

# Bible Heroes

Healing  
by the pool

Teachers  
Story notes



Essential Teachers notes:

Bethesda was a pool with five colonnades, four to surround it and one through the centre. It's safe to assume the man having been there so long would have held a social position as well as a 'better' spot for observing the crowds that passed through. While the healing can be overshadowed by the breaking of Sabbath rules and the leaders to persecution I'd deliberately not gone in that direction. Equally I've shied away from Jesus' inference that his illness was caused by his sin. Rather than dwell on the surrounding elements this story focuses on the healing itself and the desire or 'want' the un-named hero has for being well.

Main Passage : John 5:1-14

It was Sunday morning and our hero was laying down on his mat in the shade of a column near the water. Around him were lots and lots of other ill people, just like him. Some people were chatting, others stared into the deep cool liquid hoping that they may see something move. They were all waiting for the water to move, every single person there, the blind, the lame, the sick. Because this pool of water was called Bethesda and people believed an invisible angel would come and stir the waters here. When the waters moved the first person to get in would be healed.

Our hero had watched many people go into that water. Some had watched for so long they believed it moved when it didn't. Some had been healed and others had not. Some days the waters didn't move at all and when the sun was going down his friend would come and ask if he wanted to be carried home. Sometimes our hero just stayed all night sleeping on his mat. For 38 years this had been his life. He knew everyone who waited around him, he had said goodbye to many friends who had given up waiting and celebrated with others. He knew fathers and mothers and sons who visited their families and everyone knew him.

There was always new people to meet, new people arriving or just coming to see the famous pool. Our hero didn't pay much attention to a scruffy crowd that came through this Sunday morning, they seemed to be gathered round one man. The crowd moved through noisily and then as they passed his mat the man stopped and crouched down to talk to him.

Our hero knew what to expect now. This man wanted to bring someone to the pool and wanted to know the best spot. People often asked him for advice because he'd been there so long. Or perhaps he wanted to know if the pool really healed? But the man didn't ask his either of those questions. instead he said;

"Do you want to get well?"

What a strange question thought our hero. He had been unable to use his legs for 38 years why wouldn't he want to be well? But then he realised that if he was well he wouldn't have his position by the pool. He wouldn't have his community of people. He wouldn't be important somewhere. But he would be able to walk, to walk, oh yes he wanted to be healed!

"Sir," he said to the strange man, "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."

The stranger smiled, he had heard the answer 'yes'.

"Get up then! Pick up your mat and walk!" he said

It was a simple sentence, as simple as asking for a drink, but those words changed everything for our hero. Because in that moment he felt his legs for the first time in years. It was almost like someone else was in control as he stood up and picked up his mat. He was standing, standing up all by himself with his mat in his hand. Everyone around him was silent staring at him and his legs. He was staring at his legs. He couldn't believe what just happened, those simple little words and he was no longer ill. Wobbling he looked round for the man who had healed him but the crowd was already almost gone.

It took him most of the morning and a run in with some Jewish leaders who were angry he was carrying his mat on the Sabbath but eventually he found the man, the man they called Jesus, the man who had made him well!

**Today's hero is the invalid by the pool because he shows us the gift of wanting.**