

Week of May 26, 2019

John 5:1-9

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

² Now in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate there is a pool, called in Hebrew Beth-zatha, which has five porticoes.

³ In these lay many invalids-- blind, lame, and paralyzed.

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⁵ One man was there who had been ill for thirty-eight years.

⁶ When Jesus saw him lying there and knew that he had been there a long time, he said to him, "Do you want to be made well?"

⁷ The 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 making my way, someone else steps down ahead of me."

⁸ Jesus said to him, "Stand up, take your mat and walk."

⁹ At once the man was made well, and he took up his mat and began to walk. Now that day was a sabbath.

Notes:

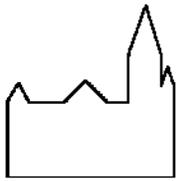
1. The key is that after the Gospel of John was originally written, about one and one-half verses were added to explain the tradition of this pool with magical curative powers. Using the NKJV translation, the end of verse 3 plus verse 4 reads:

³ In these lay many invalids-- blind, lame, and paralyzed ***waiting for the moving of the water.***

⁴ ***For an angel went down at a certain time into the pool and stirred up the water; then whoever stepped in first, after the stirring of the water, was made well of whatever disease he had.***

⁵ One man was there who had been ill for thirty-eight years.

The verses were removed for the sake of academic fidelity to the "original" version of the Gospel of John once earlier manuscripts were discovered that omitted them. However, without these verses the significance of other people stepping into the water ahead of the sick man cannot be understood.



Group Leader

Remember: you don't need to use all of the questions. Go with what works. Give people a chance to think before answering, but if a question falls flat, move on. Let the discussion go where it needs to go, as long as it remains centered around the lesson. Give the participants page 1. Use this page for yourself.

Gathering questions:

- A. What was something you once really wanted but were disappointed when you actually got it?
- B. At various points in your life, how did you answer the question: "what do you want to become?" For example, what was your answer when you were in first grade? High school? College? 30 years old?

Bible Study Questions:

- 1. Why do you think some of the details were included, such as saying that the pool had five porticoes or that the man had been ill for 38 years?
- 2. Why do you think Jesus spoke to this particular man?
- 3. Why do you think there was no particular act of faith or sign of faith in order for this man to be healed?
- 4. What do you think the man is *feeling* as Jesus asks him "Do you want to be made well?" Why do you think the man answers Jesus as he does?
- 5. What false goals have you chased in your life? How did you come to realize they were false goals?
- 6. Do you think one can tell if one is on the right path or pursuing a Godly goal? If so, what would the signs be?
- 7. Is there a situation in your life right now where you are unsure whether the path you are taking has a chance of attaining your goal? What are steps you can take to discern whether you are on the right path for you?

Closing prayer: particularly invite prayers about life goals or escaping unwinnable situations.