

October 10, 2021

## The Healing of the Paralytic

### Mark 2:1-12

1. *“And again He entered Capernaum after some days, and it was heard that He was in the house.*
2. *Immediately many gathered together, so that there was no longer room to receive them, not even near the door. And He preached the word to them.*
3. *Then they came to Him, bringing a paralytic who was carried by four men.*
4. *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.*
5. *When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, ‘Son, your sins are forgiven you.’*
6. *And some of the scribes were sitting there and reasoning in their hearts.*
7. *‘Why does this Man speak blasphemies like this? Who can forgive sin but God alone?’*
8. *But immediately, when Jesus perceived in His spirit that they reasoned thus within themselves, He said to them, ‘Why do you reason these things in your hearts?’*
9. *‘Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, ‘Your sins are forgiven you;,’ or to say, ‘Arise, take up your bed and walk?’*
10. *‘But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins’ — He said to the paralytic,*
11. *‘I say to you, arise, take up your bed, and go our way to your house.’*
12. *Immediately He arose, took up the bed, and went out in the presence of them all, so that all were amazed and glorified God saying, ‘We never saw anything like this!’” (NKJV)*

### Comments:

The above Scriptures record information pertaining to a paralyzed man of Capernaum, a man whose sins Jesus forgave, and whose body Jesus healed. Matthew 9:1-8 and Luke 5:16-26 are parallel accounts of this same event.

Jesus was the Master Teacher! Simply by reading the words Jesus spoke, one has to agree with certain officers who said, *“No man ever spoke like this man!”* (John 7:46). Hence, we should not be surprised to note that the house in Capernaum where Jesus *“preached the word”* was too crowded for four men carrying a paralytic to enter in at the door. But what does seem surprising was the extent to which these men went in order to bring *“a man who was paralyzed”* (Luke 5:18) into the presence of Jesus. As noted in the preceding Scriptures, they *“uncovered the roof”* of the house, and *“let down the bed on which the paralytic was lying!”* Two amazing things then took place: (1) Jesus said to the paralytic, *“Son, your sins are forgiven you”* and (2) Jesus also said to the paralytic *“arise, take up your bed, and go to your house”* (v. 5,11). At this point, to the amazement of all present, the man *“immediately”* arose, *“took up the bed, and went out in the presence of them all”* (v. 12)! *“Sweet saying! The bed hath borne the man, now the*

man bore the bed” (Bengel). Briefly, this capsules what occurred. But from this incident, there are several:

### Lessons to Be Learned

**1. When Jesus is in the house His presence cannot be hidden.** He entered Capernaum, the city He “*dwelt in*” after “*leaving Nazareth*” (Matt. 4:13), and where His labors were both abundant and noteworthy. In a very short time “*it was heard that He was in the house.*” Though Jesus is not here in the flesh, if He is indeed in the **hearts** of those who make up the house (family), His presence will not be hidden. It will be evidenced by the love manifested, the acts of hospitality shown, the conduct of those present, the examples set, and the service rendered to God.

**2. Some will never come to Jesus unless they are carried!** The paralytic’s condition rendered him helpless and hopeless. There was no way, on his own strength, that he could propel himself to Jesus. He **had** to be carried! By the same token, most people have been so exposed to and conditioned by immorality and false doctrine that they are virtually unable to learn the truth unless they, like the eunuch, have someone to “*guide*” them (Acts 8:31). The religion of Christ is a “*taught*” religion (John 6:44,45). Consequently, those who have been taught in the word must commit the same to “*faithful men who will be able to teach others also*” (2 Tim. 2:2). Every genuine conversion should set off a chain reaction of converted people converting others!

**3. Genuine faith in the heart is reflected in outward action.** The four men believed Jesus could heal the paralytic whom they carried. Hence, after they uncovered the roof and let down the bed on which the paralytic was lying, the record says that “*Jesus saw their faith*” (v. 5). He “*saw their faith*” because their faith was accompanied by “*works*” (cf. Jas. 2:14). They evidently knew that “*faith without works is dead*” (Jas. 2:20)!

**4. “Where there is a will there is a way.”** Because of the crowd, it was not easy for the four men to get the paralytic to Jesus. But they were determined to bring their paralytic friend to that One Who had demonstrated such healing power. Even though it was unconventional, they made a way! To the saints at Philippi the apostle Paul said “*it is God Who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure*” (Phil. 4:13). Invariably, the doing follows the willing. Too many people’s “**want to** is broken;” hence, a pebble of an obstacle is mentally magnified into a mountain too lofty to climb. Others, however, with a keen desire to worship and serve God, cheerfully surmount much greater difficulties, “*rejoicing*” that they are “*counted worthy to suffer shame for His name*” (Acts 5:41).

**5. Those who do the greatest deeds are often maligned.** Jesus forgave the sins of the paralytic, and the scribes concluded that He was speaking “*blasphemies*” (v. 7), thereby committing a sin which, under the law of Moses, was punishable by death — death by stoning (Lev. 24:16). Inasmuch as “*everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed*” (John 3:20), we should not think that we can “*walk in the light as He is in the light*” (I John 1:7) without paying a price. Jesus plainly said “*the world hates*” those who “*are not of the world*” (John 15:20). But informed, faithful Christians recognize that **bearing** the “*cross*” (Matt. 16:24) precedes **wearing** the “*crown*” (Rev. 2:10). Hence, they “*rejoice*” when they are “*persecuted for righteousness sake*” (Matt. 5:10-12).

**6. Jesus is God!** The scribes were correct in concluding that no one “*can forgive sin but God alone*” (v. 7). To the Lord belongs “*mercy and forgiveness*” (Dan. 9:9). All sin is “*against*” God (Ps. 51:3); hence, it is God Who “*blots out...transgressions*” (Isa. 43:25). The scribes knew this fundamental truth, but they greatly erred in not recognizing Jesus as God — God in the

*“flesh!”* Cf. John 1:1-3,14. His Name was called *“Immanuel,”* meaning *“God with us”* (Matt. 1:23), but the scribes regarded Him simply as a man among men. Hence, to prove that He was *“God,”* and that He had *“power on earth to forgive sins”* Jesus said to the paralytic, *“arise, take up your bed, and go your way to your house”* (v. 10,11). The fact that the formerly paralyzed man *“immediately...arose, took up the bed, and went out in the presence of all”* (v. 12) confirmed the deity and divinity of the One Who had already said *“your sins are forgiven you”* (v. 5). Incidentally, some of our own brethren who now claim that Jesus, while on earth, was *“just an ordinary guy”* have obviously missed the main point of this whole incident, and are mouthing words which border on blasphemy!

**7. When a man is healed his life will show it.** In the case of the paralytic, he was first *“healed”* spiritually (his sins were “forgiven) and then physically. Based on truths, which the lack of space prohibits our examining in this issue, we affirm that people today (following the completion of divine revelation) are not healed miraculously. But inward “healing” (i.e., the forgiveness of sins and becoming alive in Christ (Acts 2:38; Eph. 2:5) result from one’s obedience to the gospel of Christ. When this occurs, his life will show it, for he then begins to *“walk in newness of life”* (Rom. 6:4); he presents his body as *“a living sacrifice...to God”* (Rom. 12:1), and endeavors to let his *“conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ”* (Phil. 1:27).

#### **Conclusion:**

More “Lessons To Be Learned” could be cited from this incident in the life of Christ, but these are sufficient to make us more intimately aware of what Jesus can do for each of us, and to instill within each one of us a greater desire to bring others to the Christ Who can save the souls of men and women everywhere. What would have happened to the paralytic were it not for the four men who both cared and carried? And what would have been **our** fate had no one through proper teaching, brought us to Jesus? We have been taught in order to teach, and saved in order to save. Yes, concerning the four men, Jesus *“saw their faith”* when He witnessed them bringing a helpless sinner to Him. A question we need to ask ourselves is this: are **we**, in an effort to save the lost, acting in such a way that Jesus can see **our** faith?

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-B. Witherington