

BIBLE STORY: JESUS FORGIVES THE PARALYTIC
Matthew 9:1-13

Central Thoughts

- Sin is our greatest sickness and the cause of all other infirmities.
- The forgiveness of sins is our greatest need and the source of all other blessings from God.
- Jesus showed that He had the authority to forgive sins by restoring strength to the legs of the paralytic.
- Jesus has given the authority to forgive sins to His Church
- The restored strength to the legs of the crippled man is a sign of the resurrection of the body on the last day.

Discussion Questions

What is a paralytic?

Someone who is paralyzed and can't walk.

What is being paralyzed a sign of?

How sin paralyzes us and leaves us in bondage to sin and death from which we cannot set ourselves free.

Why did these people bring the paralytic to Jesus?

They believed in Jesus as the Savior.

What is the first thing Jesus said to the paralytic?

"Son, be of good cheer; your sins are forgiven you."

Why does Jesus call him "son"?

Because we become sons of God through His forgiveness.

Why does Jesus say, "Be of good cheer"?

Because the forgiveness of sins from God takes away all punishment and takes away the fear of death.

What did the scribes accuse Jesus of committing?

Blasphemy

What is the sin of blasphemy?

Taking or making use of power from God that a person has no right to.

What did the scribes claim Jesus had no right to do?

Forgive sin.

Which is easier, to say, "Your sins are forgiven you," or to say, "Arise, take up your bed...?"

Jesus is asking them about words that have power to do what they say. Do OUR words have power to forgive sins or make a crippled man walk? The answer is that we do not have the power to do either. BOTH are miracles of God. But unlike forgiveness, which is hidden, one can see a crippled man walk.

Why did Jesus tell the crippled man to arise, take up his bed and walk?

So that they would know that He had the authority from God to forgive sin.

Which is the greater miracle, and why?

Forgiving sin because sin is the cause of all our sickness and problems.

What was the response of the multitude after the crippled man arose and walked?

They marveled that God had given such power to men (plural).

What specific power are they marveling at?

The power to forgive sin.

To whom has God given this authority to today?

To the Holy Christian Church

How is this authority exercised today?

When pastors forgive the sins of penitent sinners in the stead and by the command of their Lord Jesus Christ, and when Christians forgive others in their vocation and station in life.

Where does God's forgiveness come from?

Jesus' suffering and death for sin upon the cross

Meditation on the Bible Story

Sin is our only real problem. Others brought the paralytic to Jesus because they believed He was the Savior from sin, death, and the power of the devil. Jesus first words, "Son, be of good cheer; your sins are forgiven you" teach us that our greatest need is to receive God's forgiveness. This is our greatest need because all our problems, including sicknesses and death are caused by sin. They accused Jesus of blasphemy, because only God can forgive sins. When Jesus heals the crippled man, He shows that He has the power and authority from God to forgive sins and that He has given that authority to men so that His forgiveness can be spread around the world. The miracle of healing lets us see the forgiveness of the Lord which is otherwise hidden. The miracle of restored strength to a crippled man teaches us that God's forgiveness sets us free from the bondage to sin and death. Sin paralyzes us, but God's forgiveness sets us free and gives us new life. The miracle of healing also shows us that on the last day, by the power of Jesus' forgiveness, we will rise from the dead. Jesus performs the miracle of healing to teach us that God's power to forgive sins has been given to men. This is why the multitude marveled. What an amazing gift. In this story, Jesus illustrates the power of His Word to actually give and perform the miracles of which the Word of God speaks.

The Office of the Keys is that peculiar, unique power which Christ has given to His Church on earth to forgive the sins of all penitent sinners and to withhold forgiveness from those who refuse to repent and believe the Gospel. Jesus has the authority to forgive sins because He faithfully suffered and died for our sins in His death upon the cross. In His resurrection from the dead, we see the power of His forgiveness to take away sin, which is the cause of death and all our maladies, and to give us new life with God. Jesus has given this authority to His Church. It is exercised by the ministers in the Office of the Ministry as they preach the Gospel, baptize, absolve penitent sinners, and distribute the Lord's Supper to the faithful. It is also the privilege that Christians have, according to their vocation and station in life, to forgive those who have sinned against them for the sake of Jesus who suffered and died for all.

Prayer on the Bible Story

O Lord Jesus, we give thanks to You that You have given the power to forgive sins to Your Church on earth. As we struggle with sin throughout our lifetime, give us faith to confess our sins, to receive Your absolution from our pastors, and to forgive one another as You have forgiven us; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.



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