



---

## GROWTH GROUP WINTER 2019 – ONE ON ONE WITH JESUS

### WEEK 3 – MARCH 24, 2019 - JOHN 5:1-15

#### GETTING TO KNOW ONE ANOTHER

- 1) When Jesus asks the man if he wants to be well, he says there is no one to help him get into the pool. What kind of obstacles or issues “get in the way or keep you” from getting closer to Jesus?

#### SETTING THE CONTEXT

We are told that Jesus had come to celebrate a religious festival in Jerusalem, but it is interesting that John focuses on the pool of Bethesda - a place where the sick and outcast are living. Jesus never looked to create a crowd around himself, but often seemed to find the places where the crowds would never go.

The pool of Bethesda was a well-known place of healing recognized by both Jews and pagans. It was just to the north of the Temple Mount area and at one point had been dedicated to the healing the god Asclepius. The water in the pool would bubble up occasionally and the first person into the water would supposedly be healed. Though many believed the stories about the pool, it appears as though most people were not healed when they got into the water.

The man in our story had been an invalid for 38 years. This is a long time to be sick and Jesus has a strong sense of compassion for him. He does for this man what the pool had never been able to do for him. And, just like our story from last week, with the healing of the royal official’s son, the only thing needed was Jesus’ word.

Jesus asked the man if he wanted to get well. The man responded - but it was not a yes or no. Instead, he talked about how he had no one to help him into the pool. We assume his answer would be yes, I want to get well, but he does not say that. Nonetheless, Jesus heals him. Jesus gives him three very simple orders. He is told to get up (this is the same word that is used regularly in the New Testament to describe resurrection), pick up his mat and walk.

A complication arises when the man starts carrying around his mat on the Sabbath. It appears as though Jesus was inviting the controversy by telling the man not only to walk, but to also carry his mat. Carrying things on the Sabbath was particularly prohibited (see Jeremiah 17:21 and Nehemiah 13:15). It is interesting that the religious leaders seem to be more concerned about who told the man to carry his mat than who healed him.



The healed man did not know who had healed him until Jesus found him at the temple. Though we are not sure what sin the man was still committing, it is obvious that he still had some work to do. Jesus reminds him of the grace that has saved him and calls him to live out the truth that Jesus represents.

## EXPLORING THE TEXT

### Read John 5:1-15

<sup>43</sup> Some time later, Jesus went up to Jerusalem for one of the Jewish festivals. <sup>2</sup> Now there is in Jerusalem near the Sheep Gate a pool, which in Aramaic is called Bethesda[a] and which is surrounded by five covered colonnades. <sup>3</sup> Here a great number of disabled people used to lie—the blind, the lame, the paralyzed. <sup>5</sup> One who was there had been an invalid for thirty-eight years. <sup>6</sup> 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?” <sup>7</sup> “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.” <sup>8</sup> Then Jesus said to him, “Get up! Pick up your mat and walk.” <sup>9</sup> At once the man was cured; he picked up his mat and walked. The day on which this took place was a Sabbath, <sup>10</sup> 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.” <sup>11</sup> But he replied, “The man who made me well said to me, ‘Pick up your mat and walk.’” <sup>12</sup> So they asked him, “Who is this fellow who told you to pick it up and walk?” <sup>13</sup> The man who was healed had no idea who it was, for Jesus had slipped away into the crowd that was there. <sup>14</sup> 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.” <sup>15</sup> The man went away and told the Jewish leaders that it was Jesus who had made him well.

- 2) If Jesus had gone up for the “festival” one would think John would write about that. Instead we read about Jesus going to the pool at Bethesda. What does this story teach us about the mission of Jesus? Why would John include this story?
3. As soon as the man was healed, he went to the temple (think church) to connect or reconnect with God. When something remarkable happens in your life do you find yourself seeking out God in order to connect or reconnect with Him?
4. The man who was healed didn’t recognize that Jesus was the one who healed him. Share a time from your life when God was at work in your life even though you did not recognize what He was doing.
5. We know that there were rules against carrying things on the Sabbath. (See Jeremiah 17:21 and Nehemiah 13:15). Why do you think those rules were created? What sort of purpose would they have had? Are there certain “rules or traditions” that the church of today still follows that seem antiquated to you?
6. Jesus tells the man to do three things. “Get up, pick up your mat and walk.” Jesus does not complicate things. Do you think that we sometimes make the faith too complicated? How does that happen?
7. Jesus ends with a warning to not return to sinful behavior. Why do you think we are prone to return to sinful behavior and what methods or practices have you found that are helpful in preventing this from happening?

## BRINGING IT HOME

- 8) Jesus asks the man, “Do you want to get well?” Is there a situation in your life or in someone else’s life who is close to you that needs to be healed or “made well.” Share about that and pray for each other.