

(Luke 5:17~26)

Over the last few weeks, we have been looking at the miraculous powers Jesus possessed and how he healed various sicknesses, incurable diseases, his power over demonic spirits, over the fish of the sea and on and on. When you step back and take an overall look at these two chapters, we see that he did all these to validate his claims of being the promised Messiah. 4:18 is a quotation from Isaiah, speaking of the Messiah, and it is written in metaphoric language describing the Messiah as one who would come as a Great Physician to heal, to mend, to restore health to the sick. This is a theme that continues from 4:18~5:31...³¹ *They that are whole need not a physician; but they that are sick.* In this section, Luke records several of the miraculous powers Jesus possessed over various infirmities, His power over demonic spirits, His power over nature (fish), His power over incurable diseases such as leprosy, His power to restore strength to a paralytic man, not to mention the countless others he healed that are not recorded. But as amazing as those are, they do not compare to the power he manifest here in this passage, His **power over sin!**

...“*your sins are forgiven...*” Those words represent a divine miracle that is the greatest of all miracles... **Forgiveness of sin is God’s greatest gift because it is man’s greatest need...**

For those words have the power to “*set men free*” from the bonds of sin! Those words have the power to *break the chains of guilt*, removing the shackles that bind us, setting the sinner free. The Christian faith has many truths, values and virtues, each of which have countless applications and benefits in the lives of believers. But the supreme, overarching truth is the blessed reality of forgiveness of sin. That is the heart and lifeblood of the gospel, that men can be freed from sin and its consequences! Blessed be the name of the Lord...Blessed be the name of the Lord!

If the Lord does nothing else for me, if He never grants another request for me...*I am among the most blessed men of the world!* I am blessed, I am blessed, I am blessed...for my sins have been forgiven!

Luke begins this section by introducing us to couple of groups of men referred to as the “*Pharisees*” and the “*Scribes*”... This is Luke’s first introduction of these men, in regards to Jesus. Back in chapter three, he spoke of them briefly in connection with John’s baptism, referring to them as “*vipers.*” But this is the first real encounter Luke speaks of in relationship to Jesus.

¹⁷*And it came to pass on a certain day, as he was teaching, that there were Pharisees and doctors of the law sitting by, which were come out of every town of Galilee, and Judaea, and Jerusalem...*

“*Doctor’s of the Law*” is another term given to “*Scribes.*” Scribes were the leading authorities in the Law of Moses, given that their duties revolved around the copying and translation of the law on a daily basis. The Pharisees was another branch of the religious sect that taught and enforced that law among the people. These two groups often worked side by side to carry out their duties and responsibilities in regards to temple worship. It would have been to these groups of men that the leper that was cleansed reported to, to carry out the requirements of the Law of Moses for his ceremonial cleansing.

I want to make sure we understand the emphasis of this passage. Even though it is a story contains the account of the healing of a paralytic man that is not the focus of the passage. The healing of this man, simply serves as a backdrop to the real issue Luke is trying to relate, that being the claims of Jesus, as being “*deity*” and having the authority to forgive sin, and the response of the religious leaders to those claims. As we will see, the miracle healing that took place only served to validate his claims...

No doubt, as a result of all the miracles Jesus was doing, his fame had spread all over the region, reaching as far as Jerusalem. Luke tells that Pharisees and Scribes from every synagogue from all around had come

to Galilee to hear and see this Jesus of Nazareth. It was more like an investigation, to see who he was and what he was all about. Luke tells us, that the power of the Lord was present, and Jesus was healing people... He writes specifically of a certain healing, of a man taken with palsy...

¹⁸And, behold, men brought in a bed a man which was taken with a palsy: and they sought means to bring him in, and to lay him before him. ¹⁹And when they could not find by what way they might bring him in because of the multitude, they went upon the housetop, and let him down through the tiling with his couch into the midst before Jesus. ²⁰And when he saw their faith, he said unto him, *Man, thy sins are forgiven thee.*

What an incredible display of faith... these men were determined to get to Jesus. That's a lesson all in itself, one that all of us could learn from, diligence and persistence. It's apparent, that Jesus was impressed by this show of faith. This man's healing was interesting in that he never said a word, reason being his actions said it all.

As incredible as this healing is, I want to suggest to you that what we see here is much, much more to this, than simply the healing of a paralyzed man... I'm convinced that there is a great spiritual truth being displayed here. One similar to the one we saw in the healing of the leper. Leprosy was a graphic illustration of sin... It was a dreadful disease that ravished the body, destroying its victim, much the way of sin. Like sin, leprosy was incurable by man, like sin, leprosy separated men, isolating them from God's people. But just as Jesus can cure leprosy, he can cure sin. Just as Jesus reconciled the leper back to man, he reconciles sinners back to God. When Jesus touched the leper and healed him, we see a beautiful picture of the compassion the Lord has on sinners!

Here, we see a similar illustration. Here in the paralyzed man, we see a picture of a helpless victim of sin, one who was powerless against his condition. In light of that, we see the Savior coming to his aid. I believe that it's likely that given the emphasis on the Pharisees and Scribes who were present, this was very likely an illustration of works and grace. *These religious men* trusted in their adherence to the Law, to justify them before God. But here is a man who can do nothing, yet Jesus offers him the kingdom... It emphasizes that salvation is a gift of God, which is received by faith. Notice what spurred Jesus to forgive the man...

(Vs 20) ²⁰And when he saw their faith, he said unto him, *Man, thy sins are forgiven thee...* Here a man, who could do absolutely nothing FOR God...yet he is given the kingdom. Simply because of his faith.

(Vs 21) Notice the response from the LEGALISTIC Pharisees and Scribes... ²¹And the scribes and the Pharisees began to reason, saying, *Who is this which speaks blasphemies? Who can forgive sins, but God alone?*

“Who does this man think he is?” “Who but God can forgive sin?” “This is blasphemy!”

Blasphemy is best understood as insulting or showing contempt or lack of reverence for God. Not only towards God, but it also includes Irreverence toward the things of God, showing a lack of respect for something considered sacred or holy. Blasphemy also includes claiming the attributes of deity...

By accusing him of blasphemy, they were accusing him assuming the role that is reserved for God and God alone, the role of forgiving sin. In short they were accusing him of *“Playing God!”*

“Who does this man think he is... God is the only one who can forgive sin!”

The interesting thing is, they never actually said any of this out loud... These accusations were simply thoughts that were running through their mind, after hearing him tell the man that his sins were forgiven.

²²But when Jesus perceived their thoughts, he answering said unto them, *What reason ye in your hearts?*

In a parallel account of this same event, Matthew writes... (Mt. 9) ³And, behold, certain of the scribes said within themselves, This man blasphemes. ⁴And Jesus knowing their thoughts said, *Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts?*

Can you imagine how shocked they must have been, when Jesus turned to them and *publicly* addressed what they were *privately* thinking in their hearts! ²²But when Jesus perceived their thoughts, he answering said unto them, *What reason ye in your hearts?* “What do you accuse me of blaspheming God, simply because I told this man, his sins are forgiven?” Are the miracles not enough proof for you?

(Vs 23) Let’s think about this... Which is easier... 1) To say, “Your sins are forgiven...”
Or..... 2) To say, “Rise up and walk...”

What’s the answer? Tell me, which one is easier? Of course, to say *your sins are forgiven* is the easier of the two. Simply because there’s no proof either way to say whether it actually happened or not. But to say, “*rise up and walk*” requires proof doesn’t it? In order to validate himself as having the power to heal people, the sick would have to get better. In this case, the paralyzed man would have to get up and walk! Understanding that, given the fact that to heal someone who is paralyzed is by far the harder one to do, Jesus says...that’s what I’m going to do. That way, by seeing me do the harder of the two, you’ll know that I am able to do the lesser!

(Vs 24~25) ²⁴But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power upon earth to forgive sins, (he said unto the sick of the palsy,) I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy couch, and go into thine house. ²⁵And immediately he rose up before them, and took up that whereon he lay, and departed to his own house, glorifying God.

Beloved, that fact that Jesus has power over all manner of sickness, that fact that he has power over all manner of disease, over all manner of wicked and demonic spirits, and over the very powers of nature, serve to validate the fact that He has POWER OVER SIN! For every manner of sickness, every disease, every unclean spirit, every form of wickedness, every form of evil is a result of SIN! The healings and rebuking that He performed came as a result of getting rid of the sin! These healings are pictures of the forgiveness of sin! Rather than simply removing the sicknesses, Jesus was removing the sin. People are set free; the infirmities have to set them loose...

Seeing this man who had been stricken with palsy, get up and walk away, the Pharisees and Scribes could say nothing against Christ’ claims of having the power to forgive the sins of men!

²⁶And they were all amazed, and they glorified God, and were filled with fear, saying, We have seen strange things to day.

Strange...in the sense, they had never seen anything like this before... They were awe-struck, filled with fear Luke says, and no wonder, Jesus had just healed a man, that had they had known to be paralyzed. There was no denying what he had just done...they glorified God, acknowledging the miracles was from God.

In closing...¹⁷And it came to pass on a certain day, as he was teaching, that there were Pharisees and doctors of the law sitting by, which were come out of every town of Galilee, and Judaea, and Jerusalem: and the power of the Lord was present to heal them.

This morning...the power of the Lord is *present to heal*, this morning you can be *set free*... Now I cannot promise you, that God will heal you of some infirmity you may have, that is left totally to His discretion. But I can promise you, that the Lord is present to heal you spiritually! The healing power contained in the gospel of Jesus Christ, has the power to heal all who come to Him for help!