

Time Audit Chronicles: Healing at the Pool of Bethesda

(John 5:1-18)

Prologue: A Miracle at the Pool

The Presswood family sat together, their eyes fixed on the pages of John 5:1-18, the story of Jesus healing a man who had been ill for 38 years at the Pool of Bethesda. The room was filled with a warm, comfortable glow from the lamp, and the scent of freshly brewed tea lingered in the air, while Ariel and Alice listened intently, their expressions shifting between wonder and curiosity. Ariel was deeply moved by the compassion and power Jesus demonstrated when He healed the man who had no one to help him. She thought about how lonely and hopeless the man must have felt, and how incredible it was that Jesus noticed him among so many others and chose to help him. Alice, with Mr. Fluffernutter in her arms, was pretending to be the paralyzed man, imagining herself being healed by Jesus with one simple word. "Get up, Mr. Fluffernutter!" she whispered, her eyes wide with excitement. She gently moved the bunny's arms and legs, making him 'stand up,' and then smiled with satisfaction, her imagination bringing the story to life.

"Daddy," Ariel asked, "Why was this man sick for so long—38 years? And why did Jesus heal him when there were so many others around?"

Ryan paused, reflecting on the deep lessons of this story. He thought about the importance of faith, the power of Jesus' word, and how this miracle showed that Jesus cared for those who were forgotten and overlooked. He wanted Ariel and Alice to understand that Jesus' miracles were not just about physical healing but about revealing His love and authority. "Great question, Ariel. The man had been sick for 38 years, and he was lying by the Pool of Bethesda, a place where people believed the water had healing powers. But this man had no one to help him get into the water when it was stirred. He had been waiting, unable to heal, for nearly four decades. When Jesus asked him if he wanted to be healed, He wasn't just asking about physical healing—He was asking about faith and trust. Jesus didn't heal everyone there, but He chose this man to show His compassion and to demonstrate His authority to heal, even on the Sabbath."

Ariel thought for a moment. "So, Jesus wasn't just healing for the sake of it—He was teaching everyone around Him about faith and His authority as the Son of God?"

"Exactly," Ryan said. "Jesus didn't heal for the sake of performance. Every miracle He performed was also an opportunity to reveal His divine authority, compassion, and His identity as the Son of God. Let's use the Time Audit Machine to go back and witness this powerful healing moment."

The Journey Begins: The Pool of Bethesda (John 5:1-3)

The Time Audit Machine hummed to life, its rhythmic vibrations filling the garage as a cascade of lights danced across its metallic surface. Ariel felt a sudden shift in temperature, as if stepping into the sunlit warmth of an ancient day. A faint hum of distant voices seemed to rise around them, mingling with the sound of shuffling sandals on stone. Alice gripped Mr. Fluffernutter tightly, her eyes widening as the air carried the distinct scent of damp stone and medicinal herbs. Ryan inhaled deeply, noticing the earthy aroma of Jerusalem as they arrived at the Pool of Bethesda.

The family found themselves standing beside the Pool of Bethesda, in the city of Jerusalem. The scene was both vivid and somber. The five colonnades surrounding the pool provided shaded areas where the sick and suffering gathered, their whispers and prayers creating a low, continuous murmur. The echoes of shuffling feet and the occasional cough added to the heavy atmosphere. The sharp tang of medicinal herbs carried by hopeful families mingled with the scent of damp stone. The oppressive heat of the day pressed down, beads of sweat forming on foreheads as the sun reflected off the water's surface. The crowd's despair was palpable, etched into the weary faces of those waiting, their eyes fixed on the still water as if willing it to stir."

Ariel looked around at the scene, her eyes wide with empathy. "There are so many people here—people who have been sick for a long time, just waiting for the water to be stirred." She imagined what it would feel like to be in the paralyzed man's position—unable to help oneself and feeling forgotten. "It must be so hard to wait like this, not knowing if you'll ever be healed," she added softly.

Alice tugged on Ryan's sleeve and pointed. "Daddy, why do some people look hopeful and others look so sad?"

Ryan glanced at the crowd, his face thoughtful. "That's a good question, Alice. For some, hope keeps them going, even after years of waiting. But for others, the long suffering has worn them down, making it hard to believe that healing is even possible."

Ariel nodded, her voice tinged with wonder. "Maybe that's why Jesus noticed the paralyzed man. He could see that even after all those years, part of him was still hoping." Her thoughts drifted to times when she had felt powerless, like when she struggled to solve a difficult problem at school or felt excluded during group activities. "But maybe that's why Jesus noticed him—because He knew how hard it was for him to keep hoping," she murmured, her voice tinged with wonder.

"Yes," Ryan said. "The Pool of Bethesda was a place where many came hoping for healing, but for the majority, healing never came. People had to wait for the angel to stir the water, but this man had no one to help him get in. He was stuck in a cycle of waiting, with no hope of healing on his own."

Ariel felt a sense of sympathy for the sick people at the pool. "It must have been hard for them to see others get healed and not be able to do anything to help themselves."

"That's right," Ryan said. "And the man we're about to meet had been in that condition for 38 years. He was physically and spiritually worn out, feeling helpless and alone."

Jesus Encounters the Paralyzed Man (John 5:5-7)

As the family watched, they saw Jesus approach a man who had been lying by the pool for many years. The man's frail body was thin and weak, his eyes weary from years of disappointment. Jesus' face was filled with compassion, and He knelt down to speak to the man, His voice gentle and kind. The man's condition was severe—he was unable to walk and had no one to help him. Jesus looked at him and asked, "Wilt thou be made whole?" (John 5:6). His eyes were steady, and His tone was both gentle and firm, as if He were offering not just a question, but an invitation to hope again. Ryan leaned in toward Ariel and Alice. "This question is so powerful because it's about more than physical healing. In asking, 'Wilt thou be made whole?' Jesus was addressing the man's faith and willingness to trust Him,

bypassing the rituals and superstitions tied to the pool. Healing wasn't in the water—it was in faith in Jesus Himself."

Ariel nodded, her empathy deepening. "It's like Jesus was giving him a chance to believe again, even after years of disappointment." She thought for a moment and added, "The man's response makes sense. He wasn't just explaining why he couldn't get into the pool—he was showing how much he felt forgotten and helpless."

Ryan smiled. "Exactly. His words reflect years of waiting and believing no one cared. But Jesus didn't need the water to heal him. By asking this question, Jesus was inviting him to shift his hope from superstition to the true source of healing—faith in Him."

Ariel watched closely, intrigued by Jesus' question. "Why did Jesus ask him if he wanted to be healed? Doesn't it seem obvious that the man wanted to be healed?"

"That's a great question," Ryan said. "Jesus knew the man's heart and situation, but He still asked, 'Wilt thou be made whole?' This question isn't just about physical healing—it's about the man's willingness to believe in Jesus and trust Him. Jesus was asking if the man was ready to receive healing in body and faith. Sometimes, we need to make a decision to step out in faith and believe that God can heal us or help us, even when it seems impossible."

Ariel thought about this. "So, Jesus was asking if the man was willing to trust Him—not just for the healing, but for the faith to receive it."

"Yes," Ryan said. "Sometimes, when we face long-term struggles or situations that feel hopeless, we need to be reminded that Jesus is the one who brings the healing we need. He's not just offering physical healing, but also spiritual renewal."

The Man's Response and Jesus' Command (John 5:7-8)

The man replied, "Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool: but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me." (John 5:7). He was explaining that he had no one to help him get into the water, and by the time he was able to move, others would beat him to the water.

But Jesus, full of compassion, gave a simple but powerful command: "Rise, take up thy bed, and walk." (John 5:8). The people around them gasped, some stepping back in surprise. The man looked stunned for a moment, then slowly began to move, his legs trembling as he pushed himself up. The murmurs of the crowd grew louder as they watched the impossible happen before their eyes.

Ariel watched in awe as the man immediately began to stand, his legs and body healed by Jesus' word. "Wait—did Jesus just tell him to get up and walk? Without even touching him or the water?!"

"Yes," Ryan said, his voice full of amazement. "Jesus didn't need to touch him or wait for the water to be stirred. Jesus is the source of healing. He doesn't need anything external to heal; all He needs is to speak, and His word is powerful enough to heal and transform."

Ariel marveled. "So, Jesus healed him just by speaking to him. The man didn't even have to wait for the water to be stirred!"

“That’s right,” Ryan said. “Jesus demonstrated that His power is greater than any ritual or external action. Jesus is the healing—He is the source of true life, and His authority to heal doesn’t depend on anything but His will.”

The Man Healed and the Religious Leaders’ Reactions (John 5:9-12)

The man, now healed, picked up his bed and walked. At first, his movements were hesitant, as if he couldn’t quite believe what was happening. His legs trembled as he pushed himself upright, his face a mix of disbelief and cautious hope. Then, as he stood tall for the first time in decades, his expression transformed into one of pure joy. Tears welled in his eyes as he took his first step, then another, each one more confident than the last. The murmurs of the crowd grew into gasps of amazement, and soon some began cheering. Others whispered doubts among themselves, their skepticism mingling with the overwhelming sense of awe.

Ariel clutched her father’s arm, a lump forming in her throat. "Daddy," she whispered, her voice thick with emotion, "this moment changes everything for him. He can walk—he can live a new life now." She blinked back tears, realizing just how life-changing this miracle was for the man.

Ryan nodded, his voice soft yet filled with conviction. "It’s more than just his legs being healed, Ariel. This is hope restored, a life renewed by Jesus’ word. It’s a reminder of what happens when Jesus enters our lives—He brings restoration in ways we can’t imagine."

Ariel was taken aback. "The religious leaders didn’t care that the man had been healed—only that he was carrying his bed on the Sabbath!" She shook her head, frustration clear in her voice. "They were so focused on their rules that they missed the miracle right in front of them. It must have been so frustrating for Jesus to see their hearts so closed."

"Yes," Ryan said, his tone thoughtful. "This is a perfect example of how legalism can overshadow compassion. The religious leaders were more concerned with enforcing Sabbath rules than celebrating the man’s restoration. They saw the healing as a threat to their authority, rather than as a sign of God’s love at work." He paused and looked at Ariel. "Unfortunately, human traditions sometimes obscure God’s intentions of love and grace."

Ariel’s brow furrowed as she processed this. "So, they cared more about their power and control than about the man who was healed? That’s so sad."

Ryan nodded. "It’s a reminder to us, too, Ariel. We need to focus on the heart of God’s law—love, compassion, and restoration—rather than getting caught up in rules that miss the point. Jesus showed us that true faith is about helping others and bringing them closer to God, not burdening them with unnecessary traditions."

"Yes," Ryan said. "Jesus came to show the true heart of God. The Sabbath was made for people, not people for the Sabbath. Jesus’ actions on the Sabbath revealed that His authority transcends human traditions and rituals."

Jesus Reveals His Authority: Equality with God (John 5:16-18)

As the man reported back to the Jewish leaders that it was Jesus who had healed him, the leaders became even more hostile toward Jesus. "Therefore did the Jews persecute Jesus, and sought to slay

him, because he had done these things on the sabbath.” (John 5:16). But Jesus responded by saying, “My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.” (John 5:17). Jesus was revealing that, just as God the Father worked on the Sabbath, so too He, as the Son of God, had the authority to work and heal.

Ariel gasped. “Jesus was saying that He was doing the same things as God! That’s why they wanted to kill Him—because He was claiming equality with God.”

“Yes,” Ryan said. “Jesus’ words were radical. By calling God His Father and saying that He was working just as the Father works, Jesus was declaring that He was the Son of God, with the same authority and power. This angered the Jewish leaders because they understood exactly what Jesus was claiming—equality with God. For them, this was blasphemy, but for us, it’s a powerful declaration of who Jesus truly is.”

Ariel thought about this. “So, Jesus was showing that He wasn’t just a healer—He was God’s Son, with the power to heal and the authority to interpret the law.”

“That’s right,” Ryan said. “Jesus came to show us that He is not just a teacher or prophet—He is God in the flesh, and He has the authority to heal, to forgive sins, and to fulfill God’s law.”

Reflection: Faith, Healing, and Jesus’ Authority

Back in the garage, the Time Audit Machine powered down, and the family sat in quiet reflection. The garage was dimly lit, the smell of motor oil mixing with the faint scent of old books. Ariel turned to her father, her eyes still wide with wonder, while Alice hugged Mr. Fluffernutter close, lost in her own thoughts. The contrast between the miraculous scene they had just witnessed and the familiar surroundings made the moment feel even more profound.

Ryan glanced at both girls and spoke gently. “Let’s take a moment to think about what this means for us. The man at the pool waited for 38 years, but Jesus saw him, knew his struggle, and restored him completely. How can we trust Jesus to work in our lives, even in the times we feel like we’re waiting?”

Ariel thought deeply before answering. “I think I can trust Jesus more when I’m worried about things, like my schoolwork or making friends. I want to pray more consistently, like asking Him for help instead of just worrying.”

Alice tilted her head, her arms wrapped around Mr. Fluffernutter. “I can help someone who feels left out, like the boy at church who doesn’t have anyone to sit with. That’s like making them feel better, right?”

Ryan smiled warmly. “Those are wonderful ways to live out faith. Trusting Jesus means believing that He’s working in every part of our lives, even when it doesn’t seem like it. Let’s make this our family challenge: to think of areas where we need to ‘rise, take up our bed, and walk’ in faith. Maybe it’s overcoming fear, doubt, or discouragement.”

Yaya, listening from her seat, added softly, “And remember, Jesus’ authority is not just about what He did in the past—it’s about how He works in us today. His healing might look different for each of us, but His love and presence are always with us.”

“Jesus really didn’t need to be there physically to heal the man,” Ariel said softly. “His word was enough. And He didn’t just heal him—He showed His authority as God’s Son.”

“Yes,” Ryan said. “Jesus demonstrated that He is not limited by space, time, or tradition. His power is greater than any ritual, and He came to bring healing, not just in body, but in spirit. He showed us that He has the authority to heal, to forgive, and to bring new life.”

Ariel smiled, feeling the weight of this truth. “So, faith in Jesus’ authority is what leads to true healing—physically, spiritually, and emotionally.”

“That’s right,” Ryan said. “And just like the man who was healed, we are all invited to trust in Jesus’ power and authority to bring healing and restoration to our lives.”

Takeaway: Jesus’ Authority to Heal and Restore

In John 5:1-18, Jesus heals a man who had been ill for 38 years, demonstrating His power to heal from a distance and His authority over physical and spiritual restoration. Jesus’ actions on the Sabbath show that His authority goes beyond human traditions and laws, and He declares that He is equal with God. The healing of the man is not just a physical miracle; it’s a sign of Jesus’ divine power and His ability to bring healing in all areas of life. Jesus shows that faith in His word and authority leads to true healing, and He calls us to trust in Him for complete restoration, body, mind, and spirit.

Interactive Reflections

1. How does Jesus' question, "Wilt thou be made whole?" speak to areas of your life where you may need healing or restoration?
2. Have you ever felt stuck or helpless like the man by the pool? How can trusting Jesus bring you hope?
3. Jesus healed the man with His word alone. What does this teach us about the power of Jesus' word in our lives today?
4. How can you show compassion to people who feel overlooked or forgotten, just as Jesus did?

Songs or Poetry

Children's Poem: "Rise and Walk"

*"By the Pool of Bethesda, so many in pain,
They waited for healing again and again.
Then Jesus spoke gently, His words full of grace,
'Rise, take your bed, walk at your pace.'

A miracle happened, the man stood tall,
Healed by the Savior, the Lord of all.
Trust in His power, His love so true,
Jesus brings healing to me and to you."*

Mr. Fluffernutter's Perspective

“Mr. Fluffernutter says waiting for healing at the Pool of Bethesda must have been hard, especially for someone who had no one to help. But he thinks Jesus’ words, ‘Rise, take up thy bed, and walk,’ must have felt like the happiest moment ever—like finding a whole garden of carrots just for you! What do you think it would feel like to hear Jesus speak such powerful words to you? Share your thoughts below!”

Ariel's Journal Reflection

"Today, I saw how Jesus healed a man who had been waiting for 38 years. What stood out to me was that Jesus noticed him when no one else seemed to care. I think sometimes we all feel overlooked or forgotten, but this story reminds me that Jesus sees us, even in a crowd. He doesn't just heal us physically—He helps us trust Him with the parts of our lives that feel broken or stuck. If Jesus could heal a man who had been sick for so long, I know He has the power to help me in my struggles, too."

Alice's Reflection with Mr. Fluffernutter

Alice sat on the carpet, placing her stuffed animals in a row beside Mr. Fluffernutter. "Fluffy, Jesus told the man to 'rise and walk,' and guess what? He really did!" She made her stuffed bunny hop excitedly. "Do you think Jesus could make me super strong too? Maybe I could help someone carry their backpack at school."

She picked up a toy lamb, pretending it was one of the sick people. "Fluffy, we can help by praying for people who feel sad or lonely. Let's be like Jesus and tell them they're not alone!" She hugged her bunny tight, grinning. "That's what love is, right, Fluffy?"

KJV Scripture

- **John 5:6:** *“When Jesus saw him lie, and knew that he had been now a long time in that case, he saith unto him, Wilt thou be made whole?”*
- **John 5:8:** *“Jesus saith unto him, Rise, take up thy bed, and walk.”*
- **John 5:17:** *“But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.”*