

## Jesus Healed a Paralyzed Man

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn the importance of focusing on the fact that Jesus wants to transform lives. Jesus will use our faithful sharing of the Word of God to change people and transform their lives. In this topic, we will see that Jesus healed a man that was paralyzed.

In Matthew 9:1-2, we read, “So He got into a boat, crossed over, and came to His own city. Then behold, they brought to Him a paralytic lying on a bed. When Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytic, “‘Son, be of good cheer; your sins are forgiven you.’” The people of the area of Gergesa had asked Jesus to leave their area because their pigs were more important to them than people. As a result, Jesus and the disciples got into the boat and went across the Sea of Galilee to the city that Jesus was using as His home city. From Matthew 4:13, we see that city was Capernaum. That verse says, “And leaving Nazareth, He came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is by the sea, in the regions of Zebulun and Naphtali.”

Luke also wrote what Jesus did after He made Capernaum His home city. Luke 5:16-17 says, “So He Himself *often* withdrew into the wilderness and prayed. Now it happened on a certain day, as He was teaching, that there were Pharisees and teachers of the law sitting by, who had come out of every town of Galilee, Judea, and Jerusalem. And the power of the Lord was *present* to heal them.” Here, we see that Pharisees and scribes had come from many places because they heard what Jesus was doing. The people came to hear what Jesus taught and see what He did. In contrast, the scribes and the Pharisees came to look for an excuse to condemn Jesus because their hearts were evil. Jesus had left the crowds to go to the area of Gergesa by boat. The crowds had then gone to Capernaum because they thought that Jesus would return there, which happened very soon because the people of Gergesa asked Jesus to leave their area.

After Jesus arrived in Capernaum, we see that a paralyzed man was brought to Jesus. Mark 2:3-4 says, “Then they came to Him, bringing a paralytic who was carried by four *men*. And when they could not come near Him because of the crowd, they uncovered the roof where He was. So when they had broken through, they let down the bed on which the paralytic was lying.” From these verses, we see that four friends had a great concern to see their friend healed. Their faith caused them to refuse to let anything stop them from getting their friend to Jesus.

Jesus saw and honored the faith of the four friends by what He said to the paralyzed man. Jesus spoke to the paralyzed man and said, “Son, be of good cheer; your sins are forgiven you.” The fact that Jesus began by telling the man that his sins were forgiven may be an indication that this particular man was paralyzed because of his own sin. At other times, Jesus made it very clear that physical problems were not the result of sin. In John 9:1-3, we read, “Now as *Jesus* passed by, He saw a man who was blind from birth. And His disciples asked Him, saying, ‘Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?’ Jesus answered, ‘Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but that the works of God should be revealed in him.’” This passage makes it clear that the purpose of some physical problems is to bring glory of God.

The message of forgiveness certainly brought joy to the heart of the man that was paralyzed. However, it produced a very different reaction among the scribes that were there that day. Matthew 9:3-5 says, “And at once some of the scribes said within themselves, ‘This Man blasphemes!’ But Jesus, knowing their thoughts,

said, ‘Why do you think evil in your hearts? For which is easier, to say, ‘Your sins are forgiven you,’ or to say, ‘Arise and walk?’” The scribes were eager to find some excuse to condemn Jesus and we see the result of that eagerness in these verses. The scribes immediately thought within their hearts “This Man blasphemes!” In their hearts, the scribes immediately accused Jesus of blasphemy. Later, in Jerusalem, other Jews put this same inner attitude into words. John 10:33 says, “The Jews answered Him, saying, ‘For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy, and because You, being a Man, make Yourself God.’”

Here, we see that Jesus knew that these men were accusing him of blasphemy in their hearts. As a result, Jesus asked a question that actually gave them proof that He is God and has the power to forgive sins. Jesus just asked the question, “Why do you think evil in your hearts?” The fact that Jesus could know what was in their hearts showed that He is God. If Jesus were a man, He would not have known what was in their hearts. In 1 Corinthians 2:11, we read, “For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God.” However, Jesus did know what was in their hearts because He is God.

In fact, Jesus revealed the evil character of their hearts. Jeremiah 17:9 says, “The heart *is* deceitful above all *things*, and desperately wicked; who can know it?” Genesis 6:5 says, “Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man *was* great in the earth, and *that* every intent of the thoughts of his heart *was* only evil continually.” Many of the scribes, Pharisees and Sadducees showed that their hearts were like the hearts of the people in the time of Noah because they refused to believe that Jesus is God, in spite of all of the signs which Jesus did. This is an example of the fact that whatever is in the heart will determine how a person views everything that they see or hear as they go through life.

Jesus went on to explain that He could heal this man by saying two different things. He could say, “Your sins are forgiven you,” and the man would be healed. He could also say, “Arise and walk,” and the man would be healed. Either way, the fact that a man who was paralyzed would be totally healed was evidence of the fact that Jesus is God. We see that Jesus was making it necessary for people to examine their own hearts and make a choice. Each person has to choose within his or her heart either to believe that Jesus is God or to deny that Jesus is God. All people today still have to make that same choice. John 1:12 gives a wonderful promise to all who truly believe and receive Jesus as Lord. That verse says, “But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name.” The scribes there that day chose to deny that Jesus is God and so they did not receive eternal life.

We go on to see what Jesus did after He talked about the hearts of the scribes and Pharisees. Matthew 9:6-8 says, “‘But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins’—then He said to the paralytic, ‘Arise, take up your bed, and go to your house.’ And he arose and departed to his house. Now when the multitudes saw *it*, they marveled and glorified God, who had given such power to men.” Jesus said that He would show that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins. Then Jesus said to the man, “Arise, take up your bed, and go to your house.” The man immediately took up his bed and went home. However, that miracle did not change the hearts of the scribes because they had made the choice that they were not going to believe that Jesus is God.

In contrast, we see that there was a different response by the multitudes. We see that the multitudes marveled and glorified God. The word translated “marveled” means *to wonder at or to be amazed*. This is the word that was used to describe the disciples in the previous chapter when Jesus calmed the storm. Matthew 8:27 says, “So the men marveled, saying, ‘Who can this be, that even the winds and the sea obey Him?’” However, even

when people marvel and are amazed, it does not mean they always believe and receive. Mark 12:17 says, “And Jesus answered and said to them, ‘Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s.’ And they marveled at Him.” This verse shows us that people can be amazed and still refuse to believe that Jesus is the Christ.

However, part of the multitude did show evidence that could indicate belief that this man had his sins forgiven and was healed. We see that there were many in the multitude that glorified God and recognized that God was the source of the power that healed the man. Those who were true disciples were growing in their understanding of who Jesus was and is. John 20:30-31 says, “And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.” Jesus knew that many in the multitude did not have true belief, but He wanted those who were becoming His disciples to recognize that Jesus had both the power to heal and also the power to forgive sins.

This is also the reason why we share the Word of God with others and not just our own opinions about Jesus. Hebrews 4:12 says, “For the word of God *is* living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” Our thoughts and opinions about Jesus may cause people to be amazed. However, the Word of God will do much more. The Word of God will discern the thoughts and the intents of their hearts. Romans 10:10 tells what happens when the Word of God reveals the intents of the heart. That verse says, “For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.” Our opinions many convince the mind but only the Word of God can change the heart. That is why we want to help our physical and spiritual children understand the importance of sharing the Word of God rather than their own opinions when they are talking to others. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children learn to share the Word of God with others.