



Lesson 7 January 16<sup>th</sup>, 2021

## Called to Heal

MIDDLE/HIGH SCHOOL

Study Scripture – Mark 2:1-12

Background Scripture – Mark 2:1-12

### Key Verse:

*Whether is it easier to say to the sick of palsy, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk?*

**Mark 2:9**

### INTRODUCTION

Jesus knows humanity. He has complete understanding of who we are and why we act the way we do. Being as He is with complete understanding Jesus feels the hurts of the people and does not hold Himself distant from people but crosses the boundary where the social, religious, or physical are erected so that He can relieve the pain that people feel.

In our Study Jesus asks two questions that are very important, the first namely,

***Why are you thinking these things?***

The second one we will examine is,

***Which is easier to say, 'your sins are forgiven', or to say, Get up and walk?***

Note that in both cases it is not that Jesus did not know the answers, but Jesus wanted those to whom He addressed the questions to answer the question and to really consider what it was that they believed about God, and what kind of God that they served. Was their belief in God one that would lead them to anger, rejecting the possibility of the forgiveness of sins then rather than simply hope?

Our Study will also examine the nature of faith and how it operates in real life with boldness and determination, often asking for what seems to be the impossible. It will indicate a compassionate response from Jesus to beseeching appeals.

Not to be forgotten is that we are introduced to the hostility of the religious leaders and political leaders. In the case of the miraculous healing preceding our Study Scripture there are generally positive reactions to Jesus by the response of the crowd who say that they have never seen anything like that done by Jesus, while in this story in our Study and that following, the reactions are generally negative and ends with the Pharisees, scribes, and the political party called Herodians conspiring to kill Jesus.

The issue for the people of the top of the society and those at the bottom is Jesus' authority. Despite the overwhelming evidence that Jesus' authority is from God the Pharisees, the scribes and Herodians will never embrace Jesus. They will instead try to destroy Him. So, our Study will examine the first of five stories of controversy in Mark where Jesus' authority is shown to be superior to those of the Jewish authorities and that will rankle them.

But for the people the reaction to Jesus' authority is somewhat different. Jesus had called disciples and they left their nets and their sundry other occupations and followed Him. They were obedient to Jesus' authority. The ordinary people recognized that Jesus ***"taught them as having authority and not as the scribes"*** (1:22). 1:27 states they were amazed.

***"What is this? A new teaching? For with authority he commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him"***.

So, the issue we face now is Jesus demonstrating His authority on earth to forgive sins when He poses His interesting questions referred to above and then heals the paralytic.

The previous healing recorded to our Study is in Mark 1 and deals with the healing of a leper who broke all the rules and came beseeching Jesus and kneeling to Him saying, ***If you will, you can make me clean"***. This highlights the appeal of the leper to the will of Jesus which brings forth pity, anger, but a compassionate response and a healing touch from Jesus.

Note that this was not an attractive but a repulsive looking man for Luke tells us in Luke 5:19 that ***"he was full of leprosy"***. William Barclay describes what a leper looked like so we can begin to appreciate the power of Jesus and His compassion and how He deal with those then and those today that are filled with a sense of worthlessness and despair. He notes:

***"The whole appearance of the face is changed, till the man loses his human appearance and looks as the ancients said, "like a lion or a satyr". The nodules grow larger and larger. They ulcerate, becoming startling. The voice becomes hoarse, and the breath wheezes because of the ulceration of the vocal chords. The hands and the feet always ulcerate. Slowly the sufferer becomes a mass of ulcerated growths. The average course of the disease is nine years, and it ends in mental decay, coma, and ultimately death. The sufferer becomes utterly repulsive--both to himself and to others"***.

This was love in action. Jesus touched and the leper was healed, his flesh strong and clean again. Jesus sent him to the priests as instructed in the Book of Leviticus.

Jesus sending him to the priests for examination and a declaration that he was cleansed from the leprosy was very important for there had been never anything like this healing of leprosy since the time of Elisha the prophet. In that case it was the leprosy of the Gentile commander of the Syrian army that was healed. This would be a clear manifestation of a sign that Messiah was present and had the power to cleanse the lepers among the many miraculous healings Isaiah had predicted Messiah would do when He came.

Jesus cared. He showed His loving care despite the conflict that His actions would bring about. Mark reveals significant truths about our basic humanity as well as Jesus' love and empathy for the difficulties with which we struggle.

### **THE TEXT**

**Verse 1.** Jesus' fame had become such that it was difficult for Him to appear in public because of the crush of the crowds that attended His every appearance. His healing of a leper who was such a blabbermouth, though he had been strictly charged by Jesus to do otherwise, had created such excitement that, for some time, Jesus kept out of the cities.

His primary ministry of teaching and preaching the kingdom of God was brought to a standstill. His retreat to some desert area to find some respite proved futile as the crowds followed Him there and typically, He ministered to all their needs, (1:45). It was after this excursion into the desert that He again entered Capernaum, which by now had become His headquarters.



Jesus must have entered Capernaum quietly and by now it could be expected that the frenzy that followed the healed leper's sensational report might have subsided, but such was His fame, that before long the word spread quickly; 'the Man is in the house'.

**Verse 2.** Almost immediately the crowds began to gather. Apparently, they were not prepared to wait till the Sabbath, when they could definitely hear Him in the synagogue. It seemed to indicate though that if Jesus did not go to the synagogue, then He would preach at a house, or on the streets. The crowd gathered thick and fast that one could not even approach the door of the house.

.... *he preached the word*, the life-giving word of God, the Gospel. As important as the miracles of Jesus were, the preaching of the Gospel was even more important, for it was the hearing of the Gospel that saved men.

*Blessed are ye that sow beside all waters*, Isaiah 32:20.

**Verse 3-4.** The manner in which the paralytic was carried speaks to the seriousness of his condition; *borne by four* as if upon a bier, a telling picture of both his physical as well as his spiritual condition, both to which Jesus will attend. We do not know for sure how many men were involved in this operation to bring this paralytic to Jesus for it would involve a tremendous amount of work pushing through the crowd, taking the man to the roof of the house, and then digging into the roof. So deep was the crowd outside the house where Jesus was teaching, that the paralytic and his bearers could not easily even approach the door.

After quickly appraising the situation that they could not see Jesus through normal means, their response was one born of desperation. Likely there were other sick people waiting to see Jesus and who were probably not willing to give up their place closer to the door of the house. Someone would have to bear the cost of the damage done to the house, but this did not deter the desperate seekers.

We are told that **“archaeological discoveries in Capernaum show that the houses were made out of rough basalt rocks built up, without any mortar to hold them together. These pillars of rocks couldn't support much more than a thatched roof. It would have likely been a sloped roof, made up of wooden crossbeams, and overlaid with woven reeds, branches, and mud. These roofs needed to be rebuilt every year before the winter rains came, so it would not have been neither too difficult to dig through the roof, nor too difficult to repair. But still, digging through the roof and dropping their friend before Jesus was nonetheless a silent, dramatic plea for help and healing”**.

In that area people would sometimes go on the roof to sleep during hot nights. The roof would also provide a place for one to separate oneself from the busy household activities. There would be a ladder beside the house permitting people to gain access to the roof. But remember that getting a paralyzed man up the ladder and onto the roof would certainly be a very difficult task which would require much effort, skill, and determination as well as courage.

One can more accurately think of these men as men who were determined. Their faith was such that though Jesus was not now conducting a healing service but rather a preaching service away from the streets, they were determined to reach Jesus.

Mark obviously wants to encourage us to have and exercise this kind of faith, for this incident appears to be suggesting that God will respond to the needs of people regardless of what they are, despite the fact that it is not on the program.



We can now look at the quality of faith and begin to identify several aspects of this desirable kind of faith. We should think of all the paralyzed man is feeling for a moment. Just remember that he was strapped to a rigid mat so that he could be taken up the ladder and down from the roof. This would require quite a bit of rough handling. But this was a man without hope. He obviously hoped that this Healer would do for him what He had done for others.

These men had the kind of faith that clearly impelled them to “do” something that was difficult. Perhaps they had to carry the sick man some distance through the streets and then when their passage was blocked, they undertook the onerous task of carrying this full-grown man up an outside stairway to the roof. This could not have been an easy task. This kind of faith was not just an emotional feeling or an intellectual agreement about Jesus. It showed itself in determined and visible Action for everyone to see.

Incidentally, it illustrates perfectly what is involved in bringing men to Christ. Sometimes it is certainly no easy job but can involve much faith and creativity. Their thinking might have been, if they could just carry this man to Christ once, they would not need to carry him anymore and so they resorted to the extreme; with some amount of effort, they *uncovered the roof*.

Next, we see that these men did something very unorthodox. They did not give up easily, sit down or spend much time researching how to get to Jesus. They recognized quickly that they had to risk the disapproval of the house owner and also the disapproval of those present, because they would be interrupting the meeting.

Next these men did something that would cost quite a bit in order to save their friend. Someone would have to repair the roof and we can be sure that the owner was not happy to see the tiles on top of his house moved and daylight suddenly appear. Employing some innovative engineering they lowered the bed with the paralytic into the room where Jesus was teaching. Some believe that this was Peter's house, and we all know how excitable a personality Peter was.

These men were obviously ready, for they had the faith at cost to themselves to do what was necessary to bring their friend to Christ. At least five men were involved in showing faith in Jesus.

**Verse 5.** Anyone who saw the paralytic or knew him would have considered physical healing his greatest need.

Fact is, the greatest and most urgent need of every human being is to know God and Jesus whom He had sent. Jesus at first responds to the man's most pressing need, that of the forgiveness of his sins. Jesus was prepared to give the man more than he was asking for. He calls him *son*, a term of endearment, showing His compassion. This was meant to console and an assurance to the paralytic that he would be healed.

It is fair to assume that the man was brought to Jesus because of his physical condition and so the question arises, as to why Jesus would first forgive the man's sins. It seems evident however from Jesus' words that this man's paralysis was a result of some lapse, and therefore Jesus went straight to the heart of the issue.

One commentator offers the following explanation for what Jesus said:

**1st. The man might have brought on this affection of the palsy by a long course of vicious indulgence. Conscious of guilt, he may have feared that he was so great a sinner that Christ**



would not regard him. He therefore assured him that his offences were pardoned, and that he might lay aside his fears.

2nd. Jesus might be willing to show his power to forgive sins. Had he stated it without any miracle, the Jews would not have believed it, and even his disciples might have been staggered. In proof of it, he worked a miracle; and no one, therefore, could doubt that he had the power. The miracle was wrought in *express attestation* of the assertion that he had the power to forgive sins. As God would not work a miracle to confirm a falsehood, or to deceive men, the miracle was a solemn confirmation, on the part of God, that Jesus had the power to forgive sins.

3rd. The Jews regarded disease as the effect of sin, John 9:2; James 5:14, 15. There is a *real connexion* between sin and suffering, as in the case of gluttony, intemperate drinking, lewdness, debauchery. Jesus might be willing to direct the minds of the spectators to this fact; and by pointing them to a manifest instance of the effect of sin, to lead them to hate and forsake it. Diseases are sometimes the direct judgment of God for sin, 1 Corinthians 5:3-5; 11:30; 2 Samuel 24:10-14. This truth, also, Christ might have been desirous of impressing on the people.

The invalid and his helpers showed great faith in Jesus' power to heal and this was immediately noted by our Saviour. The four friends showed their faith by the bold and persistent efforts that took liberties with the house and the palsied man showed his faith by consenting to the extraordinary measures employed in his behalf.

One writer comments on faith:

**Faith works - The men expended great effort to help their friend.**

**Faith persists - They didn't let personal inconvenience stop them.**

**Faith succeeds - Their faith was rewarded. The man was healed.**

It is to be noted that faith in God which leads to "interrupting" God when He is the middle of some activity will not go un-noticed, for God is well pleased when believers demonstrate their faith in Him.

Note that Jesus never rebuked them. Believers should never lose their ability to defy the status quo and should not fall prey to the attitude that they are afraid to do anything, simply because it might be criticized. One should never be afraid to bring their needs to God and the brethren should never put obstacles in their way but should be ready to help meet their needs.

**Verse 6-7.** Mark now shifts the focus away from the paralysed man to the Scribes who had been silently listening to Jesus and observing everything that was happening. If calling this poor paralytic *son* surprised the scribes, who were too far removed from the ordinary people to speak to them so familiarly, they were totally taken aback, when Jesus pronounced the man's sins forgiven. One writer notes:

**"Scribes were professionals trained in the interpretation of Jewish law. They are often mentioned in association with the Pharisees, who led a lay reform movement within Judaism. Concerned to preserve the Jewish faith and way of life in the midst of Roman occupation, the Pharisees took seriously God's calling of Israel to be "a priestly kingdom and a holy nation" (Exodus 19:6). They sought to renew the faith by applying biblical laws concerning ritual purity to all Jews (not only priests) and to all aspects of daily life (not only temple worship), with special attention to dietary laws and Sabbath observances.**



**While scribes and Pharisees valued debate about interpretation of the law, opinions were formed on the weight of precedent and tradition. Jesus troubles them because he speaks and acts on his own authority, without deference to tradition (1:22). He seems cavalier about law observance and simply makes pronouncements, claiming to speak and act for God. Thus, they view him as a threat to the religious and social order”.**

Cynically ignoring all that Jesus had said and done up to this point in His ministry that clearly marked Him as the Promised Messiah of Scripture (Isaiah 61), some scribes present in the audience, who had doubtlessly come to check out the charismatic Rabbi from Galilee, in their hearts, not publicly, accused Jesus of blasphemy.

Clearly, they were suspicious of Jesus and quite sceptical. This is the first of five confrontations or controversies with the leadership of Israel, that really show us the continuing fight between good and evil. Some would not show the active demonstration of faith by the men who had brought the paralysed man to Jesus through the roof.

Their spirit was clearly critical, and all of them, without consulting each other, were really asking themselves who Jesus thought He was. They knew the Old Testament Scriptures that only God can forgive sins and therefore one can recognize that they were right in their reasoning:

*.... who can forgive sins but God only? for the Scriptures had said: I even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake and will not remember thy sins. Isaiah 43:25.*

Luke provides some additional details that some Pharisees were also in attendance:

*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: and the power of the Lord was present to heal them, Luke 5:17.*

The presence of these notables is further evidence of Jesus' growing influence and we cannot fault them from coming to examine what Jesus was teaching, given the impact He was having among the people, His reputation recorded in Mark 1:32- 34 and given the fact that He was demonstrating tremendous and unheard of healing powers. They recognized the necessity of coming to some definite judgment regarding Jesus.

Here it is evident that they were refusing to see who Jesus was. Wilfully or not, they had drawn the wrong conclusion. They disregarded the fact that someone with impeccable prophetic credentials had pointed out Jesus as the Messiah, *the Lamb of God, who had come to take away the sins of the world.* John the Baptist proclamations could not be challenged.

The scribes were not faulty in their logic but were mistaken in their premises; hence Jesus will not deny their doctrine, but He will correct their mistaken application of it to Himself. This led them to reject the deity of Jesus and His position as Messiah, even though overwhelming evidence was right in front of their eyes.

**The word *blaspheme* originally means to speak evil of anyone, to injure by words, to blame unjustly. When applied to God, it means to speak of him unjustly, to ascribe to him acts and attributes that he does not possess, or to speak impiously or profanely. It also means to say or do anything by which his name or honour is insulted, or which conveys an impression unfavourable to God. It means, also, to attempt to do or say a thing which belongs to him alone, or which he only can do. This is its meaning here. Christ was charged *with saying a thing in his own name or attempting to do a thing which properly belonged to God*; thus,**





assuming the *place* of God, and doing him injury, as the scribes supposed, by an invasion of his prerogatives. "None," said they, (see Mark and Luke,) "can forgive sins but God only" In this they reasoned correctly. See Isaiah 43:25; 44:22. None of the prophets had this power; and by saying that *he forgave sins*, Jesus was understood to affirm that he was Divine; and as he proved this by working a miracle *expressly* to confirm the claim, it follows that he is Divine, or equal with the Father.

**Verse 8.** *Why reason ye...*

Jesus question challenged their denial of His deity, for He had read their minds, thereby displaying another attribute peculiar to God, that of His omniscience (Matt.12:25; John 2:25; 1Chron.28:9).

Jesus was not able to read their minds because of any recognized habit or tendency on their part to criticize Him, for this is the first recorded indication of hostility on the part of the scribes. The uncanny ability to know the inner thoughts of someone was to characterize Messiah (Isa.11:2-3) and itself proved He could forgive sins, for the attributes of God are inseparable. He that can read the mind can also forgive sins. In fact, it should have bothered them that Jesus read their thoughts and knew what they were questioning within themselves and that should have led them to accept that He was God visiting men.

We should learn from this that it is very dangerous to reason in our hearts and think that these reasoning escape God. God knows everything that happens in the hearts of men. Those who are believers and have the Holy Spirit should be very careful about inclining themselves toward the desires of the flesh. The Holy Spirit is always there, and we can grieve Him by our thoughts. Nothing in thought or action escapes the attention of God.

Jesus' reaction is a clear statement to His mercy and compassion. We see here and understand that even though Jesus knows of our sins and the particulars of each sin, He is still willing to forgive us. Our thoughts and actions should show therefore that we are ready to repent, obtain forgiveness of sins, and enter into eternal life.

Of note is the Bible's use of the word '*heart*' to mean the mind, the seat of reason and intelligence. It is often used in this manner in the Scriptures.

**Verse 9.** *Whether is it easier to say...*

Here Jesus confronts their doubts and will demonstrate before their very eyes His power to forgive sins, an unseen act, by doing the physically impossible, curing the palsied, a visible act. The key word in this verse is the word **say**, for at issue was the power or effect of his speech. One writer explains:

**The scribes after their first shock of surprise, thought that Jesus feared to attempt the fraud of a so-called miracle in the presence of learned men, lest he should be detected and exposed; and hence looked upon his present action as an attempt to bear himself safely off before the public, and to maintain his standing by the use of high-sounding words. They felt that he used words of unseen effect, because he dared not use those of seen effect. This was precisely the view that Jesus knew they would take, and that he wished them to take; for by showing his ability to work in the realms of sight that which is impossible; viz.: the healing of the sick man, he could place before them proof suited to their own reasoning that he had a like ability to work the impossible in the realms of the unseen; viz.: the forgiveness of the man's sins. By thus demonstrating his authority in the eternal and physical world, Jesus assures us of his dominion over the internal and spiritual**



Jesus' proposition that He could just as easily do the more difficult, external, thing that they could all see, and hence corroborate the fact that He had the power to do the thing that they could not see, namely, to forgive sins, should have settled the question as to who He really was, if in fact He could heal the man.

**Verse 10-11.** The tension must have been mounting in the hearts of the scribes and the other onlookers with each word Jesus spoke and in these verses, He drops the 'bomb' on them.....*so that ye may know*. Shocked or not, given the teaching of the Scriptures and the correct reasoning of the scribes that only God could forgive sins, if in fact the paralytic was healed, only one conclusion could be drawn. Jesus was in fact Messiah!

*That ye may know...*unequivocally, without apology, Jesus calling Himself the *Son of Man*, claims the power to forgive sins on earth, by ordering the paralytic to *take up thy bed, and go...* He would perform a wonder that only God could perform and then they would know that He had power to forgive sins. There are only two other recorded occasions of Jesus forgiving sins (Luke 7:48; 23:43) and given that His audience was representative of Jewish society, Jesus was here declaring to the nation, that He was the Messiah.

The phrase *on earth* implies He has another abode.

The *Son of Man*, His favorite name for Himself, is a title from Daniel 10:13 with profound implications, if this rabbi is in fact that *Son of Man*. Some argue Jesus use of the title emphasized His humanity, though here it is His divine personality that is in view. This miracle particularly highlights the human and divine natures of our Lord.

Note that this exchange between Jesus and the Scribes was carried on while the paralytic laid on the bed. We can just imagine what he might have been thinking during all this. Would he really believe that Jesus was saying that He could forgive his sin and that he would be able to do as Jesus commanded Him? Or would he accept what these religious professional leaders were saying that Jesus did not have the right to forgive sin? Who would he believe? Was his case really hopeless? Did he make a mistake to come to Jesus?

All these thoughts would have been running through his mind and we know that Satan would be trying to encourage this man to go into reverse. But in contrast to the lack of faith by the Scribes who just sat there dumb, all obstacles to faith were brushed aside.

**Verse 12.** The miracle was executed at Jesus' command. As was typical of His miracles, the man was immediately healed with a word: without incantations or agonizing's, without any long prayers, waving of hands, jerking of the head, or histrionics. It was totally and dramatically accomplished with utmost ease, without prior staging and with no props. In view of all the circumstances, this miracle was done under test conditions, proving dramatically the power and deity of Jesus. Thus, Jesus performed a three-fold miracle in the presence of those most interested in exposing it if false and most able to do so, had it not been true.





The audience reacted with wonder and amazement, but note, amazement doesn't equal belief. They readily admitted they had never seen it in that *fashion*, (**Literally, "seen paradoxes": things contrary to common thought and ordinary experience**), in one event, they had seen a threefold miracle: sins forgiven, thoughts read and palsied healed. Forgiving power of itself would not be a marvel for Jews but that a man, to all appearance like one of themselves should possess it, gave occasion for wonder.

But in contrast the Scribes remain seated and silent, while the people glorified God, the man took up his bed, walked out in front of everybody and went home. This paralysed man was so completely healed that he could not only get up and walk but had the ability to take up his bed and carry this piece of furniture.

By having the man take up his bed and keeping it for further use this man would be remembering where he had come from.

One commentator writes on this verse:

**As to the test of power or authority, the miracle of Jesus was very convincing; for in the popular opinion sin was a cause of which disease was the effect. We are told, on the authority of later rabbis, that it was a maxim among the Jews that no diseased person could be healed till his sins were blotted out. We also recognize a correlation between sins and diseases, which the Saviour's use of this miracle justifies. A mere miracle, such as swallowing fire or causing iron to float, would not prove his ability to forgive sins. The proof consisted in the relation which disease bears to sin, and the consequent relation which healing bears to forgiveness.**

## CONCLUSION

The inability of the scribes and Pharisees to recognize the proclamation that the time was fulfilled, and the kingdom of God had come near had disastrous consequences for them. They had ignored the human need for wholeness, for healing, and for acceptance. They had disregarded the preaching of the prophet Amos in chapter 5 and Hosea in 6:6. The prophets had called to

***"Let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream"*** as well as shown the mind of God which led Him to say,

***"I desire mercy, not sacrifice"***.

We too should recognize that there are ominous consequences when we ignore or disregard who Jesus is and His concern for human beings over ritual observances of the law. We cannot think that just by going to Church and believing in the Law and Commandments of God that that is sufficient.

We should recognize that the present order of the world does not concern itself with serving human needs. It is about domination and making a clear distinction between insiders and outsiders so that they can preserve power and status.



Jesus was called to heal, and His words and actions certainly pose a threat to the established order for He wants every man to have a new vision, a recognition that God fundamentally wants to change humanity from its present disastrous course of action.

So, we need to ask you to question whether there is anything bold about your faith. Are you like Jacob who wrestled with One who some consider to be the pre-incarnate Christ saying that he Jacob would not let Him go until He blessed him?

Are you simply being polite with Jesus in your relationship with Him instead of being bold and insist when you go into His presence that you are going to take His words seriously?

Do not forget that He takes your words seriously.

Do you think that making a hole in the roof is a problem for Jesus?

Do you think that the buildings or things are more important to Him than the people who come to Him in faith and make the right choices as was made by these five men?

Look closely at the situation of this lame and paralyzed Man who lived in Capernaum and was not going anywhere. His physical situation was not really an emergency for though awful his circumstances would not change normally. His circumstances were going to be the same as one writer says the next day, and the next day, and the next day.

So why would his friends decide that it was most important that they do not wait one moment longer or for Jesus' teaching to end and the crowd to disperse? They decided that there was urgency though it does not seem to us to be a life-or-death situation physically.

The emergency does not seem to relate to the man's physical condition. This lame man must have been in a spiritual crisis. The writer of Hebrews 4:7 gives us good advice and a warning which might have relevance to this case:

***“Therefore God again set a certain date, calling it Today.***

***Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts”.***

Remember therefore that the Holy Spirit must have been talking to this lame man and a decision had to be made that would change everything. He might have been blaming God for his paralysis and everything had become so unbearable to him that he realized that he could not live anymore without some help from this man of God and so his friends assisted him with this visit of urgency.

This paralyzed man had to have his sins forgiven. Jesus was therefore focused on this most important issue and not simply on the healing that had to be done. Jesus therefore had to forgive the sins of the lame man and give him relief from his despair over the things that he had done to erect a wall between himself and God. The spiritual burdens had been lifted.

So, in thinking about yourself do you think that your knowledge of the Bible or your status in Church or in the world will guarantee your forgivingness?

Are you serving God the Father, Jesus the Son, and the Holy Spirit who are all passionate about forgiving sins and would love to remove burdens from people, since they are generous with grace and mercy?

There are many who are aware of their failures and are ashamed, who long for some relief from the struggle, want to believe that God would be there for them and not against them. They want to start with the sense that God is on their side and that there is no barrier between them and God.



So, let us pick up our mats, shake off our paralysis, and walk, telling everyone that Jesus the Great Saviour and Miracle Worker has the authority to forgive sins.

The Good News is that Jesus is still the Healer. It is most dangerous to ignore that. The world in most cases do not like to pay attention to the matter of sin which has twisted man inside and makes it impossible for him to want to come to God without the powerful work of the Holy Spirit.

Jesus calls us to announce that He is there to forgive sins and to reconcile men with God the Father.

This offer of forgiveness can cleanse all sin. We are warned by one writer:

***“There are many people in our communities whose souls are being strangled by guilt, regret and self-absorption. We can speak the healing word of Jesus that tears apart the stranglehold from somebody, and allow the cleansing work of God, by his Spirit to flood into that person's life, bringing release and freedom from bondage.***

***When hurting people came to Jesus, he didn't turn them away, but showed them God's loving compassion. He announced God's forgiveness: he drove away sin-sickness and the symptoms that go with it: hopelessness, guilt, and despair. We are called to that kind of compassionate caring in the same way that Jesus modeled God's loving care”.***

