

The Signs in John's Gospel

Week 3: Jesus heals a man at the pool

WELCOME

Spend time relaxing and sharing together.

WORSHIP

Listen to an appropriate worship song or hymn or take some time to praise the Lord in some other way.

WORD

Read John 5.1-15

The Pool of Bethesda is in the northeast corner of Jerusalem, near the temple. In decades past, critics pointed to this passage as an example of historical error in the Bible. Since then, archaeologists have discovered a two-section pool near the Sheep Gate matching the description given in v2. The "five covered colonnades" were pillared areas to provide shade from the sun.

The pool was fed by a natural spring which would periodically bubble up. The pool wasn't just a place of healing for Jews there is evidence that pagans also regarded it as a place of healing. The popular belief was that when the water bubbled up, the first person in the water would be healed of whatever affliction they had.

1. Has anyone been to Jerusalem and seen the excavated Pool of Bethesda or other sights? Ask them to share what it meant to them to walk where Jesus walked? Otherwise, what do people think generally about the value of visiting the Holy Land.

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What is particularly notable about the man at the pool is that his need was a long-standing one – he had been paralysed, or unable to walk, for thirty-eight years.

2. Jesus' question in v6, "Do you want to get well?" seems a little strange. Why do you think Jesus asked this question?

3. As far as we can tell, what has the man been doing with his life? What does the man's response (v7) tell you about him?

Read John 5.28-29

4. How does Jesus' command to "get up! ..." (v8) give us a hint of what Jesus' new creation will look like?

5. After healing the man, why was it important to Jesus to find him and speak to him again?

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6. Jesus implied that the man had become paralysed because of his sin. However in John 9.1-3, Jesus insisted that sin was not the reason that the man was born (“Neither this man nor his parents sinned” said Jesus). What does that tell us about the relationship between sin and illness?

7. What do you particularly look forward to being healed or freed from in the new creation that Jesus brings?

WHAT NEXT?

How can we demonstrate God’s love to people who are suffering?

Prayer Ministry and Intercession

Ask if anyone would like to be prayed for.

Ask if there are situations that the group can pray for including longstanding issues?

For personal reflection

Take the time to reflect on where your life is going. Is your life purposeful or has it stagnated?

How might you respond to Jesus’ command to “Get up?”

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