

How Will You Respond?

There are different views about the angel that “stirred up the water” of Bethesda; some skeptics dismiss it altogether. But, the critical issue in John 5 isn’t whether an angel actually stirred the water or the spring just bubbled at particular times to fuel overactive near-eastern superstitions. The point is that Jesus didn’t need the pool for the kind of miracles He was doing. So, when Jesus went to Jerusalem for “*a feast of the Jews*” and spied a man stricken with a debilitating disease, he asked him: “***Do you want to be made well?***” Now, what kind of question is that? Why would anyone *NOT* want to be made well? One would expect this question to produce a resounding response of “***YES, DEFINITELY, YOU BET’CHA!***” But, what do we read? Excuses! “*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*” (v. 7). For thirty-eight years, this man didn’t seem to be able to change his situation. Something always came between him and his goal.

All Christians cater to the efficiency of excuses on occasion, particularly when failure after failure beats one down; it wears on a soul’s spiritual commitment. And, yet, God speaks to us everyday through His Word, encouraging us to hold fast (Hebrews 3:6), to be patient (James 5:8), and be steadfast (1 Corinthians 15:58); “*for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not*” (Galatians 6:9). In order to maintain this “stick-to-it” attitude, we must keep our focus on the power of Jesus; everything else is just a distraction. After a long battle as a paralytic, this man was made well; now, there were no more excuses.

No matter how long you have been struggling to live the Christian life, no matter what stands between you and faithfulness, no matter how discouraged you might become, there are no excuses sufficient to stifle the power of God. This same question is just as valid today; wringing our hands with a sky-is-falling frustration and bowing to defeat is unacceptable. When one submits to the Great Physician through His inspired word, one can change (Romans 12:1-2), become whole again (John 5:14) and enjoy the abundant life Jesus promised (John 10:10). There are no acceptable excuses for rejecting Christ’s invitation. How will you respond?