Healing of a Man By a Pool



Scripture Reference: John 5:1-15

Suggested Theme: Jesus cares for hurting people and wants to heal them. Pray and care for others.

Memory Verse: “I asked the Lord for help, and he answered me. He saved me from all that I feared.” Psalm 34:4, ICB

Story Overview:

Disabled people gathered around the Pool of Bethesda because the water was said to help heal those with physical problems. One of these was a man who had lived with a disability for 38 years. He could not even get to the water and had lost all hope. Jesus told him to pick up his mat and walk. That is precisely what the man did!

Background Study:

Today’s story takes place during a Jewish feast. The Bible does not say which feast that was. The three main festivals requiring Jewish men to travel to Jerusalem were Passover, Pentecost and Tabernacles. It was quite possibly one of these three.

A big wall with many gates surrounded the city of Jerusalem. The gate by which Jesus entered was called the “sheep gate” because it was the gate where sheep were washed for sacrifice at the temple.

There are a few pools around Jerusalem even today. The Pool of Bethesda is believed to be one discovered deep below the level of present-day Jerusalem. It has five “porches.”

Stairways at the corner of the pool allowed people to walk into the water. Underground springs probably fed the pool intermittently.

In the days of Jesus, some people believed a superstition that an angel stirred the water. They thought the first person to get into the stirred water would be healed. Some versions of the bible, including the New International Version, leave John 5:4 out. That is because this verse is believed to have been inserted by a later copyist to explain the belief about the healing powers of the water.

> “Sometimes an angel of the Lord came down to the pool and stirred up the water. After the angel did this, the first person to go into the pool was healed from any sickness he had.” John 5:4, ICB

The belief that the water had healing properties explains why so many sick people were lying around this pool. It was a wait of desperation. Anyone who has experienced a long-term illness understands the openness to try many things to be well again.

©2011-2026 Mission Bible Class, used by permission. Not to be sold. Find more free lessons at https://missionbibleclass.org/

One of the men waiting at the pool was in a hopeless state. There could be a number of reasons why he was unable to walk, but certainly, after thirty-eight years, his legs would have been withered and useless. This man had been brought to the pool, but he knew that he could never get to the water in time if the water stirred. The implication is that he had given up trying.

This man must have had a shock when Jesus asked him if he *wanted* to be healed. He doesn't even say "yes." He just tells Jesus his story to make Jesus understand how helpless the situation was. But Jesus knew that real power did not lie in bubbling water. The power lies with God.

This miracle was instantaneous. There was no prayer or laying on of hands. No one had to send money to a television evangelist or stand in front of a crowd. Jesus just told him to get up and walk, and the man did so immediately.

How sad that the Jews were more concerned with the fact that the man was working on the Sabbath (carrying his mat) than with the fact that a miracle had been performed.

Bible Verses About Hope:

- Psalm 62:5-6
- Isaiah 40:31
- Romans 15:4
- Romans 15:13
- 1 Timothy 4:10

Way to Introduce the Story:

How many of you have ever seen a geyser? (Let them explain what happens) How many of you have ever been to natural hot pools? What makes the hot pools hot? (underground springs). "In today's story we are going to learn about a pool of water that people thought was very special."

The Story:

In the city of Jerusalem, there was a pool of water called "Bethesda." It was a beautiful pool with porches built around it so that people could sit and rest. Sometimes the water in the pool was very calm. But sometimes, the water would bubble up.

Many sick people liked to go to the Pool of Bethesda. Some were blind or paralysed. Others could not walk. They came to the pool and waited for the water to bubble up. People believed that if they touched the bubbly water before it stopped bubbling, then they would be made well.

One day, Jesus passed by the pool and saw one of the men lying down beside the pool all alone. He noticed that the man was very sad so he stopped to talk to him.

The man could not stand or walk because his legs did not work properly. He was sad because he had been unable to walk for thirty-eight years. Every time the water bubbled up, the man tried to get to it and touch it, but he could not. He was also sad because he had no friends to carry him to the pool. Jesus asked the man, "Do you want to get well?"

The man told Jesus that he really wanted to get better, but there was no one to carry him to the bubbly water. He was very sad. He thought that no one cared about his sadness.

But Jesus cared that the man was sad! He listened to the man, and then he said something very surprising: "Get up! Pick up your mat and walk."

©2011-2026 Mission Bible Class, used by permission. Not to be sold. Find more free lessons at https://missionbibleclass.org/

As soon as Jesus said this to the man, the man was cured. For the first time in thirty-eight years, he was able to stand up. He did just as Jesus said, picked up his mat, and walked.

People asked the man who had made him well. The man could not answer because he did not even know the name of the man who had healed him. The man was so excited that he had not noticed Jesus slipping back into the crowd.

Later, he saw Jesus at the temple, and Jesus told the man to always be good. He was so happy to see Jesus. He was glad to see the man who had made him well.

top

Ways to Tell the Story:

This story can be told using various methods. Always remain true to the facts found in the Bible, but help children connect to its meaning by using drama, visual aids, voice inflection or other group participation.

Be selective. Each teacher is unique, so only use the illustrations that best relate to how YOU tell the story in THIS lesson. Too many illustrations can be confusing, so eliminate any that cover other stories or details you do not wish to emphasise in this lesson.

Click here for visual aids and more storytelling methods.

View this slideshow and download it from the original source:
http://www.freebibleimages.org/illustrations/jesus-bethesda/

top

Review and Reflection Questions:

Review questions help children remember and know the facts of a story. Reflection questions encourage them to internalise the meaning and implications for their lives. Asking at least one of each type of question can help strengthen a child's spiritual development and help them connect to God. Click here to learn more about review and reflection questions.

Click here to learn more about review and reflection questions.

Review:

- What did the people at the pool believe about the water? (If they touched the water when it bubbled up, they would be healed)
- Why was the lame man lying alone beside the Pool of Bethesda? (He was waiting to touch the bubbly water and be healed)
- Why was the lame man beside the pool so sad? (He could not get to the bubbly water in time to be healed)
- Why could the lame man beside the pool unable to reach the water? (He had no one to help him get into the pool when the water started moving)
- What day of the week did Jesus meet the lame man? (The Sabbath day)
- What did Jesus say to the lame man beside the pool? ("Get up! Pick up your mat and walk.")
- What did the Pharisees tell the man when they saw him walking and holding his mat? (That it was against their law for him to carry his mat on the Sabbath day)
- Where did Jesus later see the man again? (At the Temple)

©2011-2026 Mission Bible Class, used by permission. Not to be sold. Find more free lessons at https://missionbibleclass.org/

- What did you learn about Jesus from this story?
- What did you learn about people from this story?

Reflection:

- What do you think the water looked like when it started moving or bubbling up?
- What do you think the man's mat looked like or felt like?
- How do you think Jesus felt when he saw the man who had been ill for 38 years?
- Why do you think Jesus asked the man, 'do you want to be made well?'
- How would you feel if you had been ill for 38 years?
- How do you think the man felt about finally being healed?
- If you were the man who was healed, what is the first thing you would've done after being healed?
- When have you felt hopeless or sad?
- Imagine someone is so sad that they are crying. Now imagine Jesus walking into the room and seeing them crying. What might Jesus do or say?

Prayer:

It is important to guide children in learning how to pray. In prayer, children can connect with God and learn that He hears and answers them. God can become a life-long friend who is with them every moment of their lives. Try using a variety of prayer methods from time to time so that the children can learn to connect with God in different ways. Note that you can pray at any time throughout your lesson. A variety of prayer methods are found here.

Song Suggestions:

- L-O-V-E Song
- One, Two, Three Jesus Loves Me Song
- Yes! Jesus Loves Me
- J-E-S-U-S Song
- Refer to the Song Page on this website for more song options.

top

Activities and Crafts:

- How to choose the best learning activities for my teaching situation.
- Visit the activities and songs pages for additional activities and crafts.

Activities:

- Use the public library or borrow a book with good pictures of Jerusalem during the early first century. Some are very good for showing the children the walls and temple layout.
- Use a dictionary to look up the word "hope" and talk about what we hope for. Compare the hopes we first think of with the kind of hope mentioned in the Bible.

©2011-2026 Mission Bible Class, used by permission. Not to be sold. Find more free lessons at https://missionbibleclass.org/

(Psalm 62:5-6; Isaiah 40:31; Romans 15:4; Romans 15:13; 1 Timothy 4:10)

- If you live in a place that experiences thermal activity, plan a trip to the springs, mineral pools or natural hot pools.
- To help understand the limitations of a man who could not walk, allow the children to try to do various activities without using their legs. They could try getting somewhere fast, rolling, handstands, crawling, etc.
- Tell a story about a time you were sad or went through a difficult situation. Explain how God helped you through. After you have shared, invite the children to share their own experiences.
- Send cards to encourage someone who is sad or needs hope.
- Find the Sheep Gate and the Pool of Bethesda on a map of Jerusalem.
- Use Alka-Seltzer tablets to make a pan of water bubbles as you tell the story.

Invite the children to respond to this story using the adaptable “God’s Story” printable reflection page. Free printables for this story.

Crafts:

- Make mats by weaving either paper, reeds, or flax.
- Create art using one of the Bible verses about hope, which is mentioned above. Choose methods that work for the children you are teaching.
- Print the verse on paper and then decorate a border around it using markers or crayons.
- The children can write the verse themselves and then decorate a border.
- Draw pictures or glue on items that illustrate the verse. This might be feathers for Isaiah 40:31 or a rock for Psalm 62:5-6.
- Simply allow the children to come up with their own ways to illustrate or decorate the verses.
- Remember that the conversations you are having with children as they are creating can be as much or more important than the artwork itself.

Print and use these free bookmarks, trading cards or timelines. Free printables for this story.

top

Other Online Resources:

- Colouring page and worksheets about the healing of the man by the pool (Calvary Curriculum)
- Illustrations and images of the Pool of Bethesda and its location in relation to the temple (generationword.com)
- Study: Article about the Pool of Bethesda from *Crosswalk*
- Study: Article about the history of the pool from Biblical Archaeology

©2011-2026 Mission Bible Class, used by permission. Not to be sold. Find more free lessons at https://missionbibleclass.org/

top

Date
2026/11/29

©2011-2026 Mission Bible Class, used by permission. Not to be sold. Find more free lessons at https://missionbibleclass.org/