

The Healing at Bethesda

The Setting

"Some time later, Jesus went up to Jerusalem for a feast of the Jews. ²Now there is in Jerusalem near the Sheep Gate a pool, which in Aramaic is called Bethesda and which is surrounded by five covered colonnades. ³Here a great number of disabled people used to lie—the blind, the lame, the paralyzed." - John 5:1-3

1. Sometime later — ("After these things") — many months pass between John 4:54 and 5:1.

2. Jesus goes to Jerusalem for a feast. This was probably Passover.

3. The pool was probably for washing the sheep before using them as sacrifices.

Jesus settles in Capernaum	4:13-17	1:14-15	4:31-32
Fishermen called to be disciples	4:18-22	1:16-20	
Demoniac in Capernaum Synagogue		1:21-28	4:33-37
Peter's mother-in-law healed	8:14-17	1:29-31	4:38-39
Many healed at sunset		1:32-34	4:40-41
Disciples seek Jesus		1:35-38	4:42-43
Jesus preaches in Synagogues	4:23-25	1:39	4:44
Jesus preaches from Simon's boat		5:1-3	
Miraculous catch of fish		5:4-11	
Jesus heals a leper	8:2-4	1:40-45	5:12-16
Jesus cures a paralytic	9:2-8	2:1-12	5:17-26
Matthew (Levi) called to be a disciple	9:9	2:13-14	5:27-28
Parables at Levi's reception	9:10-17	2:15-22	5:29-39

Bethesda (Bet Chesda) means "the house of mercy" (or grace)

4. Because it was a covered area, and because of a legend, the disabled people would lie here.

5. Verse 4 of this story is not found in most Bibles. It was not part of the original documents ; in later documents it became a note in the margin; and finally, was included in the text.

"...paralyzed—and they waited for the moving of the waters. ⁴From time to time an angel of the Lord would come down and stir up the waters. The first one into the pool after each such disturbance would be cured of whatever disease he had."

- John 5:3-4

The Sickness and the Solution

"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." ⁸Then Jesus said to him, "Get up! Pick up your mat and walk."

⁹At once the man was cured; he picked up his mat and walked." - John 5:5-9

Of all of those who needed healing, only one was chosen. Why? Jesus asked an odd question.

The man says, "water is stirred." This could have been a result of a spring or from drawing water for washing the temple mount.

Jesus gave 3 commands: get up; pick up; be walking.

Consider:

1. The man believed Jesus and even followed the directions.
2. The man had showed no faith whatsoever. (Healing produces the faith, not faith the healing!)
3. This was a complete healing which included at least three different levels of wholeness.

The Sabbath (or, another kind of sickness!)

"The day on which this took place was a Sabbath, ¹⁰and so the Jews said to the man who had been healed, "It is the Sabbath; the law forbids you to carry your mat."

¹¹But he replied, "The man who made me well said to me, 'Pick up your mat and walk.'"

¹²So they asked him, "Who is this fellow who told you to pick it up and walk?"

¹³The man who was healed had no idea who it was, for Jesus had slipped away into the crowd that was there." - John 5:9-13

The "Jews" scold the man for carrying his mat on the Sabbath. (Please note that this is mankind's law, not God's!)

The former invalid blames Jesus, but Jesus cannot be found.

The Seeking

"Later Jesus found him at the temple..."

- John 5:14

Jesus made the effort to find the man. This tells us a lot about Jesus.

The Sin

"Later Jesus found him at the temple and said to him, "See, you are well again. Stop sinning or something worse may happen to you." ¹⁵ The man went away and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him well." - John 5:14,15

Jesus indicated that the man was ill because of his sin, and that he needed to stop sinning or something worse could happen.

Was this man a "believer?" There are two views:

1. The man was not religious, and Jesus was telling him that if he didn't repent, he was headed to hell. (something worse!)
2. This man was a "believer", but had been living in intentional sin. This sin had caused his lameness and could cause a potential future illness.

Some sickness is the result of sin. (Deut. 28:58-61; Ps. 32: 1 Cor. 11:30)

Not all sickness is the result of sin. (Job; John 9:1-3)

Lessons:

1. God uses us for His purposes and heals us in the process.
2. Sometimes our legalism blinds us from God's power and even steals our joy.
3. What is your lesson for today?

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