Then she sat on a bench nearby to rest briefly before carrying the heavy jug home. Her ears perked up when she overheard a traveler telling stories about Jesus. “I saw the man, Jesus, just last Sabbath, and something amazing happened,” the man announced. “What happened?” a nearby woman asked. “I was near the Sheep Gate in Jerusalem last Sabbath. You wouldn’t believe how many people there were this year, all with some type of infirmity! They lay there by the pool of Bethesda all day. I can’t believe how many people still believe in the old tales told of that pool! Anyway, there was a man who was flat on his back not far from where I was standing in the shade. The porches there would be so much more beautiful and relaxing if they had rules keeping the sick away,” the man speculated.

“You were about to tell us about an amazing event!” one listener impatiently reminded him. “Oh, yes,” the man continued. “Well, this lame man was completely helpless, and it seems he never makes it to the pool in time to be healed (if you believe in that kind of thing), and the man, Jesus, started talking to him, and the next think I know is that this man is rolling up his mat and carries it right out of there. I hope someone reported him to the Jewish leaders because he certainly should not have been carrying that mat on the Sabbath if you ask me!” “You mean to tell me that Jesus healed him?” one incredulous man asked. “Hmmm? Oh, well that seems to be the story going around,” the man replied casually. “This is the third time this week I’ve heard stories of healings of the lame, deaf, and blind. I’ve even heard that people afflicted with evil spirits are finally free because of Jesus’ power!” one amazed man remarked. “Have you heard about the time he multiplied a child’s lunch until there was enough to feed a crowd of five thousand?” an elderly man asked. After listening for several more minutes, Mary smiled and picked up her heavy jug. She tried to envision five thousand people sitting in groups on the grass as the twelve disciples passed around fish and bread. Twelve baskets of leftovers from those five loaves and a couple of fish must surely have convinced people that Jesus was the Messiah! It was reassuring that so many witnesses were present. And it all came from a little boy’s lunch! Mary was thrilled that Jesus chose to include children in His ministry. He loved children. He seemed to make a special connection with them.