

**THE LAME MAN AT BETHESDA**

**John 5:1-47**

**Theme: The choice of wholeness**

**Episode 4 of 7**

**Part 1: THEY MET THE MASTER SERIES**

**(STORIES OF MEN AND WOMEN WHO MET JESUS)**

**CTTW SHORT DRAMA PROGRAMS W/QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS**

**CHRISTIAN RADIO DRAMA**

**“THE STORY WITHIN”**

**004**



**Writer: Diana C. Derringer**  
**Editor: Dr. Art Criscoe**  
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**Part 1: They Met the Master Series**  
**Episode 4 of 7: The Lame Man at**  
**Bethesda**  
**Christ to the World Ministries**

## **DIRECTORIAL INFORMATION**

**CAST OF CHARACTERS:** (note voice quality required)

- **Each voice should be recognizably different from any other character.**
- **Some characters appear in multiple episodes of this series. Use the same voice for the same character.**

**Elias:**                    **The lame man at Bethesda** (voice of a mature man)  
**Reuben:**                **A blind man at Bethesda** (voice of a mature man)  
**Jesus:**                  **The promised Messiah** (voice of a mature man)  
**Laban:**                  **Jewish religious leader** (voice of a mature man)

**Notes to all readers:**

- These are radio **dramas**. The actions and emotions are in the words. Remember that the listener will only hear these words once; speak distinctly with appropriate emotion; carefully observe all punctuation (i.e., pause at commas, stop at periods, intensify at exclamation points, and give special emphasis to words in **bold** type).
- Observe all **music** cues (bold/small print) throughout the script.
- Observe **sound effects**\_directions (bold print) throughout the script.
- Observe all **voice** instructions (bold print) throughout the script.
- When Scripture is used, the print is in *italics*, and it is the NIV (1984). Scripture references are given to aid the translators and should not be read as part of the script.

## **THE LAME MAN AT BETHESDA**

**Scripture Reference: John 5:1-47**

**(Music: Theme music begins, then gradually fades to underscoring during comments by Program Host. Note to producer: Limit theme music not to exceed 12-14 seconds.)**

### **Program Host**

Welcome to “The Story Within.” Today’s drama tells us about the lame man at Bethesda, a man who “Met the Master.” It is based on the gospel of John in the Bible. Near Jerusalem’s Sheep Gate at the pool of Bethesda, people with disabilities waited. The first person to enter the pool when the waters stirred would be healed. Jesus met a lame man there who had waited 38 years to enter the pool. Jesus asked the man if he wanted to be healed. The man explained he had no one to help him in the water. Jesus then told the man to get up, pick up his mat, and walk. When the religious leaders saw the man carrying his mat, rather than rejoicing in his healing, they condemned him for carrying a burden on the Sabbath. The man said his healer, whose name he did not know, told him to pick up his mat and walk. Later, at the temple, the man saw Jesus again. Jesus told him to stop sinning in order to avoid a fate worse than 38 years of lameness. Once the man knew Jesus’ identity, he shared that information with the religious leaders. Because Jesus healed the lame man on the Sabbath, the religious leaders began persecuting Him. Jesus referred to God as His Father who oversees all creation

every day, including the Sabbath. That only increased their efforts to kill Him. Jesus tried, unsuccessfully, to reason with them and show them His role as ordained by God, prepared by John, and foretold by Moses and others in God's holy Word.

Listen now as Elias, the name chosen for the lame man at Bethesda, tells us his story.

**(Music: swells to indicate change; then fades to soft underscoring)**

**(Elias – Storyteller)**

For 38 years I lay near the pool of Bethesda waiting for someone to help me into the water when it stirred. For 38 years, no one offered assistance. For 38 years I watched other people rush to be first and receive miraculous healing. For 38 years I held onto hope only to have those hopes dashed over and over again. At Bethesda, the house of mercy, mercy continued to pass by me. Nevertheless, I remained. What choice did I have? Where else could I turn? I had no other options . . . or so I thought.

**(Music: swells to indicate change; then fades to soft underscoring)**

**Reuben:**     **(calls from a distance)** Good day, Elias. Did you sleep well?

**Elias:**       About like usual Reuben. These old bones have a way of talking back to me in the wee hours of the morning. How about you?

**Reuben:** Oh, I slept alright until the sun peeked over the horizon. You know how the morning light always gets in my eyes.

**Elias:** **(laughs)** Reuben, I don't know how you do it. You say the same thing every morning in spite of never seeing a sunrise your entire life.

**Reuben:** That may be true, but I can feel the sun's rays, and I can imagine how that warmth must look. Who knows, today may be my lucky day. If I hear those waters stir, I have every intention of being the first one in this time. Someday soon I plan to see the sun and everything under it.

**Elias:** God speed to you, my friend. I keep hoping some good soul will get me to the water. **(sighs, doubtful)** Who knows? Maybe someday.

**Reuben:** You have waited a long time, haven't you?

**Elias:** Thirty-eight years. **(pause)** Thirty-eight long years.

**Reuben:** You know that is longer than many people live, don't you?

**Elias:** That I do, and the wait has certainly felt like a lifetime.

**INSERT:** **(Sound effects: Jesus' rapidly approaching footsteps)**

**Reuben:** Sounds like someone is awake besides us, and from the speed of those steps, I doubt He needs to be healed.

**INSERT:** **(Sound effects: Jesus' footsteps stop before Elias)**

**Jesus:** Good morning, sir. Peace to you.

**Elias:** And to You as well.

**Jesus:** Looks like we are in for a fine day.

**Elias:** That it does.

**Jesus:** Quite a crowd around the pool.

**Elias:** Yes. Everyone hopes to be first in when the waters move so they can be healed.

**Jesus:** Including you.

**Elias:** Yes, including me. Thirty-eight years and still waiting.

**Jesus:** *“Do you want to get well?”* (John 5:6).

**Elias:** *“Sir, I have no one to help me into the pool when the water is stirred. While I am trying to get in, someone else goes down ahead of me”* (John 5:7).

**Jesus:** **(with authority)** *“Get up! Pick up your mat and walk”* (John 5:8).

**(Music: swells to indicate change; then fades to soft underscoring)**

**(Elias continues his story)**

Just like that I was healed. After 38 years, no more waiting for the waters to move. No more hoping for someone to help me in the pool. This Man said get up and walk, and I did just that! I have no idea why I believed I could. Yet, He spoke with such authority, I never doubted it would happen.

Because it was the Sabbath, however, religious leaders chided me for carrying my mat.

**(Music: swells to indicate change; then fades to soft underscoring)**

## **INTERMISSION**

**Program Host:** Thank you for listening to “The Story Within.” Our story will continue in a moment. Elias had been crippled and unable to walk for 38 years. He lay on his mat each day beside a pool where sick people gathered. One day Jesus passed by and stopped and healed him. He told him to pick up his mat and walk. This took place on the Sabbath. When the religious leaders saw Elias carrying his mat, which they classified as a burden, they were angry with him. Let us listen as the story continues.

**(Music: swells to indicate change; then fades to soft underscoring)**

**Laban:** *“It is the Sabbath; the law forbids you to carry your mat”* (John 5: 10).

**Elias:** *“The man who made me well said to me, ‘Pick up your mat and walk’”* (John 5:11).

**Laban:** *“Who is this fellow who told you to pick it up and walk?”* (John 5:12).

**Elias:** I have no idea, Laban. As I walked away, He disappeared into the crowd, and I have not seen Him since.

**(Music: swells to indicate change; then fades to soft underscoring)**

**(Elias continues his story)**

Later I did see the Man again. Finally able to enter the temple for worship, I met Him there. He had healed my body, but He was not finished with me. At the temple His focus changed to my spiritual needs.

**(Music: swells to indicate change; then fades to soft underscoring)**

**Jesus:**        *“See, you are well again. Stop sinning or something worse may happen to you”* (John 5: 14).

**(Music: swells to indicate change; then fades to soft underscoring)**

**(Elias continues his story)**

It did not take long for me to realize I was talking to Jesus, the one believed by many to be the promised Messiah. I also believed and told everyone I met, including the religious leaders who earlier asked for His identity. I thought they would be excited to know about His miraculous healing power and spiritual insight. Instead, they focused on His healing on the Sabbath.

**(Music: swells to indicate change; then fades to soft underscoring)**

**Laban:**        Jesus, today is the **Sabbath**, yet You heal on our day of rest and worship.

**Jesus:**        *“My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I, too, am working”* (John 5:17).

**(Elias continues his story)**

Jesus’ answer only upset them more. Not only had He healed on the Sabbath, now He was also calling God His Father. In essence, He was claiming equality with God. More determined than ever, the religious leaders plotted to kill Him. Yet, Jesus never backed down. He tried to help them understand who He was and the authority He held.



**(Music: swells to indicate change; then fades to soft underscoring)**

**Jesus:** *“I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does. For the Father loves the Son and shows him all he does. Yes, to your amazement he will show him even greater things than these. For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son gives life to whom he is pleased to give it. Moreover, the Father judges no one, but has entrusted all judgment to the Son, that all may honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father, who sent him. I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life. I tell you the truth, a time is coming and has now come when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live. For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son to have life in himself. And he has given him authority to judge because he is the Son of Man. Do not be amazed at this, for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice and come out — those who have done good will rise to live, and those who have done evil will rise to be condemned. By myself I can do*

*nothing; I judge only as I hear, and my judgment is just, for I seek not to please myself but him who sent me” (John 5:19-30).*

**(Music: swells to indicate change; then fades to soft underscoring)**

**(Elias continues his story)**

To try to help them understand further, Jesus explained that testimony on His behalf included not only His words and works but also those of John, His forerunner, plus prophecies of their forefathers in scripture.

**(Music: swells to indicate change; then fades to soft underscoring)**

**Jesus:**     *“If I testify about myself, my testimony is not valid. There is another who testifies in my favor, and I know that his testimony about me is valid. You have sent to John and he has testified to the truth. Not that I accept human testimony; but I mention it that you may be saved. John was a lamp that burned and gave light, and you chose for a time to enjoy his light. I have testimony weightier than that of John. For the very work that the Father has given me to finish, and which I am doing, testifies that the Father has sent me. And the Father who sent me has himself testified concerning me. You have never heard his voice nor seen his form, nor does his word dwell in you, for you do not believe the one he sent. You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the*

*Scriptures that testify about me, yet you refuse to come to me to have life. I do not accept praise from men, but I know you. I know that you do not have the love of God in your hearts. I have come in my Father's name, and you do not accept me; but if someone else comes in his own name, you will accept him. How can you believe if you accept praise from one another, yet make no effort to obtain the praise that comes from the only God? But do not think I will accuse you before the Father. Your accuser is Moses, on whom your hopes are set. If you believed Moses, you would believe me, for he wrote about me. But since you do not believe what he wrote, how are you going to believe what I say?"* (John 5:31-47).

**(Music: swells to indicate change; then fades to soft underscoring)**

**(Elias continues his story)**

I would like to say Jesus convinced them of the truth of His words. Yet, most of their minds were already made up. Nothing He said or did deterred their efforts to get rid of Him

Nevertheless, those of us whose lives He healed with His touch and His words would never be the same again. Regardless of the consequences, I choose to believe Jesus, and I will follow Him the rest of my life.

**(Music: Dramatic music swells; then begins reprise of Theme music; softly underscore comments of program host during Our Response to God)**

## **OUR RESPONSE TO GOD**

### **Program Host**

Do you want to get well? That is the question Jesus asked Elias. It is also the question each of us must answer. We may not have a physical disability, yet we all suffer spiritual disability caused by sin. The wrongs in our lives separate us from God. Only Jesus can restore us to a right relationship with God.

Not everyone chooses wholeness. Some people grow comfortable with their current status and choose to do nothing. Others, like the religious leaders, openly reject Jesus and the new life He offers. Those, like Elias, who follow Jesus receive healing and wholeness.

Healing was possible in the pool at Bethesda only at certain times when the water stirred, and only one person could be healed at a time. God's Holy Spirit is at work at all times. He stirs our hearts, making us aware of our need for Jesus' forgiveness and new life. Unlike the limitations of the pool at Bethesda, anyone can choose to follow Jesus any time and any place.

Jesus told the lame man to rise and walk. He also calls us to rise and walk in a new way of life. Jesus waits to make us spiritually whole when we accept Him as personal Savior and Lord.

Not everyone will understand or accept those who follow Jesus. Some will try to rid themselves of His message and sometimes the messengers. Jesus never backed

down because of threats against Him, and neither should we. He will give us the strength we need to endure whatever comes our way when we follow Him.

**Now we come to the time when we can respond to God.**

God has made a way that our sins can be forgiven. That way is through His Living Word, Jesus. God sent Jesus from heaven to earth to be our Savior. The apostle Paul declared, “*Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners*” (1 Tim. 1:15). It is through Jesus that we can have forgiveness of our sins.

I’m going to pray a brief prayer from my heart to God. Listen to my prayer, and then when I have prayed I will lead you to pray the same prayer.

**Dear God, Thank You for sending Your Son, Jesus, to be my Savior. I want to know more about how my sins can be forgiven. Amen.**

Now repeat the prayer aloud after me. We will pray it a portion at a time. Make the prayer your very own to God. Mean it with all your heart as you pray.

**Dear God,** (pause for listener to repeat)

**Thank You for sending Your Son, Jesus, to be my Savior.** (pause for listener to repeat)

**I want to know more about how my sins can be forgiven.** (pause for listener to repeat)

**Amen.** (pause for listener to repeat)

Thank you for praying that prayer. In the next program we will learn more about how our sins can be forgiven. The next episode will be a drama about “The Man with a Withered Hand.”

**(Music: swells to indicate change; then fades to soft underscoring)**

## **Questions and Answers**

The Questions and Answers below are designed to be used following the broadcast of the drama. They are questions a typical listener might have after listening to the drama. The number of questions used will of course depend upon the amount of air time available at the conclusion of the drama. It may not be necessary to use all of the questions provided. Voices used for the questions should include: male and female; young and old; believers and non-believers. The Program Host should give all the answers to the questions.

Try to make both questions and answers conversational in nature.

The questions should be asked in a forthright manner. Persons asking the questions should reflect different attitudes and positions. Most of the questioners should reflect an openness and honest desire for the truth; some should reflect deep concern; some should reflect anxiety; some could reflect sarcasm or unbelief; some could even reflect anger. Occasionally a voice antagonistic to Christ and the Gospel could ask one of the questions.

The Program Host should use warm and friendly language and tone of voice. He should never talk down to a questioner in a demeaning fashion regardless of the question asked. He should never express shock or surprise at the question asked. He should speak in a manner that puts the questioner at ease. Some producers might want to use names. For example, a question might begin with: “My name is \_\_\_\_\_. Could you explain . . .” or “My name is \_\_\_\_\_. Here is my question: . . .” The Program Host could use the person’s name in answering the question. The use of names is at the producer’s option.

The Questions and Answers could begin by the Program Host saying: “Thank you for listening to this drama. Now let us go to some questions that listeners like yourself have about what we have heard.”

**1. Question:** How can a pool of water have healing powers?

**Answer:** The pool was probably fed by a spring that stirred the water from time to time. It no doubt had some medicinal value. Many pools of water, such as thermal springs, are beneficial and promote healing.

**2. Question:** If the man in the story had been an invalid for 38 years, why did he continue to wait and hope for healing?

**Answer:** I think the man held on to a sliver of hope that some day he could be healed. Lying by the pool and waiting had become a way of life for him.

**3. Question:** Why did no one ever help the man into the water?

**Answer:** We do not know. Did he not have family? Did he have any friends? Did someone bring him to the pool each day and leave him there, or did he spend night and day at the pool? We do not know. Evidently every person there was trying to be first into the pool and not thinking of helping anyone else.

**4. Question:** Why did Jesus not heal everyone at the pool that day?

**Answer:** Jesus loved everyone and was moved with compassion over the hurts and needs of the people. But Jesus’ mission was not to heal every sick person. His mission was to teach the people about the kingdom of God and to die for the sins of the world. Jesus said, “*For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost*” (Luke 19:10).

**5. Question:** Why did it upset the religious leaders for Jesus to call God “My Father”?

**Answer:** God’s Word says: “*For this reason the Jews tried all the harder to kill him; not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God*” (John 5:18). The Jews would never call God “Father.” But Jesus taught us that God is truly our

heavenly Father and we can call Him “Father.” He cares for us as an earthly father cares for his family.

**6. Question:** How can dead people hear the voice of Jesus?

**Answer:** Jesus said that some day all who are in the graves will hear His voice and be resurrected from the dead. We will be raised from the dead on that great day. If we know Jesus as Savior we will live forever in heaven with Him. If we are not believers we will spend eternity in a place called hell.

**7. Question:** Why were the Jews so strict about observing the Sabbath?

**Answer:** The Jews had many man-made rules and laws regarding what a person could and could not do on the Sabbath. They thought the keeping of all of these rules assured them of their acceptance before God. They ignored the spirit of the Sabbath, that of helping those in need.

Thank you for listening and taking part in this program. May God be with you and keep you safe.

**( Music: Theme music swells dramatically then fades as broadcast ends)**

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