

## The Sabbath Healing at the Pool of Bethesda

There was a healing tradition at a pool in Jerusalem. This pool called the Pool of Bethesda was near the Sheep Gate which was one of the entrances into the City of Jerusalem. The sheep for the temple sacrifices were brought into the city through this gate. It was at this location that people who were invalid use to come to be healed by the waters of the pool.

On a particular Sabbath Day there was a group of sick people waiting for the moving of the water and among them was a man lying near this pool waiting to get into the pool to be healed, he had been an invalid for 38 years. On this day Jesus was in Jerusalem for a Jewish feast and as he walked by the pool he saw this man waiting by the pool and Jesus learned that this man had been in this condition for a long time, Jesus asked the man, "Do you want to get well?"

"Sir." the invalid replied, I have no one to help me into the pool when the water is stirred. Then Jesus said to him, Get up! Pick up your mat and walk." At once the man was cured; he picked up his mat and walked. Later Jesus found this man at the temple and said to him, "See you are well again, stop sinning or something worse may happen to you." The man went away and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him well.

This healing was very upsetting to the Jews because it occurred on the Sabbath Day and they believed that the Old Testament Law forbid any work of any kind on the Sabbath and in their interpretation this healing and telling the man to carry his mat was a form of working. When the Jews questioned this man they didn't ask "Who healed you" but rather, "Who told you to carry your mat on the Sabbath?"

The Jewish religious authorities expressed their disapproval to Jesus and His response was that, because His Father in heaven continued to work, so did he. Then, for the first time in the Book of John the authorities began plotting the death of Jesus and not just for breaking the Sabbath laws, but also for claiming that God was his own Father, making himself equal with God.

1. Jesus identified himself to the invalid and told the man to stop sinning or something worse might happen to him. The eternal consequences of sin are far worse than temporal physical infirmities.
2. The Jewish religious leaders lived by the Law and did not recognized Jesus as the Messiah.
3. The sick people waiting by the pool were focused on their own needs. A group of people not coming together in unity in God, but free agents trusting in the water of the pool.
4. Notice that it wasn't the man's faith that healed him, and their isn't anything mentioned about a tradition of people having faith in God's Word, just the waters. Ordinarily faith in Jesus was essential to miraculous healing but Jesus sought to make his point with the Jewish leaders.

Jesus never acts as a free agent, but only does the will of the Father. (Are we free agents figuring out our own way in life or do we believe that God's Word teaches us how we are to live?)

Jesus life and actions builds up the faith of the disciples and others who are watching Him. (Do we build the faith in those who are around us by our actions and how we live?)

Jesus refutes the Jewish religious leaders who teach people to live by works alone. Jesus teaches to put our trust in "The Word." (Do we put our trust in man or Jesus?)

What are the waters that we turn to? (Is it money or education or do we turn to God's Word?)