



Thirty-eight Years Later

John 5:1-9

The impotent man answered him, Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool: but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me (John 5:7—KJV).

The sick man answered Him, “Sir, I have no man to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up, but while I am coming, another steps down before me” (John 5:7—NASB).

The sick man answered him, “Sir, I have no one to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up; and while I am making my way, someone else steps down ahead of me” (John 5:7—NRSV).

Imagine lying on a makeshift bed by a pool for thirty-eight years waiting to be healed. You are waiting for the water in the pool to be stirred by an angel, knowing that the first sick person to enter the pool will be healed, and for thirty-eight years someone has always beaten you to the water. Year after year you have seen sick people come and go after being made well, and you are still lying on a mat and becoming more hopeless. You have no member of your family and no friend to help you; they have all given up hope that the water will be stirred when they are with you. They have all gone back to their work and homes. Even though you have been there the longest, you have never had the other sick people at the pool agree that maybe they should wait their turn and let you go first. There was always someone in the crowd too selfish to delay his healing even for a moment. Friendless and hopeless, you can at least go to the pool to beg for enough handouts to meet your daily needs. Then, one day a stranger comes and asks you if you want to get well. You do not know He is the Friend of the friendless and the Healer of the helpless. How do you answer? He tells you, “Stand up, take your mat and walk.” He also gives you the power to do what He says. How do you feel?

Thinking Further

1. Why was the pool near the Sheep Gate used by the blind, the lame, the paralyzed, and others? How was it used?
2. Why did Jesus speak to and heal one of the people at the pool?
3. What did Jesus ask the man? Why do you think Jesus asked His question?
4. What did Jesus say to the man and what did the man do?
5. What did the royal official in John 4 have before Jesus healed his son that the man at the pool did not have?

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