



*From the Pastor's study*

## The Answer Is In the Question

There is so much sickness, sadness, and suffering in the world. Each and everyday we see, hear about or read of the pervasive and permanent like debilitating stress affects of personal sickness and social disharmony. The human situation is of such that we are bombarded with the clinical and callous reminder that no one is too far removed from the *House of Blues*. There is not one person who is exempt from the tragic possibility of becoming overwhelmed by the hostile forces of "this world" and, thus, remaining free of the cosmic debris that wrecks our physical and spiritual well-being. Further, it is indeed a most interesting phenomenon as to the willingness of the human creature to not exercise the **courage to be** (the affirmation of being in spite of those elements which conflict with non-being) and, instead, dwell in a culture of mediocrity, hangout with crippled associates, and believe in a bankrupt ideology.

In the 5<sup>th</sup> chapter of the Gospel of John, Jesus encounters a nameless man and initiates a new day conversation with him regarding his protracted psycho-somatic pathological condition (Jn. 5:1-18). Although the man is in alliance with a multitude of weak and feeble like folk (v. 3), Jesus takes a particular interest in this man who had been ill for thirty-eight years (vv. 5-6). Here before Jesus was a man who had resigned himself to the normalcy of an abnormal situation. He (*the nameless man*) had bought into the disfigured gestures of his environment and the private rhetoric which both served as justification for the man's public argument when challenged by Jesus about the real possibility of wholeness (v. 6). Here before Jesus was a man whose existence was submerged into a situation of neurotic negativity and lethargic creativity, but Jesus, the **Open Man**, had the insight (Jn. 1:47-48; 2:23-25; 4:16-18) to awaken this man to the possibility of a brand new day. Here before Jesus was a man who had become trapped by the anxiety of meaninglessness and condemnation (v. 14), but Jesus, the **Free Man**, had the insight to awaken within the man the reality of a new selfhood grounded not in the enslaving and powerless voice of the nation-state but, rather, in the counter-cultural and counter- prevailing voice of the WORD made FLESH (Jn. 1:14; 5:8). This new selfhood (vv. 6, 9, 11, 14-15) was and is made possible when we find ourselves lying down at the *House of Mercy*, surrounded by the negative forces of financial debt (**blind**), over consumption (**lame**), and a possessed by possessions condition (**paralyzed**) and we hear the question that provokes and shakes us out of our state of spiritual malaise and morass, "**Do you want to be made well?**"

*Walking with Jesus,*

Pastor Craig