

Is that in the Bible? | Brought to Life | The Man at the Pool of Bethesda

Scripture: John 5:1–15

Episode Clip: *The Chosen*, Season 2, Episode 4

Day 1 – Identify False Assumptions

READ: John 5:1–7

The man we meet in John 5 had been stuck for thirty-eight years — nearly four decades in the same condition, showing up at the same spot every day. You can imagine the desperation that man must have been in - fighting his condition for 38 years, wanting to believe this small body of water was his answer.

The Pool of Bethesda sat near the Sheep Gate in Jerusalem — the very entrance where lambs for temple sacrifice were brought in. In the first century, people believed the waters had healing power when they “stirred.” Verse 4 — the angel-stirring detail — doesn’t appear in the earliest manuscripts, likely added later to explain the local tradition but John’s original audience would’ve understood this superstition instantly. They also would have understood the mental and physical space this man mentally was in.

Ironic though - the Lamb of God (John 1:29)- Jesus, was standing right next to the Sheep Gate when he found this man ready to offer what the man was desiring most... and this man was still focused on the pool.

How often though - We fix our hope on something other than Jesus:

- *If I had more money, I’d be secure.*
- *If I got the job, I’d finally be happy.*
- *If this relationship worked out, I’d be fulfilled.*

A false attempt to find the answers to our trouble, suffering, lack of content. Each gap makes us stare at the “pool” instead of the Person.

And here’s the truth: your pool might be a legitimate good thing... but it can never give you what only the living Christ can.

Pause

Write down your “pool” — the thing you’ve been convinced must change before life can get better.

Journal

What false assumption have you been living under? How has it kept you from seeing Jesus as enough?

Day 2 – Ask Hard Questions

READ: John 5:6

Jesus asks the man: *“Do you want to be made well?”* It sounds obvious, even offensive. Of course he wants to be healed... right? But Jesus isn't just asking about his legs. The Greek word here, *hygiēs*, means whole, sound, restored in every way.

This is a bigger question than, “Do you want to walk?” It's, “Do you want a completely new life?” Because healing would mean leaving behind everything familiar — the rhythms, relationships, and even identity he'd had for almost forty years. Forty years.

In the chapter before, Jesus asked a Samaritan woman about her thirst — not just for water, but for the kind of life only He can give. Now He's asking this man about his desire for wholeness. In both cases, Jesus starts with the heart before addressing the body.

We have to ask ourselves the same question. Do we actually want to be made whole? Or have we learned to function well enough in our brokenness that change feels scarier than staying the same?

Pause

Sit quietly for 5 minutes. Ask Jesus honestly: *“Do I want to be made well?”* Pay attention to what comes up — excitement, fear, resistance — and talk to Him about it.

Journal

Where in your life have you adapted to what's broken? What would it cost you to step into wholeness?

Day 3 – Do Scary Things

READ: John 5:8–9

Jesus says: *“Get up! Pick up your mat and walk.”* The Greek verb for “get up” (*egeirō*) is the same word used for “raise” in resurrection passages! Meaning that in conversation about Jesus raising us from death to life, out of our sin. - He is speaking that same word over this man. This isn't just about standing - it's a foreshadowing of our resurrection life breaking into the present.

But think about what this man faced - muscles that hadn't worked for decades, a nervous system trained to expect failure, a brain conditioned to stay down. And beyond the physical, there was the social shock — moving from the margins, stepped and climbed over, perhaps spat upon or at the very least, ignored - into the flow of life in Jerusalem.

And yet, when Jesus commands, He also empowers. Ephesians 4:7 reminds us that grace is given “according to the measure of Christ's gift.” The same voice that called Lazarus from the tomb now calls this man to his feet.

That first movement — awkward, trembling, new — was an act of faith. Obedience often feels scary, because it calls us to leave behind the known for the unknown. But every step in Jesus' direction comes with His strength to do it.

Pause

Write down one “get up” step you sense God inviting you to take this week — in your faith, relationships, or habits. Break it into the smallest first step and do it today.

Journal

What fear is keeping you from taking that first step? How does this story challenge that fear?

Day 4 – Listen to the Right Voices

READ: John 5:9–10

No sooner is the man walking than the criticism comes: *“It’s the Sabbath; the law forbids you to carry your mat.”* In Jewish thought, only God worked on the Sabbath. By healing on the Sabbath, Jesus was claiming divine authority — something the religious leaders couldn’t accept.

But there’s more: Jesus told him to carry his mat for a reason. That mat reserved his spot by the pool. Carrying it was a public declaration: *I’m not coming back here.*

Theologians point out that in the ancient world, healed people needed to leave old environments to keep their healing. Surround yourself with the wrong voices, and you’ll be pulled back into the patterns that once defined you. Proverbs 13:20 says, *“Walk with the wise and become wise, for a companion of fools suffers harm.”*

The voices you listen to will either strengthen your walk or sabotage it. This man had to decide which voices would shape his future. So do we.

Pause

Write down the top five voices influencing you right now — friends, media, authors, mentors. Circle the ones drawing you closer to Jesus. Put a line through the ones pulling you away. Make one intentional shift toward the first group this week.

Journal

Which voices in your life align with God’s truth? Which ones are subtly pulling you back toward the “pool”?

Day 5 – Make Different Choices

READ: John 5:14

Later, Jesus finds the man in the temple — a restored man in a restored place — and says, *“See, you are well again. Stop sinning or something worse may happen to you.”* It’s not a threat. It’s a warning.

In the ancient world, sickness and morality were often linked in people's minds. Jesus isn't endorsing superstition here - He's pointing to reality: freedom can be lost if we drift back into the patterns that once bound us.

Galatians 5:1 puts it plainly: *"It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again."* The healing was an act of grace. The staying free would require a new way of living — new crew, new habits, new choices.

John calls this healing a "sign" — one of seven in his Gospel — each revealing something about Jesus' identity. This one shows us that He doesn't just raise the body; He calls the whole person into a new life. That life has to be guarded, nurtured, and lived out.

Pause

Identify one old pattern or temptation that could pull you back. Share it with someone who will pray for you and hold you accountable.

Journal

What's one new habit you can start this week to protect the freedom Jesus has given you? How will you remind yourself daily that He is your source?