

# ONE CONVERSATION AWAY:

## How a Single Encounter with Jesus Can Change Your Life

The opening chapter of John's Gospel says that Jesus "came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all might believe" (1:9), and Jesus himself said he came "to seek out and save the lost" (Luke 19:10). It's a good reminder that every Christian's mission should be to introduce as many unbelievers as possible to Jesus. The

overwhelming majority of non-Christians are closer to Christ than you might think, and all it takes is one real encounter with Jesus to change everything. In this series we'll explore four unique conversations that Jesus had with everyday people - a young fisherman, a middle-aged mother, a religious elder, and a woman with a sordid past - and we'll see how one interaction with Jesus can change a life forever.

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### February 1, 2026 - Healing at the Pool of Bethesda

**Think about some of the deepest conversations you have ever had.** What are some of the ingredients that create a great conversation?

**John 5:1-7** - Some time later, Jesus went up to Jerusalem for one of the Jewish festivals. Now there is in Jerusalem near the Sheep Gate a pool, which in Aramaic is called Bethesda and which is surrounded by five covered colonnades. Here a great number of disabled people used to lie—the blind, the lame, the paralyzed. One who was there had been an invalid for thirty-eight years. When Jesus saw him lying there and learned that he had been in this condition for a long time, he asked him, "Do you want to get well?"

"Sir," the invalid replied, "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."

#### **How does John 5:4 illustrate the accuracy and reliability of the Bible?**

This man had been sick for 38 years, which is about the average life span of a person in the 1st century. He had been lame almost his entire life. **Can you relate to this man's prolonged struggle in any way?**

Jesus asks the man who had been sick for 38 years, "Do you want to get well". **What is Jesus really getting at in this question? How might Jesus be asking you this same thing today?**

#### **What stands out to you about the man's response?**

**John 5:8-14** - "Then Jesus said to him, "Get up! Pick up your mat and walk." At once the man was cured; he picked up his mat and walked.

The day on which this took place was a Sabbath, and so the Jewish leaders said to the man who had been healed, "It is the Sabbath; the law forbids you to carry your mat." But he replied, "The man who made me well said to me, 'Pick up your mat and walk.' " So they asked him, "Who is this fellow who told you to pick it up and walk?" The man who was healed had no idea who it was, for Jesus had slipped away into the crowd that was there.

Later Jesus found him at the temple and said to him, "See, you are well again. Stop sinning or something worse may happen to you." The man went away and told the Jewish leaders that it was Jesus who had made him well.

This man was not healed in response to his incredible faith. Rather, it appears he didn't even know who Jesus was! **How does this healing different from other miracles in the Gospels?**

**How does this miracle reveal to us the nature of God's grace?**

**What is Preventive Grace?**

**John 5:19** - "Very truly I tell you, 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"

Due to the size of the pool Jesus was surrounded by hundreds of people who needed healing, yet he sought out this one man. **How does Jesus model healthy ministry in a world where we too are surrounded by pain and brokenness that is overwhelming ?**

Throughout John Jesus has had conversation with people who are fixated on the physical world, when instead Jesus is speaking about the spiritual one. **What kind of healing does Jesus seek to provide?**

**Ephesians 2:8-9** -For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast.

When it comes to our salvation, we bring nothing to the table, it's Christ alone. We are saved by grace through faith. **How can this truth transform the way you think about faith, and how you share your faith with others?**



### **Women's Retreat with Wendy Speake**

Save the date to join us for a spring women's retreat on Saturday, March 21 from 10am to 2:30pm! This retreat is open to women of all ages and life stages. Learn more and register: [thestory.church/events](http://thestory.church/events)



### **Overflow for Students TONIGHT!**

The first Overflow of 2026 is this Sunday, February 1 at 6:30pm! Overflow is a monthly gathering for 6th-12th grade students with worship and teaching, fun group games, dinner, and raffle prizes. No registration necessary!



### **Serve on Sunday Teams**

Stop by the Teams table on your way out to learn about our current volunteer needs & get plugged in serving with a Sunday team this new year! You can also learn more about the teams on our website: [thestory.church/serve](http://thestory.church/serve)