesus, because He was doing these things on the Sabbath.

“But Jesus answered them, ‘MY Father is working until now, and I am working.’ This was why the Jews were seeking all the more to kill Him, because not only was He breaking the Sabbath, but He was even calling God His own Father, making Himself equal with God.” This is the word of the Lord.

Brave Men: Thanks be to God.

Ted: What we have here, I think, is an example of *the visible and the invisible*. And in the Nicene Creed one of the lines of the Creed says that I believe in all things visible and invisible. And I think that the things that are visible and obvious are easily seen by the world. But the things that are invisible, the things that are supernatural, are not seen by the world. And therefore this passage can be seen in two ways.

First of all, *the visible and the obvious*. In a pool called Bethsaida lay a multitude of invalids, blind, lame and paralyzed. Well, this is setting the scene up for Jesus to be the Messiah, because these are the very things that the Scriptures promised that the Messiah would do. Look at Isaiah the 35th chapter. *“Behold, He”* (that is, the LORD), *“will come and save you. Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap like a deer, and the tongue of the mute sing for joy.”* The Scripture in the Old Testament anticipated that these are the things that the Messiah would do.

And when John the Baptist’s disciples came to Jesus and asked Him if he was indeed the Messiah, the promised One that we find in Scripture, Jesus says to them, that is the followers of John the Baptist, *“Go and tell John what you have seen and heard: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear. The dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them.”*

So the scene is set for the Messiah to show Himself. And then we have a man. The man who was there had been an invalid for thirty-eight years. And you know, if you were an invalid for 38 years, if you’re incapacitated in any way, this has an impact on you. And more often than not, periods of long suffering or infirmity begin to twist your soul.

I don’t do well with pain. And my daughter, my younger daughter, always seems to have a neck ache or a shoulder ache. And I wasn’t especially sympathetic with her until I had one for three days. Now that’s not very long for some of you. But I was cranky and miserable that whole time.

So this is what suffering can do. It can make you cynical. It can make you nearsighted, focused on yourself, thinking about yourself all the time. And it basically dumbs you down to life. You quit sensing life at all. And that’s what Jesus found in this man that had been an invalid, and laying for 38 years.

“Waiting for the Waters to Stir; a Morning Encounter with John 5”

And then Jesus said to him, “*Do you want to be healed?*” It’s a strange question, isn’t it? “*Do you want to be healed?*” But it’s the kind of question that He asks a lot of times, the obvious question.

Look at the 20th chapter of Matthew. Jesus asked the mothers of the sons of Zebedee, “*What do you want?*” The mother comes up and she has a petition for Jesus. So Jesus says, “*What do you want?*” And to the two blind men that followed after Jesus and called out to Him, He said, “*What do you want Me to do for you?*” And to James and John who approached Jesus, He said, “*What do you want Me to do for you?*”

So the question that He asks the lame man here and the mother of the sons of Zebedee and James and John and the two blind men, and the other places in Scripture, is a diagnostic question. And it’s not a question about your body or your physical condition. It’s a question about your soul, your psyche. What’s on your mind; what’s your intention? What are you really thinking about?

And so the man responds. “*Sir, I have no one to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up. While I am going, another steps down before me.*”

Now the man’s response speaks volumes about what’s on his mind and his intentions. And what was he saying to Jesus? Jesus said, “*Do you want to be healed?*” And the man responds, “I need somebody to take me down to the pool.”

So here the man is. The man is looking at the visible, the natural, the earthly. And he’s saying, “This is my problem. I have a practical problem. If I can just get down into the pool, I’m going to be healed. I’m going to aim at something that’s practical, that’s doable, that’s probable, and that’s carnal.” And Jesus and he were on completely different pages.

This man is in a desperate condition. Thirty-eight years! I don’t know how many of those years he spent by the side of the pool, unable to get down to be healed. He’s in a desperate condition.

But his desperation has not led him to the truth, because the Truth is standing next to him, offering healing. And rather than that, he has a practical solution. “Jesus, can You just kind of help me get on my feet and kind of work me down to the poolside next time it stirs?”

John: I might get some pushback on this one. I look at this guy as playing the victim. Instead of saying, “Yes, I need help. Yes, I want to be healed,” I see him as playing the victim. “Would you like to be healed?” “Oh, woe is me! I can’t get down there.”

Which raises a question that I’ve never been able to figure out. We’re supposed to act and do and be proactive in things, to perform tasks worthy of Christ and to trust in God. I’ve never been able to figure out that balance. I’m kind of curious as to—Do you see it that way?

Ted: On the victim business, I was looking for the Scripture. I couldn’t find it last night, and that’s because I was given so little time to prepare. *(Laughter)*

Don Maurer: You’re a victim.

Ted: Yes, I’m a victim; that’s right. *(Laughter)* Any inadequacies on my part are always somebody else’s fault. *(Laughter)* But the thing is that adversity is designed by God to draw you closer to Him. But it also has the effect of making you alienated from

“Waiting for the Waters to Stir; a Morning Encounter with John 5”

Him. And that’s why I say that what we begin to do is to look for something to blame, which I just did, someone to blame, some condition.

And we begin to play the role of the victim. We do it all the time. And you know, if we could just listen to ourselves talk! Why do things turn out the way they do? I mean, we look at ourselves and we say, “That man is a fool!” I’m a fool for thinking like that.

Now you went on to talk about not only the victim, but the balance between action and dependency.

John: Right.

Ted: That’s Good. And thank you, straight man. You’re leading me to the final point I want to make. *(Laughter)* Bear with me. So the man sets his sights on the visible, the practical, the doable. And Jesus and he are on completely different pages, because he’s in a desperate condition. But his desperation is not leading him to God. It’s leading him to a practical solution to the problem. The lame man’s sights were set very low.

Remember, he was looking for help from an angel when the Son of God was standing next to him, offering healing. To be deeply converted, you must recognize your desperate condition. And this is something he did not recognize. Yes, Greg?

Greg: I’m not sure which translation you’re using.

Ted: The ESV.

Greg: But you brought up the angel there. In the New King James, and I’m sure it’s in the King James as well, there is what I have as the end of verse 3 and verse 4, which were omitted in the translation you read. But it says that the lame man was “*waiting for the moving of the water. For an angel went down at a certain time into the pool and stirred up the water. And whoever stepped in first at the stirring of the water was made well of whatever disease he had.*”

Ted: Yes, right.

Greg: So wherever that came from, there’s obviously a debate about whether that’s part of the original text or not. But if somebody could give a further explanation about that angel part,--

Ted: Well, I think here it talks about an angel, does it not?

Greg: No, I don’t think so.

Don: No.

Ted: I’m sorry. I must have read that in tension because I was working off two translations, which of course, had I been given more time,-- *(Laughter)* that would not have been a problem. But I’m just saying that for whatever reason he was looking to something less. And thanks, Greg, for pointing that out.

And I just want to make the point here. To be deeply converted, you must recognize your deep desperate condition. This is kind of a short sidebar. And I was just struck by the man’s story.

“*Jesus said to the Twelve, ‘Do you want to go away as well?’*” Because when Jesus began to talk about His body and His blood, they found this hard to believe when He talked about eating His body and drinking His blood. And it says that “many of His disciples left Him.” And Jesus looks at the Twelve and He says, “*Do you want to go away as well?*”

“Waiting for the Waters to Stir; a Morning Encounter with John 5”

“Simon Peter answered Him, ‘Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.’”

Somewhere along the line, whether if it’s when we got saved or went forward, or sometime later in life, we have to find ourselves in a desperate situation, so that Jesus is the only option. And I’m a big believer in Jesus as the only option, as a great way to move into a deeper life with God.

I’m thinking about a conversation I had with a fellow. Our daughter was involved in study overseas. And she’d made friends with another American student who was also studying there who was an atheist. And clearly my daughter had told this fellow (I’ll call him John), that her dad was an over-the-top, religious kind of guy. (*Laughter*) John was an academically enlightened atheist. And he was going to have a go at me. And so we went at it for about an hour.

It was a good conversation. It was respectful. This fellow was a very bright young man, I think probably about twenty. And finally I said to him, “John, let me ask you a question.” You all know that this is a very typical presentation of the necessity of the gospel and of God. I said, “John, let me ask you a question. If I’m wrong and you’re right, if I’m wrong that Jesus is the Son of God and that God the Father has the say over all things, and that salvation through them is essential and necessary, if I’m wrong and you’re right, what difference does it make?” You’ve heard this before.

And I said, “But if I’m right and you, John, are wrong, you’re in deep trouble.”

Don Nemit: Amen.

Ted: And you know, it’s one of those kind of things where you don’t say anything, and the next person who talks loses. (*Laughter*) There’s a long silence. He looks at me and he finally says, “I never thought about that. That’s an interesting point.”

John was nowhere near desperate. I hoped that by saying that and covering in that way that by the grace of God I made him more desperate for the solution.

Missing in modern evangelical preaching and teaching is a desperation for God. I think about that great passage in Isaiah 59 that talks about our condition. *“We grope for the wall like the blind. We grope like those who have no eyes. We stumble at noon, as in the twilight. Among those in full vigor, we are like dead men.”*

Somewhere along the line, in order to move deeply into a relationship with God, you must be desperate. Every morning in my devotions I say as a confession the 51st Psalm, Psalm 51. *“Have mercy on me, O LORD, according to Your loving-kindness.”* Do you know that one? It’s a great Psalm. And I say it again and again.

You would think that by reading a Psalm or a portion of Scripture or a prayer that it becomes humdrum and becomes rote. It doesn’t. You dig deeper and deeper into that prayer.

And in that prayer it has a very interesting petition of God. In Psalm 51 it says, *“Take not Your Holy Spirit from me.”*

Brave Man: Amen.

Ted: Now think about that. As a believer, why would you say that? “Take not Your Spirit from me.” And that’s because we are all in desperate conditions. And at any moment, if God was to step away, we would be completely lost. Without Jesus I am a

“Waiting for the Waters to Stir; a Morning Encounter with John 5”

dead man. Without Jesus I am the spider that falls into the bonfire, from Jonathan Edwards’ sermon. I have no reason to be proud or confident in any decision or sanctity that I’ve achieved, because every day I say, “*Take not Your Holy Spirit from me*”, because without You I am a dead man.

I’m back on verses 8 and 9. “*Jesus said to him, ‘Get up, take your bed and walk.’*”

Brave Man: Ted?

Ted: Yes, sure.

Brave Man: A question. That’s in the Old Testament, where the Holy Spirit could come and go.

Ted: Yes.

Brave Man: When we become Christians in our age, the Holy Spirit is going to stay with us. So is that really—

Ted: So that’s not a valid petition. Psalm 51 is not a valid petition. Do I hear Marcion? (*Laughter*) That was bad. Marcion was a 2nd-century heretic who said that we have to eliminate all of the Old Testament stuff. And he had only one Gospel that he allowed and that was the Gospel of Luke,. Because it was written by a Gentile, not a Jew. But everything Jewish had to be taken out.

It’s interesting that you should raise that point, because just yesterday I was listening to an interview between—(let me get this right)—Andy Stanley and—I’m not going to have it—

Caleb: Jeff Durbin. The dialogue that they had?

Don Maurer: James White?

Ted: No. Jeff Durbin. Very interesting! Now you all know Charles Stanley, don’t you? Andy Stanley is the son of Charles Stanley. You know Charles Stanley? “Now listen to me! Listen to me!” (*Laughter*) That’s my Charles Stanley imitation. (*Laughter*) I love the man because he has long fingers. I always wished I had long fingers. (*Laughter*) “Listen to me, now listen to me!”

But his son Andy Stanley has a very large church. And Andy Stanley has come up with an interesting book, an interesting take on the gospel. And he says that the church needs to become unhitched from the Old Testament. It is a disturbing thought, because he says that the problem,—and you know, he’s part of a very contemporary young adult church,—is that when the newcomers read the things in the Old Testament, it’s a turnoff to them of the gospel, like the annihilation of all the Amalekites and things of that sort. So therefore the church needs to unhitch itself from the Old Testament and what is found in there, the undesirable parts of God.

I don’t want to overplay this, because Stanley wouldn’t necessarily say that. The argument is very subtle in listening to it. But I want to tell you that it was disturbing. I won’t go into it; it’s too much to go into today. But it was disturbing, because what he was saying is that we’ve got the witness of the apostles and that’s all we need. And this other stuff is a distraction. He said this; I was listening to it. Let’s not think about the Ten commandments. Let’s think about the Sermon on the Mount.

Now here’s an established, conservative, evangelical preacher saying these things. And it’s starting to sound a lot to me like the stuff I hear from the mainline churches, and

“Waiting for the Waters to Stir; a Morning Encounter with John 5”

things I actually heard this weekend from a family member, where this family member said in response to “*Jesus said, ‘I am the way, the truth and the life.’*” This family member who is theologically educated in one of the mainline churches said to me, “Jesus said to follow Him; He never said to worship Him.”

Don Maurer: Oo!

Ted: So you see, it’s all kind of sliding in the same direction. So back to that. Did you want to say any more about that?

Brave Man: I’m sorry. What did she say about Jesus?

Ted: “Jesus never said, ‘Worship Me.’ He said, ‘Follow Me.’” So the problem, the main problem then becomes in us not following what He said to do, versus worshipping Him for who He is. It takes the disturbing question of who Jesus is out of the discussion, because you’ve got these rules and regulations. And as long as we follow those, we’re Christians, regardless of who He said He is. And that’s what this section ultimately gets to. Did you see that interview?

Caleb: Yes.

Ted: Did you want to share the mike? Any thoughts about it?

Caleb: It think that fundamentally it was a difference in how you view the Bible. Jeff Durbin kind of started with the presupposition that the Bible is authoritative and the word of God, here as it seemed to me that Andy started with the reasoning of man and wants to work his way toward the Bible as God’s authoritative word. So it’s a difference in presuppositions. That’s what I saw.

Ted: Mm-hmm. And do you know what? It’s being from a historic church. The Anglican Church is a historic church that understands the evolution of the Scriptures and how they came into being in the first and second century. I think that Stanley and both of those guys missed a significant point. If you go to the Roman Catholics, that’s where the difference is with us, because the Roman Church will say that they are the ones who wrote the Scripture. Therefore they can work as they please.

And that’s basically what Stanley was saying. I mean, I can see that, having come out of a tradition that understands how that thinking goes. And that’s why I don’t want to get into it. But that really surprised me from Andy Stanley. I’m sorry, I apologize. We’ll move on.

Don Maurer: But Ted, what about the question of the Holy Spirit? I know what I would say, but what would you say?

Ted: Well, what do you say about the Holy Spirit? (*Laughter*) I’m sorry. I was trying to avoid that because—

Don: Oh, all right.

Ted: Yes, absolutely. We’ve been given the Holy Spirit. You’re right. In the Old Testament the Spirit comes, the prophets prophesy, and then the Spirit goes. But the fact of the matter is that we have no guarantee that the Spirit is going to stay with us outside of the grace of God. So we can’t act as if it’s our possession. That’s what I would say.

Brave Man: I’m not acting like it’s a possession. It’s a promise. God said that He would never leave us and never forsake us. Granted, the relationship can be damaged or separated because of sin, but God promised that He is always going to be with us.

“Waiting for the Waters to Stir; a Morning Encounter with John 5”

Ted: The only thing I would say about that is that there is that room for self-deception, where we think we have the Spirit and we really don't. So therefore I think that prayer is appropriate. *“Take not Your Holy Spirit from me.”* I have no problem saying that. Yes. You may not believe it, but this is going to disturb a lot of people and they're not going to have Ted teaching.

Greg: I was just going to say in terms of that particular petition, it's not so much that we're trying to change God's mind as it's something that reminds us who we are. It's a warning for us.

Ted: Thank you. Right. I would agree with Greg. Okay, bear with me while I just keeping plowing through this. Jesus said, *“Take up your bed and walk.”* *“And at once the man was healed and took up his bed and walked.”*

But there are problems with this healing, because normally we're expecting to read something like this. *“You're faith has made you well; go in peace and be healed.”* I think that's just one verse. Many times it says, *“Go in peace; your faith has made you well.”* But the healing in this particular story makes no mention of the man's faith. We have his initial faith in Jesus, and we have no idea whether he came to faith afterward. We just don't know.

We do know one thing. And that is that the man testified to Jesus' healing and His miracle. *“The man went away and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had healed him.”* That's verse 15.

So even if you don't end up believing as a result of some miracle or wonder or healing, yet God did not leave Himself without a witness, as it says in Acts 14. *“I tell you that if these were to remain silent, even the very stones would cry out.”* God will always have His witness whether the people believe it or not.

Now that's the visible part of the story. Now we enter the invisible part, the supernatural part, because this story is more than just about a Healer. It's more about the Healer than the healing and what happens to the Healer. The Son of God and the followers of God have a big target on their backs. And Jesus found Himself in this very situation as a result of this healing.

Ephesians reminds us that *“we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.”* So even though we may not have obvious visible enemies and being attacked, yet the fact of the matter is that we always from the cosmic powers, from the powers of the air, from the satanic powers, we always are under attack.

At first Jesus is perceived by the Jewish leaders as an iconoclast, One who breaks the religious rules. *“This is why the Jews were persecuting Jesus, because He was doing these things”*, that is, healing on the Sabbath. That was the first opposition to Jesus, because He was doing things that were against morality and accepted religious practice.

But it gets worse from that point and it gets to the point. Jesus warned us that this would happen. *“If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you.”* John 15. Men become haters of God.

“Waiting for the Waters to Stir; a Morning Encounter with John 5”

In fact, I was once flying on a business flight a number of years ago. And I sat next to a man who was the head of the Sikh Society in his community. It’s a variation of Hinduism.

We got to talking and I identified myself as a Christian. I asked him if he knew very much about Christianity. And he said immediately to that question, “Let me tell you what irritates me about Christians.”

And I said, “Okay , what is it?” It was a very respectful conversation, plus we were seat-belted next to each other. *(Laughter)* So it wasn’t one of those YouTube things where they take a picture of people dragging folks off. *(Laughter)* And screaming all kinds of obscenities. That wasn’t going to happen.

He said, “Christians are so intolerant of other religions. That’s what really bothers me.”

And I said to him, “Well, if you really want to be bothered, let me tell you what you can really be bothered about.” *(Laughter)* And what I did was I laid out the sovereignty of God and the divinity of Jesus Christ, and He being the only way to salvation. I just laid it out. I don’t remember how the conversation ended. It was like “We’ll just agree to disagree.”

And so it’s one thing to say, “Well.” But when the person, my family member, recently said to me, “Jesus never said to worship Him but to follow Him,” you see, that’s the problem, isn’t it? Because the Jewish leaders were objecting initially to following the acts of Jesus. But that will not get you killed. What will get you killed is if you say that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and the only way to salvation.

“My Father is working until now, and I am working. The Son can do nothing of His own accord, but only what He sees the Father doing. For whatever the Father does, the Son does likewise.” “The Jews were seeking all the more to kill Him, because not only was He breaking the Sabbath,”—you can be put into prison for that,—“but He was even calling God His own Father, making Himself equal with God.” That’s when you start to get into trouble, because that’s where Satan becomes furious, because Satan wants to be God. He doesn’t want Christ to be God. Don?

Don Maurer: With the member of your family who said that Christ didn’t say to be worshiped but to be followed, if you look a couple of verses below it says *“that all may honor the Son just as they honor the Father.”* That’s worship.

Ted: Of course. I mean, it was irrelevant because the point was trying to be made to dumb down our faith and dumb down our confession.

So Jesus is saying that He is working and the Father is working, and They are working together. But this is also to be the experience of the Christian life. It’s not as if we get saved and God is here, and we’re over here. And God kind of gives us grace, like through a conduit, to us. It’s more that our life is brought into God’s life and God’s life is brought into us, so that when we do the works, back to the original question, when we do the works it’s really God doing those works through us, because the whole Christian life is about being in union with Christ.

“Work out your salvation with fear and trembling.” You all know that, right? Get on the stick, get going! I have no confidence that I’m going to be successful at all. But Ted,

“Waiting for the Waters to Stir; a Morning Encounter with John 5”

remember. *“It is God who works in you, both to will and to do His good pleasure.”* Anything good that I ever accomplish, any of the good works that I do, are because the Son of God is doing those works through me.

Greg: Amen.

Ted: That is my only hope, and a completely different understanding than any other religion in the world has. Every other faith, every other religion, says, here are the rules. If you do them, you will live. And Christianity says, here is the Person. He lives in you; you live.

On the surface, in the visible, John 5 is about the healing of an invalid for 38 years, unable to walk fast enough to get to his Healer. But in the invisible John 5 is a lesson to the followers of Jesus about who He is and the One who fulfills all God’s promises, and what it means to follow Him. *“And the hour is coming that whoever kills you will think that he is doing God’s will.”*

We are returning to the first century, brothers. Yes, Brian?

Brian: I think you just answered the question. So using Scripture, here it is. Colossians 3:23: *“Whatever you do, work heartily at it, as to the Lord and not to men.”* And as you flip then to 1 Peter 4:10, it says, *“As each has received the gifts, whatever God has gifted you to do, use it to serve one another as good stewards of God’s varied grace.”* So you’re going to work you tail end of using the gifts that God has given you, put His glory on display, show the love of neighbor by serving them. So I think that’s how you tie it in.

Ted: It is. But all of that is God’s working.

Brian: That shows in Ephesians 2:8-10.

Ted: Right. And also 2 Opinions 3:1 and 2. *(Laughter)* No, I was just joking. I mean, do you understand? There’s a distinction here. They talk about our responsibility. But I’m not responsible without the work of Jesus Christ in me, me being in Him and Him being in me. Otherwise, you’re never going to be able to get there. It’s more like God’s here, I’m here. He’s giving me instructions, inspiration and power to do it. But it always ends up being me doing it. It has to be Him doing it. Yes?

Greg: I don’t want to be a noodge, but I think it’s relevant to what you’re saying. Under point 3 you have the invisible in that same line. *“We believe in all things visible and invisible.”* I think your quotes are from the Nicene Creed.

Ted: Yes, they are.

Greg: And really, just to clarify, it’s *“We believe in God the Father almighty,”* the Maker and Creator of all things. So the emphasis is on God, not so much on all things.

Ted: Yes. Absolutely right.

Greg: And it’s just interesting that some versions of the Nicene Creed, instead of *“visible and invisible”* will say, *“seen and unseen.”*

Ted: Well, that’s a newer track, a newer rendering. That’s another issue. That’s not very helpful. Seeing something and not seeing something is a human condition. Visible and invisible is the nature of the thing. But I’m not going to get into that right now.

(Laughter)

Brave Man: You didn’t have time to prepare. *(Laughter)*

“Waiting for the Waters to Stir; a Morning Encounter with John 5”

Ted: Yes. Go ahead, Jim.

Jim Fitzgerald: Yesterday I saw this on Facebook. Somebody has revealed what their policy is for determining people to be haters.

Ted: Right. Good.

Jim Fitzgerald: And it’s basically saying that if you say anything negative about any other religion or any other thing, you’re a hater.

Ted: Right.

Jim Fitzgerald: Which is really just turning around “I hate you.”

Don Maurer: Oh yes!

Ted: You know, folks, welcome back to the first century! (*Laughter*) Really, welcome back to the first century. We’re there. Now maybe parts of the third world, Africa and Asia, are not there. Maybe they’re in the 15th century, I don’t know. But welcome back to the first century. Everything has changed. And because of that change God will make us desperate for Him. And our lives must be lived in the near future in Him and in His church, if we are to persevere to the end. That’s where it comes down to. I’m not discouraged about the situation in the world, no more than the first-century Christians were discouraged by it. It’s the nature of the world. It’s the nature of the world to hate you because they hate the fact that Jesus Christ is the only-begotten Son of God,-- “*God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made.*” The world hates that. They can’t hate Christian morality about kindness and goodness. They love that.

So Christians, why don’t you just substitute the two? Switch them off. Then you can avoid persecution. Then you can avoid being hated. Just do the loving things that Jesus talked about doing. And quit messing around with this silly secondary issue of who Jesus is. And what we say is, “Sorry, that’s who I am in Him.” That pretty much concludes what I was going to share. Do you all have any other thoughts, anything that you wanted to share? Sorry if I disturbed you about “*Take not Your Holy Spirit from me.*” Yes, Don?

Don Maurer: Ted, at the end, when Jesus confronts the man and He says, “*Sin no more lest something worse befall you,*” what do you think He had in mind there?

Ted: Actually I’ve avoided that because I didn’t want to deal with it. (*Laughter*)

Don: Well I’m asking you now, so you have to. (*Laughter*)

Ted: If I were better prepared, I’d have more time. (*Laughter*) I think that’s a warning to all of us. I just think of my own life, and I’ve been fairly candid. Four decades ago I went through a very dark period. I was living with a priest who gave me a home because I didn’t have a home to live in because of my own sin. And one day the priest came to me and he said, “I think God is losing His patience with you, Ted. I think you’re running out of second chances.”

Now is that a theologically correct statement? No, it’s not a theologically correct statement. But I’ll tell you what. It made an impact on me. (*Laughter*) Because this fellow was saying, “You’ve just about run out of time. Don’t test God. Quit sinning or something worse is going to happen to you.”

Caleb: You get desperate.

“Waiting for the Waters to Stir; a Morning Encounter with John 5”

Ted: You get desperate, thank you. I got desperate. And I got desperate with a question. Do I want to die or do I want to live? That’s where I came down to. It’s not do you want to do this or that?, or other options. Do I want to die or do I want to live? Anyone who has been in addiction, if you really come out of the addiction, they have to deal with that question. If I continue in this addiction, I’m going to die. That’s all there is to it, I’m going to die. I’ll either overdose or I’ll do something stupid or I’ll get shot, or something like that. And the addiction is so attractive that you have to come to that place, because otherwise you’ll go back to that addiction. But once you realize that, you realize that to go back to it means death. Is that what I want? Ted, do you really want to quit living? Is that what you want?

No, it isn’t. Well, quit sinning so that something worse does not happen to you. I think that’s it. It’s almost like practical instruction. I mean, it’s true. If you want to keep doing this, you’re going to die. That’s all there is to it. Sorry, nothing sweeter than that. Yes, Jim?

Jim Hamilton: There’s another addiction, and it’s the idea that people have about being a good person.

Ted: Oh yes, sure!

Jim: They get along with people. Mice guy. Nothing to do with Christ, nothing to do with salvation. It’s just that I’m a good person.

Ted: I agree.

Jim: And who could expect more out of me?

Ted: Right.

Jim: And I run into this all the time. And it’s something that’s really frustrating when people pass it off as being a good person, and think that all is right with God. It’s very sad.

Ted: Well, you know, in this same interview with Andy Stanley and—

Caleb: Jeff Durbin.

Ted: Durbin told an interesting story. Do many of you know who Ben Shapiro is? Ben Shapiro is a conservative Jewish commentator, analyst and provocateur. He’s very bright. He went to Harvard Law School and another Ivy League school when he was 16 years old. This guy is brilliant. And I like his political analysis of things.

But he got into a discussion with a Christian apologist who was explaining the reason for the Resurrection, based on the Old Testament Scriptures to Ben who is a Jew, an Orthodox Jew. A conservative Jew, excuse me. He was explaining the reasons to believe in the Resurrection from the Old Testament Scriptures and because of reason and logic. And he laid it all out to him. And I understand that it was a brilliant exposition to Ben Shapiro, who has a brilliant mind. So certainly this brilliant mind can get it, right?

And he said to Ben, “Based on what I said, do you believe in the resurrection of Jesus Christ?” And Ben said, “No, I don’t.”

He said, “Why?”

He said, “Because I don’t find it interesting.” (*Laughter*)

Now that is the problem, isn’t it? Jim is surrounded by folks who think that living a good life is what it’s all about. They’ve never gone beyond that because anything beyond

“Waiting for the Waters to Stir; a Morning Encounter with John 5”

that is not interesting. That’s why it requires the Holy Spirit, not 25 singings of “Just As I Am.” (*Laughter*) That’s not the thing to do. It takes the Spirit to impress upon a person to say, “If you don’t do this, you’re going to die. And if you don’t do this, your life amounts to nothing. Your life is a big zero.”

“John, what happens if I’m right and you’re wrong?”

“I never thought about it. It’s not interesting.” And that’s what we face in the world. So Jim is swimming in the sea, like we all are, of the default position which Satan lulls us into. We’re spiritually like that invalid at the side of the pool, spiritual invalids who say, “Listen, I’ll tell you. This is what it’s all about. Be a good person and hope for the best.”

Ashes to ashes, dust to dust. In the end, without God, without life in Christ, we are nothing but the dust of the universe. And as Durbin said, “dust talking to dust.” So any other philosophy is dust talking to dust. There’s nothing to it.

Ron: Martin Luther cited that. I won’t use the word he used because he used a word that’s not good. But in a lot of his writings he said that we are “*desperate souls.*”

Ted: Luther was a desperate man. He agitated other people. He was always agitating, and that’s because he was desperate after God.

Ron: In fact, I think that when you were talking about the man at the pool, I think that’s Bruce Springsteen’s appeal. He laid out the human situation, but he didn’t offer an answer, because so many people could just wallow in their own discouragement.

Ted: Let’s not think about it. We’ve got something else to do. I’ve got a project I’ve got to do. I can’t think about this stuff now. It’s not that important. My project is more important. Come on, God, give me a break! (*Laughter*)

Let us pray. Lord God, we pray that the word which You have spoken in Your Scripture and conveyed to us by Your church through the apostles, that this Word may change us, and that we may become desperate after You. In Jesus’ name. Amen.

Brave Men: Amen. (*Applause*)