



The Pool of Bethesda

Lesson Overview

1. True or False?

How does healing take place?

2. Watch a Video

Watch John 5:1-47 at bit.ly/GCEDGospelOfJohn from **34min 14sec to 42min 34sec** (8min 20sec).

3. Discuss

Discuss John 5 the healing at Bethesda and choose whether to continue with Jesus' persecution and defense.

New Church Concept Bed

A bed signifies the doctrine which people get for themselves either from the Word or from their own intelligence, for in it their mind rests, and as it were sleeps. *Apocalypse Revealed* 137

People who are caught up in evil have think that evil is good. This is because evil delights their senses, especially the senses of sight and hearing, and consequently delights their thoughts and perceptions. Even though they may acknowledge that evil and good are opposites, still when they are caught up in evil, they are moved by the delight of it to say that evil is good, and good evil. See *Divine Love and Wisdom* 271

FaithBuilder 3 | Lesson 14 | Gospel of John

True or False?

When people are ill or injured there are many ways to help them regain health. What is it that actually makes healing happen?

- medications (e.g. painkillers, antibiotics)
- surgery (e.g. to physically fix an issue)
- prayer
- laying on of hands
- treatments bring relief; only the Lord heals

Watch a Video

Watch John 5:1-47, from *The Life of Jesus . Official Full HD Movie . English*, at bit.ly/GCEDGospelOfJohn. (Enter link in the web browser bar at the top of your screen.) **Start video at 34min 14sec. Watch until 42min 34sec; 8min 20sec.**

Note: This video segment includes the healing at the pool of Bethesda, and continues to show the Jewish officials' response to Jesus instructing the man to work on the Sabbath, breaking Jewish law. Choose whether to stop the video at 37min 55sec and focus on the miracle, *or* to continue and discover how Jesus defended himself from the accusations that resulted from the miracle in unique court-room style.

Discuss *The Pool at Bethesda*

Choose questions for discussion.

- The Lord knows what's in a person's heart (John 2:25). So why did He ask the man by the pool if he wanted to be made well?
- What does the man's excuse say about him?
- What does the Lord ask of us, in the Word?
- How do we respond when the Lord asks us if we want to be made well?
- The man was waiting at the pool for 38 years—probably most of his life! Like him, we might struggle to let go of bad attitudes and habits. Could this be because we want to get attention by pointing out ways in which others have hurt us? Is this a valid reason for hanging on to anger or upset? Are there any reasons for hanging on to anger or upset? If so, what are they?

6. How might using troubles and hardships to get attention make it harder to let go of bad habits and attitudes?
7. In the privacy of our own thoughts we experience selfishness as delightful. Getting our own way can make us feel important, or give us the feeling of having power over others. Why is evil delightful? How might enjoying evil actually make us freer to choose between loving ourselves and loving the Lord? If evil was not fun, would it tempt us—would we have to choose?
8. Like the man who gave the excuse that “nobody helped him,” we may also blame bad habits on others. Is it legitimate to blame others for our moods? Or are we responsible for our spiritual states, regardless of what others say and do?
9. The bed the man lay on pictures the beliefs his life rested on. We also have a mental “bed.” It is made from the ideas we learn that we make the basis of our beliefs. How does the Lord call us to “take up our bed and walk?”
10. The man immediately walked away—into the temple, perhaps to thank God for this miracle. How easy is it for us to change our habits if we decide to? Can we do it instantly?
11. When the Lord met the man in the temple He said, “See, you have been made well. Sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon you.” (John 2:14) This warning against going back to old habits is for us too. Why might going back to old bad habits make overcoming them harder?

Discuss Persecution and Defense

Choose questions for discussion.

1. When Jesus told the man to take up his bed he knowingly violated a Jewish law. Persecution by the Jewish leaders began immediately. How did Jesus defend himself? By arguing with the leaders? Or like a lawyer in a courtroom?
2. What did Jesus claim or reveal about Himself during the dialog?
3. How did Jesus use witnesses to support his claim?
4. Jesus accused the Jews of not having the love of God in them (John 5:42). What does this mean? How does a person have the love of God in them?
5. What kind of Messiah were the Jews expecting? A natural ruler who would restore the kingdom of Israel? Or spiritual leader?

No Work on the Sabbath

Thus says the Lord: “Take heed to yourselves, and bear no burden on the Sabbath day, nor bring it in by the gates of Jerusalem, nor carry a burden out of your houses on the Sabbath day, nor do any work, but hallow the Sabbath day as I have commanded your fathers.... But if you will not heed Me, if you refuse to keep the Sabbath holy, if on the Sabbath you carry a burden when entering the gates of Jerusalem, then I will kindle a fire in its gates, and it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem, and it shall not be quenched.” Jeremiah 17:21,27

New Church Concept Jesus’ Rejection

The cause for the Jews unbelief was their wish for Messiah who would exalt them to glory above all the nations in the world; also that they were wholly natural and not spiritual. *Apocalypse Explained* 815.5

The reason why the Jews rejected Jesus was that He taught them about a kingdom in heaven, not one on earth. For they wanted a Messiah who would make them superior to all peoples throughout the world, not one who would provide for their eternal salvation. See *True Christian Religion* 502

No Work on the Sabbath

What was represented by the requirement that they should not do any work on the Sabbath day means that they must not do anything that begins in themselves, only what begins in the Lord. For the angelic state in heaven is such that they do not will or do, they do not even think or utter, anything that begins in themselves or what is properly their own. This is what their being joined to the Lord consists in. Not doing anything that begins in themselves is meant when it says that they should not do their own will, nor do their own ways, nor find their own desire, nor speak their own words. This state existing with the angels is the heavenly state itself; and when they are in it they experience peace and rest. See *Arcana Coelestia* 8495.3