



WEEK 3 DEVOTIONAL
LIFELINES FOR HOLDING THEM UP

RECEIVE

Read the passages on the following page: **John 5:1–9; Romans 8:19–23; Romans 15:1–2**. Read these passages slowly, thoughtfully, prayerfully. Read in such a way that you imagine the Holy Spirit is trying to speak to you. As you read the passage, journal words or phrases that stand out to you. Then go back and consider why those words and phrases caught your attention. Finally, read and consider what these verses might imply about anyone you may know who is “lying on a mat waiting for help.” Is there someone you should listen to this week?

REFLECT

1. The pool at Bethsaida, with covered spaces where the sick and in need lay waiting for a miracle or alms — imagine this scene. Try to project that to downtown Chicago or an Oak Brook traffic light. What comes up in you? What are your first thoughts?
2. The dialogue between Jesus and the person wanting help is interesting. Talk about or journal what you notice about the exchange. What does Jesus ask? What is the sick person’s response? Why does he respond this way? What does it tell you about his state of mind? Why do you suppose he is defensive?

3. According to the statistics we have an epidemic in our culture that is impacting many persons, and many families. What is your first reaction and feelings to those facts? Do you feel empathy or pity? Talk or journal about the response you feel in your spirit?
4. The Romans 8 passage describes the “eager expectation” “subjected to frustration” “bondage to decay” and “groaning creation.” What does that mean to you? Make a list of things that qualify as “groans” for you today. If you’re in a group, do it as a brainstorming exercise. What kind of things came to mind first? Is there a tendency to see big problems like world peace first? What if those aren’t the most important problems for us, for Christ Church, today? Talk about that or journal what comes up in you.
5. Finally, Romans 15 describes an attitude. Notice Romans 15:1. How do you make sense of the contrast that is presented there? What does it mean? Does it say anything to you about your life last week, or your life next week?
6. “Already but not yet” speaks to our place in God’s story today. Romans 8 describes the situation and Romans 15 is a broad answer to our action. Does it help you live with it? Talk about or journal why this is helpful—or why it is not.

RESPOND

7. Pastor Tara Beth described several unhelpful ways of responding to the hurting.
 - Avoid the person – afraid of mistake or discomfort
 - Shame the person – judge it weakness or difference
 - Ignore the person – remain silent
 - Say well meaning, but hurtful, dismissive things – platitudes
8. If you’re honest which one do you tend to utilize when trying to mean well?
9. Talk or journal about your attitude and feelings when confronted with a severely hurting person.
10. Pastor Tara Beth talks about “a journey” back to mental or emotional health utilizing the following helps.

- Pray for empathy – be with them “in it.”
- Resist the neat and tidy stories – there is nothing neat and tidy about mental health
- Learn the art of “holding space”– just sit and listen.

11. Which of the above helps, do you find the most useful for you moving forward on this journey of mental health? Journal where you find yourself right now.

12. Are you in a place of needing yourself? Have you reached out to someone? If you are feeling un-tethered reach out to a friend. Find a LIFELINE. If you're looking to speak to a pastor or to find a therapist/counselor, we can help. Please contact Jean Blidy via email jblidy@ChristChurch.us. You don't have to be alone on this journey.

RESOURCES

We are releasing a podcast at the conclusion of this series called *Lifelines: The Conversation Continues*. We will interview a terrific lineup of pastors, Christian psychologists, authors, and even teenagers to shed light on the growing mental health crisis. We hope to spark your imagination on how we can be the church that the weary and anxious world around us so desperately needs. Subscribe to the podcast now to get updates sent directly to your device.

SCRIPTURE

John 5:1–9 | New International Version

¹ Sometime later, Jesus went up to Jerusalem for one of the Jewish festivals. ² Now there is in Jerusalem near the Sheep Gate a pool, which in Aramaic is called Bethesda and which is surrounded by five covered colonnades. ³ Here a great number of disabled people used to lie—the blind, the lame, the paralyzed. ⁵ One who was there had been an invalid for thirty-eight years. ⁶ When Jesus saw him lying there and learned that he had been in this condition for a long time, he asked him, “Do you want to get well?”

⁷ “Sir,” the invalid replied, “I have no one to help me into the pool when the water is stirred. While I am trying to get in, someone else goes down ahead of me.”

⁸ Then Jesus said to him, “Get up! Pick up your mat and walk.” ⁹ At once the man was cured; he picked up his mat and walked.

Romans 8:19–23 | New International Version

¹⁹ For the creation waits in eager expectation for the children of God to be revealed. ²⁰ For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope ²¹ that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the freedom and glory of the children of God.

²² We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. ²³ Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption to sonship, the redemption of our bodies.

Romans 15:1–2 | New International Version

¹ We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves. ² Each of us should please our neighbors for their good, to build them up.

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