

Series: Life to the Full; *Sermon:* **The Pool of Bethesda**

Delivered by: **Dr. Josh Moody**, senior pastor; *Date:* **January 7, 2018**

Bible text explored: John 5:1–18

¹After this there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

²Now there is in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate a pool, in Aramaic called Bethesda, which has five roofed colonnades. ³In these lay a multitude of invalids—blind, lame, and paralyzed^[a]. ⁵One man was there who had been an invalid for thirty-eight years. ⁶When 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?” ⁷The sick man answered him, “Sir, I have no one to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up, and while I am going another steps down before me.” ⁸Jesus said to him, “Get up, take up your bed, and walk.” ⁹And at once the man was healed, and he took up his bed and walked.

Now that day was the Sabbath. ¹⁰So 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.” ¹¹But he answered them, “The man who healed me, that man said to me, ‘Take up your bed, and walk.’” ¹²They asked him, “Who is the man who said to you, ‘Take up your bed and walk’?” ¹³Now the man who had been healed did not know who it was, for Jesus had withdrawn, as there was a crowd in the place. ¹⁴Afterward Jesus found him in the temple and said to him, “See, you are well! Sin no more, that nothing worse may happen to you.” ¹⁵The man went away and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had healed him. ¹⁶And this was why the Jews were persecuting Jesus, because he was doing these things on the Sabbath. ¹⁷But Jesus answered them, “My Father is working until now, and I am working.”

¹⁸This 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. [ESV]

^[a]*Some manuscripts insert, wholly or in part:* waiting for the moving of the water; ⁴for an angel of the Lord went down at certain seasons into the pool, and stirred the water: who-ever stepped in first after the stirring of the water was healed of whatever disease he had.

Review and application:

1. What potential for a miraculous cure (vv. 2-3) attracted crowds of sick people to the pool of Bethesda and its pavilions? (See also v. 4 in the footnote, which, although judged a copyist’s addition to the original text, explains the pool’s reputation.)

2. Why (vv. 5-6) do you think Jesus singled out this hopeless-case individual for healing?

Do we see others with loving compassion as Jesus and the early Christians did?

3. What (v 7) did Jesus’ diagnostic question reveal about the invalid’s focus on a mystical solution to his malady?

Can you think of contemporary “Brave New World” parallels sought by those who believe in some higher power or force but are not religious?

4. Was Jesus healing miracle (vv. 8-9a) based on the man’s faith in Jesus as the Messiah?

What was the only requirement?

5. What does Jesus’ subsequent interaction with the healed man (vv. 14-15) suggest . . .
. . . about character faults behind his physical suffering?
. . . about his gratitude and/or loyalty to his Healer?

6. How did their obsession with rule-keeping (*vv. 9b-13*) cause the religious leaders to overlook a miraculous wonder and concentrate on a Sabbath-breaking “crime”?
How have evangelical Christians been liberated from some legalistic standards maintained by their forebears?
Do you see instances in which the pendulum has swung too far?
7. How did Jesus respond (*vv. 16-17*) to the Jewish leaders’ harassment of him for not adhering to their Sabbath-keeping rules?
Could the rabbis refute his claims about God always working?
(Think, for instance about births and deaths: God giving and taking life.)
8. So what (*v. 18*) was the only objection left for the religious leaders?

