

GOT FORGIVENESS?

The paralyzed man could not bring himself to Jesus. His friends made a ruckus lowering him through the roof. As the dust settles, the people strain eyes and ears for what will happen next. They expected Jesus to heal. Through the mess and interruption, what will Jesus do?

Luke 5:20 "When Jesus saw their faith, He said, Man, your sins are forgiven you." This is one of the Bible's most blessed statements (Psalm 32). Jesus met the real need, spiritual. Disease and death are consequences of the sin of mankind, and Christ had come to deliver from sin.

1- PEOPLE CRITICIZE CHRIST. This man was now spiritually whole, forgiven of sin. But still paralyzed. He had come to be healed. So Jesus' words are truly provocative. All the people are amazed. But some are outraged. Most came to see a miracle, but some came to find fault. The scribes and Pharisees began to question, "Who is this who speaks blasphemies?"

"Who can forgive sins but God alone?" This is correct. They knew their Bibles. Exodus 34:7, Isaiah 1:18, Isaiah 43, where God says, "Besides Me there is no Savior. I, I am He who blots out your transgressions for My name's sake." Leviticus 24:16 says "whoever blasphemes the name of the Lord shall surely be put to death." Sin and blasphemy are both to be taken seriously.

2- JESUS KNOWS THOUGHTS. Talk about cranking up the controversy! In pronouncing forgiveness of sins, Jesus claims authority and power that belong only to God. Christ is not only anointed by God, He IS God, come in the flesh. And He knows their answers before He asks.

Jesus perceived their thoughts and asked, "Why do you question in your hearts? Which is easier, to say, your sins are forgiven you, or to say, rise and walk?" The holier-than-thou learned men were pricked to their hearts. "The omniscience of God should frighten hypocrites out of their hypocrisy," notes JC Ryle, "they may deceive man, but they are not deceiving Christ."

Which is easier? A priest can verify a healing, but no man can verify forgiveness of sins. Both are divine prerogatives. So their religious logic was paralyzed. Then Jesus shows His power.

3- JESUS HEALS THE NEEDY. "But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins," Jesus said as he turned to the man who was paralyzed, "I say to you, rise, pick up your bed and go home." And immediately he rose and went, glorifying God. Jesus both forgives and heals. He has the divine ability and spiritual moral authority to do so. He both declares and demonstrates his power and authority, so "that you may know."

"Son of Man" occurs 83 times in the New Testament, and is the way Jesus most often refers to Himself. He is the Son of God incarnate, come in the flesh as a human. He is the atoning Son of Man (Matthew 17:22,23) who gives His life to pay for sin. He is the apocalyptic Son of Man (Daniel 7:13-14, Acts 7:56, Revelation 1:13) who now reigns in heaven over all things.

4- JESUS SETS THEM FREE. In Luke 4, Jesus the Christ announced that He was anointed by God to bring good news to the needy, recovery of sight, and liberty to the captives. These allusions to healing remind us the word ultimately refers to wholeness, complete healing, body, mind, soul. Jesus came to give people far more than they were coming to Him for!

They came to see miracles and great teaching. He came to heal them to the uttermost. Those paralyzed by sin will be set free, and raised up to new spiritual life in Christ. "Unresolved guilt can paralyze emotionally and physically," notes RC Sproul. "Take your guilt to Christ, our Great High Priest, who alone has authority to forgive sins" (Hebrews 4, 1Peter 2:24, Colossians 2:13).

5- RIP OPEN THE ROOFS! Verse 26 "Amazement seized them all, and they glorified God and were filled with awe, saying, we have seen extraordinary things today!" Receive Christ's forgiveness in your life, and make every effort to bring others to Him. Don't give in to obstacles that block someone from believing, but take the challenge to get out of your comfort zone.

"God dug through the roof of the world and lowered down His Son so that Jesus could die for our sins," notes RK Hughes. "Our family and friends will not likely know the healing touch of Christ unless we have the kind of love that rips open roofs. If not, do we really love them?" Scripture connects healing with repentance and faith. Trust and obey God's Word. Pray for God's healing in your life, family, church, community, and nation, as you repent of your sins today! ☐