

"Do You Want to Get Well?"

JOHN 5:1-15

Thirty-eight years. That's how long the man lay by the Pool of Bethesda, waiting for a miracle that never seemed to arrive. When Jesus found him there and asked the most searching question imaginable — *"Do you want to get well?"* — the man answered with an excuse. Sound familiar? Jesus isn't asking whether you're suffering. He's asking whether you're willing to leave the pool behind. Thinking about change is not the same as change. Jesus offers forgiveness and freedom, but we must leave the old life behind.

1

The Pool Becomes Our Identity

When we're stuck long enough, our struggles stop feeling like problems and start feeling like home. The pool can be a job, a relationship, a habit, or a comfort zone — anything that keeps us anchored in place while God calls us forward. The man had been sick for 38 years. After that long, the mat becomes familiar. The routine becomes identity. And the idea of walking can actually feel more frightening than staying put.

2

Jesus Asks the Hard Question (v. 6)

This isn't a cruel question — it's mercy. Jesus knew exactly what healing would cost this man (and what it would eventually cost Himself). We often respond to God's invitation with a list of reasons why healing hasn't happened yet. But God is not looking for our explanations. He is looking for our obedience. The next time you find yourself offering God an excuse, ask yourself: am I answering the question He actually asked?

3

Stand Up, Pick Up Your Mat, Walk (v. 8)

Jesus requires effort, not just emotion. "Pick up your mat" means no fallback plan — don't leave the old life in a place where you can return to it. Healing is not an add-on to your current life. It is a replacement. Jesus doesn't renovate the old structure; He builds something entirely new. Leaving the mat behind is an act of faith that says: *I will not be defined by what once held me down.*

4

The Old Is Gone, the New Has Come

Second Corinthians 5:17 tells us that in Christ, the old has passed and the new has come. God doesn't patch up your old life with spiritual band-aids. He replaces it. And healing comes with clear direction — Jesus' final word to this man was "stop sinning" (v. 14). Freedom from a destructive habit always requires giving up what comes with it: the comfort, the community, the identity it provided. New life is not just subtraction — it is transformation.

Where Are You Right Now?

Before we leave this passage, sit with these three questions honestly. They are not meant to condemn — they are meant to locate you, so that Jesus can meet you exactly where you are.

Where is your pool?

Is it a place, a relationship, a habit, or an excuse you keep returning to? Name it. Don't let it stay vague — vagueness protects the pool.

What's keeping you there?

Fear of the unknown? The comfort of familiarity? Pride that won't ask for help? Ego that won't admit the need? Be honest. Jesus already knows the answer.

What do you need to do today?

Delete the contact. Throw away the bottle. Break off the relationship. Get accountable to someone you trust. One concrete step. Today — not someday.

"Don't leave a bed waiting. Pick up your mat and walk away from the pool — for good."

The Invitation

Jesus is not standing over you with disappointment. He is standing over you with the same question He asked that man by the water: *Do you want to get well?* The answer He's waiting for is not a list of obstacles. It's a single, courageous, faith-filled word: **Yes**. That yes changes everything. It always has.

A Prayer to Take Home

Lord, show me where I've made a home out of my struggle. Give me the courage to say yes to healing even when it costs me something familiar. Help me pick up my mat today — and not look back. I trust that what You are calling me toward is better than anything I am leaving behind. Amen.