

## THE HEALING AT THE POOL OF BETHESDA

Final Week of a 5-Week Series, "Metaphysical Bible Storytime"

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So, it's the final night of our metaphysical Bible story time. And just to remind you too -- any of us ministers, licensed Unity teachers ... When we're looking at the metaphysical interpretation of one of these Bible stories -- or anything, really -- we use two resources. One is "The Revealing Word"; the other is the "Metaphysical Bible Dictionary, both compiled and written by Unity's co-founder, Charles Fillmore.

And so we really just sit with it. We take the whole story; we look mostly at the nouns, and we look at: what's the deeper meaning. And we kind of reread the story that way. And then -- "Ooh! Here's something juicy!" So, I'm really going to take us through the steps tonight.

In the past few stories that I've done with you all, I've said, "Here's the story, and this is what we get out of it." But I'm going to kind of take you through the steps with me this evening, because now you guys are pros. This is Week #5 of five, right? So, you're all pros with me.

Tonight we're covering the story in John Chapter 5: Verses 1-15, called "The Healing at the Pool of Bethesda." It's also referred to as "Jesus Heals on the Sabbath." And that's a really important point right there, too. So, it's a good one.

Now usually these stories are really long and complex and have that old languaging. And so, I often will put it in my own modern language for you to make it more fun, too, and memorable. But tonight it's so short and easy that I'm just going to read it straight from ... Are you all good with that? Okay. I could do it in a Valley Girl accent, but I'll just read it straight for you.

Now, just so you all know, too. So, this story takes place right after Jesus was in Galilee and he healed -- it's called "Healed the Official's Son." There was an official and he heals his son. And so, this is how this story begins. It says:

*After this ...*

Meaning the healing of the official's son ...

*... there was a festival of the Jews and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. Now, in Jerusalem, by the sheep gate, there is a pool called, in Hebrew, Bethesda, which has five porticos. In these lay many ill, blind, lame and paralyzed people. One man was there who had been ill for 38 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 ill man answered him, "Sir, I have no one to put me into the pool. And when the water is stirred up and while I make my way, someone else steps down ahead of me."*

*And Jesus said to him, "Stand up, take your mat, and walk." At once the man was made well, and he took up his mat and began to walk.*

*Now that day was a Sabbath, so the Jews said to the man who had been cured, "It is the Sabbath. It is not lawful for you to carry your mat."*

*But he answered them, "The man who made me well said to take up your mat and walk."*

*They asked him, "Who is this man who said to you, take it up and walk?"*

*Now, the man who had been healed did not know who it was, for Jesus had disappeared in the crowd that was there that day.*

*Later, Jesus found him in the temple and said to him, "See, you have been made well. Do not sin anymore so that nothing worse happens to you." The man went away and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him well.*

It's so good, everybody. This is a juicy one! I have been sitting with this one all week. Welcome to my self-diagnosis of what I need to work on. It's good! Let's dive in together, shall we?

**Sheep. The sheep gate.** Sheep. A couple weeks ago, I talked about sheep. What does sheep metaphysically represent? Our thoughts. Here we are at the sheep gate -- gatekeeping our thoughts.

**Five porticos.** When we ever see five, it's talking about the five senses, right? Our sense consciousness. I won't believe it unless I feel it, hear it, see it, touch it, taste it, right? Our five senses, our sense consciousness.

**The portico is a porch.** Lovely; has an arch usually. In other words, the porch. Where are you going to hang out? Which porch are you hanging out? The one of just sense consciousness, humanness?

And then it says, in these lay **blind, paralyzed, immobilized**. It's not saying in these lay people who are. It doesn't even mention people who are. In these lay blind, paralyzed, immobilized. Because we're talking about our thoughts. We're talking about our thoughts here. Thirty-eight years. It's a long time.

Now, some reference **38** to mean -- it goes that reference back to the Israelites leaving Egyptian slavery. That reference back to being in slavery. A slave to our own thoughts. Or, you know, this idea of, *"Well, no one can do it for me. No one's doing it for me."* Sometimes we get in, *"Like, I need someone to do it for me. Help me do it."* We become enslaved to our own limitations.

And then a **pool**. A pool. Here's what "The Revealing Word" say: It's the realization and consciousness that our life is being constantly purified, healed, and made new by the activity of our mind. The pool -- constantly purifying, healing ... but being made by the activity of our own minds. And so no one can heal you and your thoughts but you.

And then Jesus says, **"Pick up your mat and walk,"** meaning stop building your home of can'ts. Pick yourself up; move yourself into action.

And I always say it's important that we feel our feelings; we process them; we are honest with all the feelings and emotions that are going on. But we don't want to pitch a tent and live there. Or, in this case, we don't want to hang out on the negativity portico for 38 years. *"Pick up your mat and walk."*

It's like when my kids were little, right? *"I don't want to!"*

*"Pick it up and go!"* Right? *"Pick up your mat and walk!"* And he walks. And here's the importance of that. It's moving the energy. Because when we're stuck -- and paralyzed; feeling paralyzed -- that importance of moving -- to walk, to run, to dance, to shake your body, to sing.

**And the Sabbath.** The Sabbath is that day of prayer and worship, but it's also a rule. It's the rule that society says, *"You're supposed to be doing this. You're supposed to be doing this here on this day at this time or not doing this."* So, it's those rules that we've made in our own minds: *"I'm not allowed to be. I can never be. I can never have."* It's those personal rules, society rules, maybe family rules that we've placed upon ourselves that limit us.

And then when he asks, *"Who was this?"* Well, **Jesus had disappeared in the crowd**. So, we have those moments of -- had those moments -- when you feel like, *"Ooh, I'm my most divine self. I am really spiritual now. I've been doing this for a while. I feel very spiritual."* And then we feel lost again. And then we show up as our human selves, and our thoughts get lost and mixed up with that group thought, with that group mentality.

And then Jesus shows up and says, *“See, you're healed. Don't sin anymore.”* So, sin gets thrown around a lot in our culture. But here's the meaning of this ... and I put it on the screen so you can read along so you really hear what this is:

Sin: missing the mark; falling short of divine perfection. Our failure to express the attributes of Being -- life, love, intelligence, wisdom, and the other God qualities. In other words, don't miss the mark and forget your God qualities.

The man **telling others that Jesus made him well**. Again, here, this divine perfection -- demonstrated by Jesus, but inherent in all and within all of us -- made him whole. Christ consciousness made him whole.

That's our rough draft, everyone. So, here's our takeaway lessons:

One: Watch our thoughts. We can choose limitation or we can express attitudes/attributes of the divine. Don't believe everything you think, right? Constantly be cleaning the mind.

Two: If we want change, we need to act. We need to take action with our thoughts, but also physically. No one can do it with us. We need to take action.

And then the third lesson here: We limit our healings -- our dreams/what we want to manifest -- by our own rules. Again, whether it's our personal roles, family roles, cultural roles; *“I can't do that because I'm too old, I'm too smart, not smart enough; I'm this, I'm that.”* Right? We limit our own selves by these rules that we've placed on ourselves.

And this other reminder, then, that miracles -- your dreams -- can come true at any place, at any day, at any time. They're not limited to only on this day or this age.

So, let's dive deeper into, then, this first lesson we get from this story, which is to **WATCH OUR THOUGHTS**. I love this! The sheep gate. The thought gate. Here's what I've been doing all week, everyone. In my mind -- little gate. Gatekeeping my thoughts. What do I want to let in? What do I want to let out? Is that a thought I want to keep? Or is that a thought I want to cleanse and release?

We need to constantly decide which ones we're going to get up and walk to the pool and clean, have a new thought around. Which thoughts are helpful? Which ones are hurtful? Gatekeeping. Our own thought gates. If we don't gatekeep our thoughts, then they lay around in our minds and they keep us paralyzed, unhealthy, unable to move forward. There's a lot of negative self-talk that we have that keeps us unhealthy, unable to move forward, paralyzed in where we are.

So, what do we do when we have that negative self-talk? What do we do when we have those stories about ourselves that don't help us? Well, I used to always say -- and I would still say -- one thing: when you notice it ... First, it's about noticing, right? So as soon as you notice that negative self-talk or that negative story or belief you've been telling yourself, all of a sudden, just let a gigantic stop sign pop up. Just see a big red stop sign and stop the thought.

The other one that I've really been using a lot this week is: *“That's not helpful right now.”* I have a thought about myself: *“That's not helpful right now.”* This morning I thought, “Maybe I should get on the scale”: *“That's not helpful right now.”*

And I say that because it's funny. But I also say that because: Do you see then where I would have let a number dictate the rest of my day? I was at peace. I was happy. I got on that scale -- a number on a box - - where it dictated my whole name, my whole day: *“That's not helpful right now.”*

Hearing something that you say to yourself: *“Wow; that's a harsh thought. Would I say that to someone I love?”* That's a harsh thought. Would I say that to someone I love?

Or, again, when you hear yourself or any thoughts that are keeping you paralyzed from moving forward in what you want to do or be, you calmly say, *"I'm not engaging in this right now."* And then we change our thoughts. We cleanse them off. We step into the pool and we get a new thought.

We can also clean our thoughts by looking at, again, that spiritual truth. In Unity, we call this negations and affirmations. So, if the thought was, you know, *"I'm never going to heal; I'm just getting old and it's just not going to be."* You know, *"I'm going to heal slowly."*

Okay, well, first we have to negate that idea of those five senses: *"I deny that this is the truth about myself and my body."*

And then we affirm: *"As an expression of the divine -- as an expression of God -- I am strong and whole. I claim divine wisdom as my true nature and find ways that support my health."*

This is what Rev. Linda Martella-Whitsitt -- she was the director of science, one of our great Unity writers and teachers. She says, *"Following words of affirmation, exercise your divine power of imagination by envisioning what living that truth might look like. And then, of course, do it."*

So, we affirm; we imagine, really sit in that; and we take action. And it's that take action part that gets us out of laying around for 38 years in a limited, stuck mindset of abusive thoughts, abusive beliefs. We take action away from it.

### **We affirm, we imagine, we take action.**

And that's what Jesus did in this story. So, in Christ consciousness -- in our divine consciousness -- we already know the possibilities and spiritual truth of what is possible. So, he already saw that for that man. He asked the man, *"Do you want to be well?"* In other words, he's inviting the man to imagine himself well. And then he tells him to take action. He affirms, imagines, takes action.

There's this great account that I follow on Instagram. It's called *"My Easy Therapy."* But here's what she wrote: *"Science shows when you focus on the good, your brain literally rewires itself to look for more good."* That's the magic of neuroplasticity. When you focus on the good, your brain literally rewires itself to look for more good. You take up your mat and you walk in the direction of your good.

So, what is a limited thought that you have about yourself or a situation in your life? And as you recall that, just think: As an expression of the Divine, what is possible? What is the spiritual truth about you or that situation? How do you cleanse the old thought and shift to something that's more spiritually powerful and positive?

Make it realistic, but also don't limit it. Affirm the spiritual truth and imagine it. Or I probably, most of the time, would say: *"I imagine it; I feel it. This is really who and what I want to be and experience."* And then I affirm it and I take action on it. But don't let yourself be paralyzed in thought and belief. Clean your thoughts. And then take that one small first step toward the new thought or belief.

That leads to our second lesson here: **IF WE WANT CHANGE, WE HAVE TO TAKE ACTION.** Now, I've shared this before -- this saying -- but it gets the point across: *"Don't sit on your affirmations."* You can keep collecting thoughts of what you can't do on the porch of your mind, or you can take action to heal your thoughts -- and therefore heal your life -- by allowing new spiritually-focused thoughts/inspired ideas to sit in your mind. You have a choice. And then with those spiritually-inspired ideas, more ideas come on how you can move forward in a situation.

See, it's our higher self -- our Christ consciousness -- that we need to listen to that will move us forward in our healing and manifesting the lives we want. To listen to that inner wisdom -- that inner voice -- and then move. And then take the action on it.

So, many psychologists recommend to actually physically move our bodies to get inspiration, to get momentum. Again -- to move the energy.

We're energetic beings, right? So, just like the wind picks up the water and makes the waves, we need to move our own energy through that physical movement: again, to dance, to jump up and down, to do yoga or tai chi ... but to move your body; to move your mind and your spirit.

I noticed even -- because some of you know I hurt my knee recently, and so I wasn't able to do all the exercise I usually can. And, to me, exercise really is about my mental health. And I was starting to notice that, when I couldn't exercise as much, I was starting to get more of those negative thoughts that were coming in. *"So, okay: how can I work?"* I turn to that inner voice. *"What can I do? I know what I can't do. What can I still do?"* And I listen to that, and I get movement so that I can get the fresh air. I get my body moving.

Because, just like the man at the pool in this story, we can get stuck in, *"Why am I this way? Why is my life this way? Why don't good things happen to me? Or why doesn't this ...."* You know, this mindset of this old story that we get stuck in; whatever it is. It could even be, *"Well, no one's helping me,"* right? He says, *"No one's helping me."*

It can look like: *"Well, I set out my resume; you know, I sent it out, but I didn't get any calls back."* Well, did you follow up? Did you talk to other friends and network? Did you look at new opportunities?

It may sound like: *"Well, I'm just this way. I can't change at my age. I've just always been this way."* Okay, that's a limited belief about yourself. What if the opposite was true? What if you challenged that thought? And then that's taking mental action, right? As we change the thought, we're taking mental action. And then we move with it.

But no one can change our thoughts or change our lives for us. You may want to exercise more, but no one's coming over to exercise your body for us. Right? Only you can do that. You can want success in your career, but you have to do the work yourself. If we want a new home, if we want a new job -- anything we are desiring -- we need to do -- take those steps to take the action and do it for ourselves.

And sometimes it's fear that keeps us stuck. Right? Fear of change. *"What if I feel better?"* *"What if I get that dream job or dream relationship?"* Or it could be the fear of failing or of making a mistake.

Eckhart Tolle just posted this, and I thought it was so perfect for tonight's talk. Here it is on the screen for you: *"Any action is often better than no action, especially if you have been stuck in an unhappy situation for a long time. If it's a mistake, at least you learned something, in which case it's no longer a mistake. If you remain stuck, you learn nothing."*

The man at the pool stayed stuck for 38 years and learned nothing. It's not until he took action that he became healed.

And so often we forget ... It's just like that man lost sight of Jesus in the crowd, sometimes we lose sight of the fact that we have spiritual qualities within us; that God made us within us, God expression that we are. And so, instead of waiting for someone to rescue us, what if we turn to and tap into those same divine qualities that Jesus had? What if we tapped into our spiritual essence to move us forward in the healing of our body, mind and spirit?

No one can do it for us, whether that's changing a belief about ourselves or obtaining a goal that we've set. But the only true healing, the only way we truly heal ourselves is by remembering our divine being and taking action on it.

The third lesson here, everyone. Lastly: **WE LIMIT OUR HEALINGS – AND WHAT WE WANT TO MANIFEST OR THOSE DREAMS WE WANT TO ACCOMPLISH – BY PUTTING TOO MANY RULES ON OURSELVES.** Or following society's rules. “Well, who are you want that or to get that or to be successful?” Right? It's that five senses part of us that asks, “Who am I to walk in my Christness, my divine beingness? Who am I to embrace my spiritual essence?”

But who are you not to?

See, Jesus finds the man in the temple – temple: meaning our own inner temple. To turn within to that sacred place with us, that which is loving awareness, that soul part of us.

And Jesus says, “Do not sin anymore.” Again, so don't make the mistake of forgetting who you are. Do not have thoughts of separation, but of oneness: one Power, one Presence. All of us are part of that One. And it's these thoughts that can cause us to forget our Beingness. Don't make that mistake of forgetting who you truly are.

Remember what it said: “Sin is our failure to express the attributes of Being: of life, of love, of intelligence, of wisdom, of other God qualities.” It's reminding us not to forget to express that which we are -- that's inherent in every one of us.

And in this story, Jesus is telling us that if we embrace our wholeness -- if we embrace our God qualities - - then nothing worse will happen to us. In other words, keep embracing your innate qualities of loving kindness, of divine intelligence, of divine wisdom and discernment. That spiritual strength, together with that spiritual power of mastery -- we master our thoughts, which is to master really influencing who we are as vibrational energetic beings. Thoughts are vibrations.

So, what vibration or feeling Do you want to sit in? Do you want to marinate in? Which ones are you hanging out on the porch with? It can be the porch of limitation -- and “Only this which I can touch and see and feel is true” -- or it can be a porch of spiritual, divine Christ consciousness. But shifting it, shifting right now: How do you want to feel? What energy do you want to be in? That's where we place our focus. It's that shift from being paralyzed -- blind to spiritual truth about ourselves, our lives, those fears - - to being willing to wash away and let go of all that and embrace our divine essence. Don't limit the truth of who you are.

From this site, Let's Train the Brain, It says, “Your brain filters your entire life through the story you repeat most.” Your brain filters your entire life through the story you repeat most. So, is the story that you can't? “I can't get to the pool. I can't get in the pool. I can't heal.” Or is the story that you're telling yourself, you can? “I can heal. I can create miracles. I can express my divine qualities.” It's that healing that changes our consciousness. And it can happen at any day, at any time, and any moment. But we have the choice. Be the gatekeeper of your own thoughts. Focus on the spiritual truth.

Here's from another new account I just found with Penelope. It's on the screen: “People are not stuck in life. They are stuck in the story they keep repeating about their life. Most people don't have a life problem. They have a narrative problem. What if your life is not a story of victimhood, but a story about heroism?”

You can be the man at the pool retelling the story of victimhood, or you can gatekeep your thoughts and focus on Christ consciousness -- your divine consciousness. You can affirm being the hero of your own story. Watch our thoughts. Focus on the divine and affirm the truth and then take action. We have the opportunity every day and every moment to heal our mind, bodies and spirits.

Do you see why I was sitting with this all week, everyone? It's good!

This is our soul work for the week. This is the lessons that we receive from this Bible story, “The Healing at the Pool of Bethesda.”

Thank you so much for joining us on this five-week journey of these fantastic, powerful Bible stories. Blessings to you all. Thank you.

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