

Biblical Story Meets Our Story

John 5-1-9

Now in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate, there is a pool, called in Hebrew Bethzatha, which has five porticoes. In these lay many invalids—blind, lame, and paralyzed. One man was there who had been ill for thirty-eight years. When Jesus saw him lying there and knew that he had been there a long time, he said to him, “Do you want to be made well?” 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.” Jesus said to him, “Stand up, take up your mat and walk.” At once, the man was made well, and he took up his mat and began to walk.

1. Describe the sick man’s problem.
2. What are his emotional issues?
3. What are the spiritual issues?
4. Describe a personal life experience in which you felt some of the same feelings.

DISCUSSION

Issue: Desire to be well.

Did this man appear to want to be well? List on one side (left column) of a piece of paper all of the reasons you want to be well. List on the right column all of the reasons favoring keeping things just as they are. What new issues would you have to face if, indeed, you were well? Describe a time when you have not wanted to be well.

Issue: Hanging on to hope

How could this man keep hope alive for thirty-eight years? Describe a situation in your life when you kept hope alive for something that seemed to be out of reach?

Issue: Whose fault is it that he is not being healed?

What are the reasons this man gives for not being healed? Does he take any responsibility for his healing? Or does he depend entirely on others? Is there any blame? Anger? Describe a situation in your life when you felt that your well being was someone else's responsibility.

Issue: Access to health care.

Does this man have equal access to health care? Are others healed while he has to wait his turn (which never comes)? Describe a time when you have watched others being cared for while you waited. How did you feel? Have you ever struggled for access to health care? Have you ever felt excluded from health care? In what ways is it a challenge for you to access health care?

Issue: Does this man feel abandoned by God?

Can you describe a time when you have felt abandoned by God? Is illness or loss a punishment? Does this man think that God is punishing him for some reason? Describe a time when you have felt punished by God.

Issue: Describe any other spiritual matters when faced with illness or loss?
