

Would You Like To Get Well?

- **John 5:1-9 (LB)** Afterwards Jesus returned to Jerusalem for one of the Jewish religious holidays. [2] Inside the city, near the Sheep Gate, was Bethesda Pool, with five covered platforms or porches surrounding it. [3] Crowds of sick folks--lame, blind, or with paralyzed limbs--lay on the platforms (waiting for a certain movement of the water, [4] for an angel of the Lord came from time to time and disturbed the water, and the first person to step down into it afterwards was healed). [5] One of the men lying there had been sick for thirty-eight years. [6] When Jesus saw him and knew how long he had been ill, he asked him, "Would you like to get well?"
- St. Anne's Church in Jerusalem – deep excavation marking pool
- Hebrew name means “house of mercy” but also “the place of the two outpourings” (fed by water from two adjacent pools)
- At this time, Bethesda has obviously become somewhat of a healing shrine. But, before we criticize this primitive belief, remember that many people in our world today flock to very similar places. Some seem to receive help; sadly, most do not.
- Those lying around the pool symbolize humanity, absolutely helpless with crippling addictions, blinding ambitions, and paralyzing conditions. Although we try so hard to be self-sufficient, we are impotent – completely powerless – to change our inner lives under our own power. That's why we devour self-help books, and that's why these people flocked to a promised cure.
- The problem with Bethesda was that it seemed to work for some, but not for most. The FIRST person into the water was cured. That's the way it seems to work in life – there's always someone first and someone last, and that's why we so jealously guard our number one status in the human family.
- Into this atmosphere of frustration walks Jesus (the son of God!), and He heads directly to one of the most senior members of the Bethesda fraternity. His question cuts to the chase: “WOULD YOU LIKE TO GET WELL?”
- The answer seems so obvious, and yet consider this: The man had not asked Jesus for help, and a beggar of that day could lose a sometimes profitable and easy income if he were cured. He would have to lose his “victim mentality” and that's not always easy to do!
- Look at his answer – it's an EXCUSE! “I don't have anyone to put me in the pool!” For 38 years, I've been a victim of the carelessness, indifference and inefficiency of my family, my friends and even the church. They have all these special meetings where the waters are troubled, but it always seems like someone else gets the help! I'm just left sitting here while it happens all around me.
- JESUS KNOWS THAT THE MAN'S “FOCUS” IS PRECISELY THE PROBLEM! So He bypasses the man's excuse and offers him a solution. Imagine this man staring intently toward the waters of Bethesda while the Son of God stands beside him offering healing! “Get out of my way, Jesus – don't block my view of the pool!”
- DO YOU WANT TO BE WELL? There is no attempt by Jesus to judge the man's worthiness or even his faith level. Jesus just needs to know one thing – ARE YOU WILLING? But my condition is not my fault! That's not the issue – ARE YOU WILLING? But you don't know how long I've felt this way! That's not the issue – ARE YOU WILLING? But you don't know what I'm hiding! That's not the issue – ARE YOU WILLING?
- Jesus wants to give us wholeness, to make us what we were always meant to be, but we are such defensive, guilt-ridden, complicated people that we cannot respond easily to His simple offer.
- Jesus is still asking, “WOULD YOU LIKE TO GET WELL?” It's like the choice Moses gave to the people he had led for 40 years when he was on the verge of death ...
- **Deuteronomy 30:19 (KJV)** I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore **choose life**, that both thou and thy seed may live:
- Moses knew like we do that many, if not most, of our circumstances in life are chosen. We make unhealthy, unrewarding choices and then blame others for our situation! So, we can either consider ourselves the victims of the insensitivity of others, or we can just square our shoulders and make better choices! CHOICE IS THE ISSUE. CHOOSE LIFE BY CHOOSING GOD!
- The unspoken message in Jesus' question is that we sometimes must pay a price to be well. There are benefits to having an illness, an excuse. The man by the pool didn't have to work, and someone carried him around every day. He may have had other perks, but all of them paled in comparison to just becoming well!

- Carl Rogers, one of the most innovative psychologists in the last half of the twentieth century, said that he considers only one kind of counselee relatively hopeless: the person who blames other people for his or her problems. He claims that if you can take ownership of the mess you're in, there is hope for you and help available.
- Dr. Martin Seligman is the author of a book called "Learned Optimism." In it, this respected psychologist says that we all have in our hearts a YES or a NO. We respond to life either negatively or positively. Seligman's thesis is that we can learn to put a YES in our hearts and by doing so can change the course of our lives.
- This is the heart of what Jesus is asking: Do you want to be well? Do you want your marriage to work? Do you want to get over that bitterness? Do you want to walk away from the sin that binds you? Do you want to be saved?
- **2 Corinthians 1:19-20 (NCV)** The Son of God, Jesus Christ, that Silas and Timothy and I preached to you, was not yes and no. In Christ it has always been yes. [20] **The yes to all of God's promises is in Christ**, and through Christ we say yes to the glory of God.
- JESUS IS GOD'S "YES" FOR YOUR LIFE! And, just like the man at the pool, when Jesus gives a command, there is power in the command to fulfill the command. IT'S NO LONGER ABOUT YOUR POWER, BUT ABOUT HIS POWER! In the same way that He spoke the world into being (Genesis 1:3 - "Let there be light, and there was light"), Jesus' spoken words had the power to cure (John 1:3 - "All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made").
- WOULD YOU LIKE TO GET WELL? Would you like to be saved?