

JESUS FOR EVERYONE
ACTS 16 v 9-15 John 5v 1-9

Two very different characters dominate our readings this week, but they share a common experience, in that God reaches into their lives and transforms them.

In the reading from Acts we encounter a well to do business woman from Thyatira. We know that she is from the upper crust of society because the text states that she was " a dealer in purple cloth" and this suggests a certain refinement. She is already a worshipper of God and now she listens to Paul eagerly, she opens her heart to his message, she offers him hospitality, and she receives baptism, not only for herself, but for her whole household!

In contrast the lame man beside the pool of Bethzatha in Jerusalem was something of an outcast. He does not appear to be a worshipper but trusts his luck in the magical properties of the pool. He had been waiting for thirty eight years for someone to help him in, but no one comes near to assist. He appears to be full of excuses and unable to motivate himself. Although he addresses Jesus respectfully, he does not offer a word of thanks for the unexpected change in his fortunes Jesus brings.

There are times when our disposition is a sunny one and we are open to receiving what others have to say and offer, and we act willingly as a consequence. But there are times when nothing appears to go right for us, we feel completely on our own and feel there is nothing to feel glad about.

The Lord searches us out anywhere between these two extremes and wants to bless our situation. In fact, he may use us to seek out others in this way, so we should be ready to catch the eye of people others might miss or prefer to keep away from.

The beautiful sentiments of Psalm 139 speak to all this:

O Lord you have searched me out and known me.
You know when I sit down and when I rise up.
You perceive my thoughts from afar.
You discern my going out and my coming in
and you are acquainted with all my ways.
Before a word is on my tongue, you O Lord know it altogether.

With love
Fr Andrew