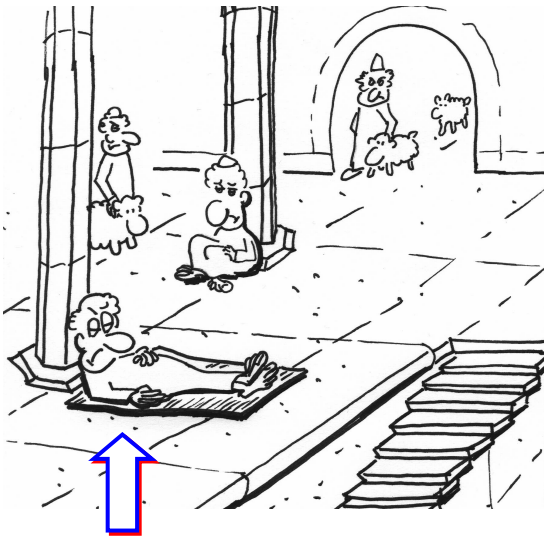


### The First Pool - Bethesda: House of Mercy

#### JOHN 5:1-9 NKJV

**VERSES 1-5** *“After this there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. {2} Now there is in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate a pool, which is called in Hebrew, Bethesda, having five porches. {3} In these lay a great multitude of sick people, blind, lame, paralyzed, waiting for the moving of the water. {4} For an angel went down at a certain time into the pool and stirred up the water; then whoever stepped in first, after the stirring of the water, was made well of whatever disease he had {5} Now a certain man was there who had an infirmity thirty-eight years.”*



“The traditional location of the pool is beneath the present site of the Church of Saint Anne, on the northwest corner of Jerusalem and near the gate by the sheep market. Excavations have shown that it was surrounded by a colonnade on all four sides and down the middle of the pool, making five "porches" in all.”\*

\* (New International Version - Expositor's Bible Commentary CD, Zondervan)

#### He had an infirmity thirty-eight years!

Multitudes waited at this pool for a supernatural event that only happened at certain times. An angel would appear and stir the waters. Whoever responded first to the appearance of the angel and the moving of the waters was healed. Among all these people, lay a sick man, who had not walked in thirty-eight years! He was in a state of hopelessness, lying at the side of the pool unable to help himself. It had been many years since he stopped believing he could ever be the first person into that pool. He was waiting, along with so many others, for something that was beyond his reach... and he knew it! He could never make it into the pool ahead of the others! All hope was lost.

**FAITH PRINCIPLE #1**

**Do not expect any change in your circumstances, as long as your circumstances control your expectations.**

**FAITH PRINCIPLE #2**

**Stop looking at what caused your hope to be lost. Change your focus. Start looking for God.**

The pool was 30 to 60 feet down. It could only be reached by walking down a long flight of steps. Sheep were carried down this steep, long stairway and were washed in the pool, then carried back up and taken to be sacrificed. Imagine how difficult that was!

There were anywhere from 300 to 3000 animals around this pool, depending on what was going on at the temple. It was a filthy pool! It was full of the dirt that had been washed off the sheep!

- It was a pool littered with sheep droppings and filth.
- Around the pool were sick, sad and hurting people.
- It was a pool of helplessness and despair.

**The beauty of God's mercy has a way of showing up in some very ugly places.**

When the angel arrived, and if you had the strength, you got up and went down those steps. Jump in first! Beat the other people into the pool and you will be healed. The pool demanded a selfish, incredible effort to get to the healing waters. It was the survival of the fittest. It was a pool representative of salvation by works.

**The Problem → Do not miss it when the angel comes!**  
**The Only Answer → Do your best to save yourself. Be first into the pool!**

You could not just roll off the edge or jump in, because it was fifty or sixty feet down into the water. The lame... the blind and paralyzed had to go down sixty feet of steps **and get there before anyone else! This is an impossible picture!** It may be a picture of some situation in your life.

**An Important Point of the Bethesda Pool Narrative that we find illustrated by the pool:**  
*Ephesians 2:8-9 NKJV*

*“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, {9} not of works, lest anyone should boast.”*

**FAITH PRINCIPLE #3**

It is not a miracle until it is beyond your reach or ability to make it happen. Only God is The Miracle Worker!

**FAITH PRINCIPLE #4**

What is beyond your reach or ability to make happen, is never beyond the reach of God!

*Mark 9:23  
NKJV*

*“Jesus said...  
“If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes.””*

**VERSES 5-7** *“When Jesus saw him lying there, and knew that he already had been in that condition a long time, He said to him, “Do you want to be made well?” {7} 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.””*

As the man lay in his familiar place on one of the five porches, amidst the smells and sounds of the animals being taken down to the pool to be washed, Jesus walked up to him. This man, sick and unable to walk for so long, was receiving his divine visitation. His miracle was on the way.



**Did he want to be made well?**

**Was he resigned to his situation?**

**Had he become comfortable in his discomfort?**



**Was he full of self-pity?**

**Was he full of hopelessness?**

**Was what he said an excuse, or simply a cry of frustration?**

We do not know the answers to all these questions. The Bible is silent about what he was thinking or feeling. Only God knows that! Nobody really knows what you are thinking or how you feel... but God!

**Notice Jesus went to the man and asked him,  
“Do you want to be made well?”**

## FIVE BARRIERS TO FAITH

(We find these illustrated in the man's response to Jesus.)

**1. Failure to acknowledge God or believe God will act on our behalf**

Like the man at the pool, we think, that it is not possible. We cannot be made well!

**2. Self-pity or other paralyzing and limiting emotions**

We think we are forsaken and forgotten. The man at the pool said, *"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."*

**3. A loser's mentality - which is limited thinking caused by what we see and surrender to (the natural conditions we find ourselves in)**

The man replied to Jesus that the conditions were not right for his healing. The water was not stirred up.

**4. Limitations we accept, caused by what we believe or do not believe.**

He believed that the pool was his only answer. He had not considered another option - the option of faith. His answer to Jesus revealed his thinking, which could be paraphrased as follows, *I do not have faith in what I cannot see or understand. I have no expectation of change.*

**5. Seeing and labeling ourselves as losers**

We identify ourselves by what we feel, or by what we believe the circumstances make us. We reject what the Word of God labels us to be - children of God and heirs to His promises!

The man at the pool of Bethesda must have been thinking, *This is not my fault. I am a victim of my circumstances and the selfishness of others. It is always someone else's fault. Someone always steps down into the pool before me.*

He answered Jesus with an excuse. If he ever had his focus set upon God, he had lost it. All he saw was his problem!

**FAITH PRINCIPLE #5**

Losing your focus on the Lord will fix your focus onto the problem.

**FAITH PRINCIPLE #6**

Focusing on the problem is surrender to the problem. It will cause you to regard yourself as captive! It will give the problem permission to conquer you and control your life.

**FAITH PRINCIPLES #5 & 6 are closely connected.**

**Bethesda = “House of Mercy - House of Kindness”**

**VERSES 8-9** *“Jesus said to him, “Rise, take up your bed and walk.” {9} And immediately the man was made well, took up his bed, and walked...”*

The man at the pool of Bethesda may have been without hope. He may have been disappointed too many times. He may have suffered for so long he could not even dream of a change in his circumstances. Jesus changed all of that in an instant.

*“Rise, take up your bed and walk.”*

It was not a suggestion. It was a command from the Most High!

**FAITH PRINCIPLE #7**

The Word of the Lord is fully dependable. It is always omnipotent and completely creative in its power.

**FAITH PRINCIPLE #8**

Faith sees beyond the problem. Faith sees God at work performing His promises, freeing you to reach your destiny.

*(Jeremiah 1:12 NKJV) “Then the LORD said to me, “You have seen well, for I am ready to perform My word.””*

When Jesus said, *“Rise, take up your bed and walk,”* It was not a suggestion! It was a command from the Most High! It was the Word of the Lord which demanded obedience, not just from the poor man, but from every affliction and attack upon his body and mind. There would be no alternative offered.

**God said it. That was the end of the matter!**

### **FAITH PRINCIPLE #9**

**A Word from God is to be obeyed without argument, excuse or regard for the circumstances or the apparent outcomes.**

Christ is the Lord of the universe and holds power over all natural law. He did not need to call an angel down to carry the man into the pool. Today, Jesus is still ready and able to perform His Word over us!

### **Miracles: Gifts of God’s Grace and Mercy (Always Creative and Often Unexpected)**



**Why did Jesus ask a man who could not walk to do the impossible - to stand up, pick up his bed and walk away from his place of long-term captivity and sorrow?**

- 1. It is in His nature. He is a loving and compassionate God.**  
He is our Good Shepherd. He will move mountains to reach you in the midst of your trouble!
- 2. He did it to show that the change in the paralyzed man’s circumstances would be entirely a sovereign act of God.**  
He showed His glory two thousand years ago so that you could know His glory today!
- 3. The people at the pool could never deny what they had seen.**  
They would know that when His Word goes forth, it commands all heaven and hell to line up and start marching. Even dead men march when Christ commands it!

*(John 11:40-44 NKJV) "Jesus said to her, "Did I not say to you that if you would believe you would see the glory of God?" {41} Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead man was lying. And Jesus lifted up His eyes and said, "Father, I thank You that You have heard Me. {42} And I know that You always hear Me, but because of the people who are standing by I said this, that they may believe that You sent Me." {43} Now when He had said these things, He cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth!" {44} And he who had died came out bound hand and foot with grave clothes, and his face was wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Loose him, and let him go.""*

#### **4. Can anything be too difficult for God?**

At Lazarus' tomb he commanded a dead man to walk, and he walked. At the Pool of Bethesda, He commanded the lame man, saying, *get up and do what you think you cannot do. If I tell you to do it, just do it! I AM that I Am. With Me all things are possible!* That man responded in faith. He instantly began to walk on feet that could not walk!

The crippled man's healing was unsolicited and unexpected. He did not ask for it and certainly did not expect it! Perhaps you are discouraged and not asking for, or expecting what you need. Perhaps you have been far too long in that condition. **If so, you are in a position to receive your miracle!**

#### **Your Miracle: It is Waiting on the Other Side of Your Obedience**

- There are times when you have to ask. (Mark 11:24, 25)
- There are times when you have to fast.
- There are times when you have to pray.
- And then there are times when you have to act - because God shows up and says, "Do it"!

Jesus could be saying, *"Get that bed of sorrows out of here and put it in the trash. You won't need it any more!"*

**He will move suddenly and unexpectedly. Anything can change. This could be one of those times.**

**FAITH PRINCIPLE #10**

**When God is in it, expect the unexpected.  
Your miracle is on the way!**

**Self-pity, sorrow, discouragement, fear and hopelessness  
have to fall into the pool. It is a new day! Christ is King!**

- **Take up your confidence and walk.**
- **Take up your hope, encourage yourself and walk.**
- **Take up your faith and walk in His grace.**

You may not expect it! You may not even like it! You may not deserve it! That is what grace and mercy is all about. Grace looks ahead to your future, not back to your past. **Your past is never qualified to determine your future.** God is a God of destiny! Trust in Him, arise, take up your bed and walk!

*(Zechariah 4:6b-7 NKJV) “Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,’ Says the LORD of hosts. {7} ‘Who are you, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel you shall become a plain! And he shall bring forth the capstone with shouts of “Grace, grace to it!””*

**Cry “grace” to your mountain and watch it go into the sea!**

**Review: TEN FAITH PRINCIPLES - From the First Pool: Bethesda**

1. **Do not expect any change in your circumstances, as long as your circumstances control your expectations.**
2. **Stop looking at what caused your hope to be lost. Change your focus. Start looking for God.**
3. **It is not a miracle until it is beyond your reach or ability to make it happen. Only God is the Miracle Worker!**
4. **What is beyond your reach or ability to make happen, is never beyond the reach of God!**
5. **Losing your focus on the Lord will fix your focus on the problem.**
6. **Focusing on the problem is surrender to the problem. It will cause you to regard yourself as captive! It will give the problem permission to conquer you and control your life.**

7. The Word of the Lord is fully dependable. It is always omnipotent and completely creative in its power.
8. Faith sees beyond the problem. Faith sees God at work performing His promises, freeing you to reach your destiny.
9. A Word from God is to be obeyed without argument, excuse or regard for the circumstances or apparent outcomes.
10. When God is in it, expect the unexpected. Your miracle is on the way!



## The Second Pool - Siloam: Sent

This is likely the same pool as the Pool of Shiloah (Isaiah 8:6) which means, *“The waters which go softly.”*

### JOHN 9:1-12

**VERSES 1-3** *“Now as Jesus passed by, He saw a man who was blind from birth. {2} And His disciples asked Him, saying, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” {3} Jesus answered, “Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but that the works of God should be revealed in him.”*

#### The Disciples' Question

*“...who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?”*

**Why did they ask this question?**

**What was their theological basis for such a question?**

**What was Jesus response?**

**What was the theological lesson in what He said?**





From this exchange between the disciples and Jesus, what can we conclude was missing in them that would cause them to ask the question? **Answer: Compassion**

## The Light of the World

**VERSES 4-5** *“I must work the works of Him who sent Me while it is day; the night is coming when no one can work. {5} As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.”*

### The Miracle: A Process of Obedience... a Product of Grace

**VERSE 6-8** *“When He had said these things, He spat on the ground and made clay with the saliva; and He anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay. {7} And He said to him, “Go, wash in the pool of Siloam” (which is translated, Sent). So he went and washed, and came back seeing.”*

*{8} Therefore the neighbors and those who previously had seen that he was blind said, “Is not this he who sat and begged?” {9} Some said, “This is he.” Others said, “He is like him.” He said, “I am he.” {10} Therefore they said to him, “How were your eyes opened?” {11} He answered and said, “A Man called Jesus made clay and anointed my eyes and said to me, ‘Go to the pool of Siloam and wash.’ So I went and washed, and I received sight.” {12} Then they said to him, “Where is He?” He said, “I do not know.””*

### **VERSE 25**

*“...One thing I know: that though I was blind, now I see.”*

*Amazing grace, how sweet the sound,  
that saved a wretch like me.  
I once was lost and now I'm found.  
I was blind and now I see.”*

*Praise God!*