

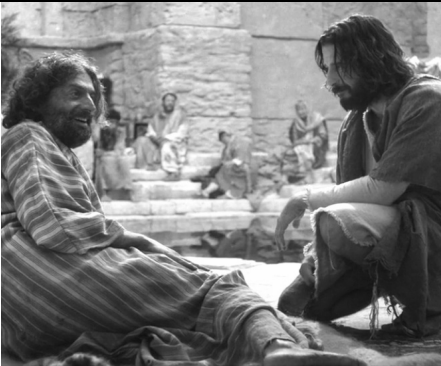
Group Study Guide

The
CHOSEN

EPISODE 4

For listening, discussion and reflection

THE PERFECT OPPORTUNITY



SCRIPTURE READINGS

John 5: 1-16;

Psalms 69: 9;

Exodus 20: 8-11

The Big Questions:

Which character speaks to you?

Why do you think God is

highlighting that person to you?

What does following look like
for the character?

What is your one BIG question
from this episode? (What
captured your imagination
most, and what would you ask
God about the events
portrayed?)

OUTLINE

Jesse (Dennis Afergis), a paralytic, spends 38 years searching for a cure and stays at the Pool of Bethesda while his brother, Simon (Alaa Safi), joins the Zealots, training to become one. Jesus and the disciples head to Jerusalem to prepare for the Feast of Tabernacles. Assisted in Jerusalem by fellow Pharisee, Yanni (Wasim No'mani), Shmuel preaches against false prophecy. The disciples discuss the scriptures as they celebrate the feast. After being informed concerning Shmuel, Jesus decides to go to Bethesda Pool to meet someone, bringing Simon, John, and Matthew. Simon the Zealot visits Jesse to bid goodbye to him. At Bethesda, Jesus approaches Jesse, asking him if he wants to be healed. Jesus heals Jesse and Matthew writes down the miracle.

Witnessing the healing, Yanni and other Pharisees are upset and admonish Jesse for carrying a mat on Shabbat. The Zealots plot to assassinate a Roman magistrate with Simon the Zealot leading the plan, but Atticus Aemilius (Elijah Alexander), a Roman cohorte urbanae, discovers their plan. When the assassination plan is being carried out, Simon the Zealot is distracted as he sees Jesse walking. The two brothers reconcile and Atticus Aemilius is bewildered. Jesus withdraws himself and Simon Zealot searches for him.

During the time of the New Testament, it was common for people to believe that certain places like the Pool of Bethesda had miraculous power to bring healing. Some Jewish people might have believed this was because God had blessed these places, but others believed that these healing centers were connected to pagan gods like Asclepius.

The Pool of Bethesda was specifically known to heal people only at a specific time - when the waters had been stirred up. It was most likely an underground hot spring. Only the first person to reach the stirring waters was healed.

Invalids - people with debilitating sicknesses, injuries, or birth defects - would often congregate around these miraculous places like Bethesda in hopes of having their sicknesses healed. Some might have family members carry them back and forth from home and help them when needed, but others were basically homeless people who had to beg in order to get food and care.

OTHER QUESTIONS

1. Jesus knew who He was looking for at the pool. He went seeking Jesse. Is there a Jesse in your life? How did Jesus's actions make you feel?
2. Jesus told Jesse the pool had nothing to offer him. What do you find yourself turning
3. to time and again that cannot satisfy/provide/help you? In what ways do you turn to a "pool" instead of Jesus?
4. As Jesse carried out his mat, he was confronted by Shmuel who accused him of working on the Sabbath. How did this example of legalism gone rogue impact you? How/when might you be guilty of a similar mindset?

QUOTES

"You're not coming back here. That life is over. Everything changes now." - Jesus

"I know a thing or two about prophecies that sound impossible." - Mary