

Gospel of John (lesson 14)

John 5:1-16

1 Some time 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.

This account of healing is an interesting portion of scripture that only appears in the Gospel of John.

[and they waited for the moving of the waters. 4 From 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 they had.]

The section of scripture in brackets is not in all manuscripts. This pool was probably spring fed and subject to bubbling or stirring from an irregular flow of water. The pool was used for ceremonial washing before going to the temple. The porches provided shade to those who were waiting to go in.

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?”

Jesus always started a dialogue with the person in need, to ask them what they want. This is so they know that Jesus is the one that healed them and that it was not a random occurrence. Also, Jesus will give you only what you ask for.

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.”

You can feel the desperation in the man's words.

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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.

Jesus gives the command and the man was miraculously healed. After 38 years his muscles would be atrophied, but immediately he was not only healed but strengthened.

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

11 But he replied, “The man who made me well said to me, ‘Pick up your mat and walk.’ ”

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

They didn't ask about the healing, they were concerned about the violation of the law.

13 The man who was healed had no idea who it was, for Jesus had slipped away into the crowd that was there.

14 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 Jewish leaders that it was Jesus who had made him well.

16 So, because Jesus was doing these things on the Sabbath, the Jewish leaders began to persecute him [and sought to kill him].

No good deed goes unpunished.