

# Bible Studies for Life: March 12

*Jesus Restored My Life • John 5:2-11, 19-21*

*By Laura Lee Leathers*



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The notation was the day I stood at the Pool of Bethesda, located near St. Anne's Church in Jerusalem. I envisioned people young and old with infirmities gathered around the pool. What was it like to wait, hoping to be the next person healed?

Our study this week begins with Jesus going to Jerusalem. "A feast of the Jews" is being observed, bringing many people and religious leaders into the city. John doesn't give us the feast's name because the "main purpose of going was not to maintain a religious tradition but to heal a man and use the miracle as the basis for a message to the people" (Be Alive Commentary, Warren Wiersbe).

**I was desperate for help that no one could provide (John 5:2-7 NKJV).** One man, among many people, is waiting by the Sheep Gate, the Bethesda pool. In the CSB and NIV versions, verses 3b and four are not printed because it lacks strong textual support. Wiersbe points out that if these verses are omitted, verse seven makes little sense.

Who were these people? Note it was a multitude, not a few. The individuals were sick, blind, lame, and paralyzed. All were waiting for the waters to be stirred up at a specific time and trying to be the first to step in. Whoever was first was healed.

In verse five, we are introduced to “a certain man who had an infirmity thirty-eight years.” Notice the text does not say he was at the pool for that number of years but on that day, he was there and waiting. Jesus saw him. Furthermore, Jesus knew he had been in that condition for a long time.

Jesus initiates a conversation with the man by asking, “Do you want to be made well?” The man shares his predicament; no one will help him and therefore someone else always manages to get into the pool before him.

**Jesus met my need in a far greater way than I ever expected (John 5:8-11).** Jesus responded with three directives: “Rise, take up your bed, and walk.” Immediately, the man was healed and obeyed without any excuses. No longer would he need to return to the pool. Taking his mat indicates permanence regarding his healing.

We read nothing regarding the man’s gratitude for the miraculous occurrence, but the Jews noticed. They approached the man and wanted to know who had cured him. Were they rejoicing over the man’s healing? No! They were upset because it was the Sabbath and he shouldn’t have been carrying his mat.

The next question was, “Who is the Man?” The healed man didn’t know it was Jesus until later when Jesus found him in the temple. Then Jesus said, “Sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon you,” referring to suffering eternal judgment.

The man returned to the Jews to tell them it was Jesus. Why? We don’t know and can only speculate. Maybe he wanted to give credit to whom it was due. Was he afraid of the Jews? Did he

want to shift the blame for carrying his bed on the Sabbath to Jesus because He told him to do so?

**Jesus was pleased to give me life (John 5:19-21).** Don't skip over verses 16-18. The Jews were ready to persecute Jesus because He had healed on the Sabbath but when Jesus told them, "My Father has been working until now, and I have been working," Jesus equated Himself with God.

The entire situation went from the Jews' accusation of Jesus breaking a man-made Sabbath law to alleging He had committed blasphemy. Jesus, speaking boldly, tells the Jews that He could do nothing apart from His Father and then in verse 21 proclaims, "even so the Son gives life to whom He will." Note all the things the Father does and what He shows in the Son.

The "official" persecution has begun.

Have you ever been desperate for help that only Jesus can provide? How have you seen Jesus meet that need? Do you then praise the Father for giving His Son that you might have eternal life and have life more abundantly?

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