

A Declaration of Those Things Which Are Most Surely Believed Among Us

An Expositional Study of **The Gospel According to Luke** **Chapter 5- Luke 5:17-20** **64- Saving Faith in a Paralyzed Man- Part 3**

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Luke 5:17-20

Now last week I told you how that by the time we get to this passage in **Luke 5**- the great battle lines for this epic conflict were clearly drawn between the sinless Jesus on one side and the self-righteous religious leaders on the other. And this conflict will continue to dominate our Journey through Luke from this time forward. This conflict gets so great and so harsh and so insurmountable that it will eventually result in the Jews breaking their own Laws to put on a kangaroo court to set Jesus up and have the Romans kill him by Crucifixion.

So right here in this passage Jesus provides these hostile religious hypocrites with an unforgettable experience and a formidable challenge to their man-made theology. So let's look at what happened. Verse 18 says:

And *some men were* carrying on a bed a man who was paralyzed; and they were trying to bring him in and to set him down in front of Him.

Now we know that wherever Jesus was teaching- that He always drew large crowds of people who had physical problems because He was miraculously and supernaturally and instantaneously healing people everywhere. And remember that when Jesus healed people- real organic diseases were destroyed and eliminated, and they went away totally healed. There was none of this "*I think I feel better*" business with Jesus like there is with so many of the so-called faith healers of our day.

So Luke tells us that in one of Jesus' meetings- here comes a group of friends bringing a man who's paralyzed. And Mark tells us that there were actually four men coming, and so there were these four plus the man on the bed. Now the word "bed" is "*kline*", and it means any kind of a bed. And this would have been a sort of *portable* bed. It's referred to later in the passage as a "stretcher", or a "pallet", and could have been a simple mat with a wooden frame which was a sort of a makeshift bed that this man could be carried on, and that indicates that the man was not mobile. The man couldn't move. He had physical paralysis.

And I want to remind you again that whenever you study the New Testament- people who have an illness are described by their symptoms and not their pathology. When we talk about people- and we don't do this anymore- we used to talk about "crippled people" or "handicapped people" or "blind people".

Nowadays because of education and the advancement of Medical Science- we tend to talk more about people in a clinical way, and we actually name the illness or the injury rather than refer simply to their symptoms. Today we say that this person has "polio", or this person has "muscular dystrophy" or "multiple sclerosis", or we say that this person had a "spinal-cord injury". So we are a little more clinical today about how we talk about these things and a little more pathological.

But back in ancient times- before they knew all about the pathology- people would simply describe a person's illness by describing their symptoms. And so Luke tells us about this man who is paralyzed. And he leaves it at that. So this could have been a form of muscular dystrophy or some kind of progressive disease, or it could have even been the result of some type of spinal-cord injury. This man's problem could have been a birth defect or some kind of genetic defect.

But based upon how Jesus responds to this man in verse 20- it is also very possible that this paralysis could have been caused by some sin that this man had committed like contracting syphilis through either adultery or fornication- because venereal diseases often caused paralysis back then in ancient times because they were left untreated.

And people who had contracted venereal diseases through their sinful behavior back then couldn't go to a doctor because they would have to give account of why they had contracted the disease and that would mean they would be stoned to death for their sexual

transgression, and so they didn't get any treatment and their disease kept getting worse and they eventually developed serious symptoms that everybody recognized, and at that point- they could no longer work and they were generally left out of society and pushed out into the streets to beg for food.

But it is interesting to know that even at this point- people like this cripple man were not as bad off as the lepers who had a disease that could easily be passed from one to another which would have frightening and deadly effects, and which would disastrously manifest in the physical destruction of the face and the extremities of the leprosy victim.

And so these cripples were allowed into society to a point- but they were greatly stigmatized as being vile sinners. Nobody would hire them, and so they were mocked and rejected and left to die on the streets. And this man bore that social stigma and that alienated him and made him an outcast and he would have been typically shunned.

And the super pious self-righteous people said that these cripples got that way because of sin and they deserved to die. And what was even worse was that this condemnation against those who had obviously sinned was eventually passed down toward those who were born blind or those children who were born cripple, or who had become cripples or blind early in life. And many of the Pharisees looked down their noses at these people and pronounced that they were obviously cursed by God for either some sin that the parents had committed or some sin that the child himself had done.

And the horror of throwing cripple children and blind children out into the streets and pronouncing God's Curse against them and their parents that stigmatized them and resulted in terrible treatment culminated in **John 9:3** when Jesus said this:

³ Jesus answered, "*It was neither that* this man sinned, nor his parents; but *it was* so that the works of God might be displayed in him.

Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him.

And he healed the man who was born blind and the Pharisees put the parents on trial.

Truly these self-righteous hypocrites had forgotten what God Himself said to Moses about the handicapped children of the world back in **Exodus 4**- so let's turn to that right now- **Exodus 4:10-12**:

10 Then Moses said to the LORD, “Please, Lord, I have never been eloquent, neither recently nor in time past, nor since You have spoken to Your servant; for I am slow of speech and slow of tongue.”

11 The LORD said to him, “Who has made man’s mouth? Or who makes *him* mute or deaf, or seeing or blind? Is it not I, the LORD?

12 Now then go, and I, even I, will be with your mouth, and teach you what you are to say.”

But even though God's Word is clear about people who are *born* with physical problems, or young children who develop mental or physical problems- there are always self-righteous and wayward people- even today- who teach that physical diseases and disorders and injuries are always the consequences of sin- either in them or in their parents- and that God is punishing these people for their wickedness.

Now it is true that grown people who sin with abandon usually do have terrible things happen to them- and that is a particular Judgment of God known as "Cause and Effect" Judgment which is the direct result of sinful behavior. God said, "Thou shalt not commit adultery", and when people rebel against God and commit sexual sins- their concepts about themselves is ruined, their marriages are wrecked, their children are destroyed, and many times- they get sick from various venereal diseases that are making a huge comeback in our day only because adultery and fornication are rampant in our day. This is what is called "Cause and Effect" Judgment.

For example, when homosexuals engage in their wicked behavior- they often get sick. Please look at **Romans 1:27** with me. That verse says:

And in the same way also the men abandoned the natural function of the woman and burned in their desire toward one another, men with men committing indecent acts and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error.

Now the "error" that God talked about here is the abominable sin that homosexuals willfully engage in, and the "recompence" that these lost sinners receive "in themselves"- is the miserable life, or the broken and shattered hope that they endure or the AIDS that they contract, and notice that God said here that this "recompence" is "meet" or fitting- meaning that the judgment that these people receive in themselves is the proper Divine Response to their wicked behavior.

But even at that- we would be wrong to throw these people out into the streets or to stigmatize them any more than we do with drunks or drug addicts or adulterers or those who steal. What they do is sin- absolutely, and God has condemned it, and God Himself brings about Cause and Effect Judgment on these people- not to destroy them but to bring them a place of desperation and repentance- the very same place that God had brought this paralyzed man here in **Luke 5**.

We must understand, dear friends, that the adulterer and the thief and the liar and the person who is covetous who is not saved will spend eternity in the very same hell as the homosexual. And the patriotic good man- who is not saved, and who has fought and died for his country who has adopted a particular type of morality about himself that is prevalent in the Deep South will spend eternity in the same hell as the homosexual.

And the Deacon and the Elder and the Pastor and the Worship Leader who is not saved will spend eternity in the very same hell as the homosexual.

Brothers and sisters- this issue must never be that we have committed "good sins" while they have committed the "bad sins", and by virtue of that- we are better people than they are. That somehow we are nicer and more acceptable to God and to one another than these dirty people who sin these vile sins because our sins are not as bad or they are not as offensive to God as their sins are.

That is the very same self-righteous hypocrisy that Jesus hated and exposed in the Pharisees. All sin is offensive to God. All sin is an affront to the Holiness and Righteous of Almighty God, and no sin is acceptable to God. And whether you have committed adultery or whether you have coveted after riches in your heart- whether you have broken one law in secret or whether you have broken all 10 laws out in the open- you are nothing more nor less than a transgressor of God's

holy and perfect Law, and that makes you to be in desperate need of forgiveness, and that makes you to be in desperate need of a Savior.

But this particular kind of Judgment called "Cause and Effect" Judgment comes your way because God said do not do that. If you insist on breaking the Law and steal money and you get caught- you will go to jail. That is Cause and Effect Judgment. And it really doesn't matter to those who arrest you and those who try you and those who imprison you are equally or even more sinful than you are. God has brought this trouble into your life as Mercy so that you will come to your senses and repent and trust in Jesus to be saved.

So "Cause and Effect" Judgment is that kind of Divine Judgment that comes naturally as the result of something that we willfully do. But all problems in life are not God's Judgment against something we have done. Some problems are given to us by God to purify our hearts; Others are allowed to come to mold us and to shape us and to bring patience and Mercy into focus in our lives. Other times God allows problems to come so that others may be used by God to be God's Agents of Mercy- relieving the suffering such as when the Church of Jesus all over the world responds to natural disasters and builds homes for blind children and facilities to help unwed mothers and places to keep mentally retarded people safe and cared for.

But because most people do not know the Bible- and because most people are not Christians- the fallen human self-righteous logic that condemns all birth defects as an Act of God's Wrath against either the child or the parents usually carries to this day. So this man would have been somewhat of a social outcast.

And here his four buddies bring him and they want to bring him to Jesus. And they were trying to bring their friend in and set him down in front of Jesus so that Jesus would heal him- you would think. And that is how this passage is usually preached. This section of God's Word is usually preached about physical healing and that the faith of these four friends was so great in tearing off the roof- that they got Jesus' attention and that is why Jesus healed this paralyzed man. And so usually the moral of the story is that the first one to move in is the devil and then we have to rise up and do something to get God's attention because God is either asleep at the wheel or He is on vacation or He forgot about us, and either God didn't know that the devil was going to attack us or He didn't care or He wasn't strong enough to stop

him and God is sitting up there waiting on us to rise up in faith- and that faith that we must exhibit first- allows God to ride in like the 7th Calvary to rescue us- unless, of course, we still don't have enough faith or unless we still have some kind of sin in our lives in which case even after we have prayed the prayers and cried out and have had hands laid on us- we still don't get healed.

And that is usually how this passage is preached. But please let me be the first one to tell you that that is not what this passage is about, and that scenario that I just told you is not how God heals people, and this is not Biblical and none of us need to be involved with any of that.

God is absolutely Sovereign, and he is absolutely Sovereign over everything, and he is absolutely Sovereign over everything all the time. And it was not the devil that allowed this man to be paralyzed- but God- acting in Mercy- to convict a lost sinner of his lost condition and to bring a wretched man to the most wonderful and most glorious place that a human being can ever reach- and that is a place of utter desperation and a place of brokenness and a place of repentance so that God may graciously and mercifully give this man the faith that he needs to be saved.

As I said earlier- this *particular* paralysis may have been a dysfunction like multiple sclerosis or a spinal cord injury or it may have been the result of this man being a wicked sinner and having untreated syphilis, and if that is true- if it is true that this man is sick with a venereal disease that has made him cripple- if that is why he is so desperate- now what would have been the goal of these men to get their friend in front of Jesus?

Most people read this passage and assume that all these men wanted was for Jesus to physically heal their friend- but in the man's heart- what he actually came for was forgiveness. And this man wanted forgiveness for the very same reason that any of us seek after forgiveness- because he knew he was guilty.

Now it is certainly possible that this man may well have connected his sickness to his own sin, and it may have been, if indeed it was syphilis, that that was the cause. This is something we can't be certain about.

But the main thing that this man wanted was forgiveness and along with the forgiveness- he would sure like to be healed, too, because

this man knew that Jesus could do both. And I think that this man believed Jesus- whether he knew He was God or not- I don't know- but he believed Jesus was *from* God, and he believed Jesus *represented* God on some level, and he believes that Jesus *spoke* for God. That is what is implied in what Luke writes here.

Now surely this man believed that Jesus could physically heal him- because he had either seen Jesus do that with others or has heard about it- but even more than that- this man believed- and he hoped- that Jesus would forgive his wicked sin.

So these men tried to bring him in and set him down in front of Jesus. But unfortunately they had no handicapped access back then and nobody moved. Now if *you* had been there that day and somebody came in with state of paralysis and there are four people who have got him on a stretcher, and this is somebody who has been carried perhaps some long distance, and they say to you, *"Could you please move and let us through? We'd like to get this man in front of Jesus,"* we would like to think that many of us would have been kind enough to move the crowd and they would be able to pass through.

And you can be sure that these men begged and pleaded and asked, but here- nobody responded. Why? Because this is the nature and the character of these self-righteous Pharisees. Those legalistic kinds of people tend to say, *"Go away, you dirty old man- get out of our sight and don't bother us here- we're spending time with Jesus and you're dirty and you're sinful and you're cursed of God and you don't belong next to this holy man."*

So instead of acting out of compassion and mercy for this cripple man- in hopes that God had convicted him and brought him to a place of repentance- this group of Pharisees and teachers of the Law actually formed a barrier with their bodies and with their hearts so that this man could not find the forgiveness that he was so desperately seeking after.

And this is a great warning to us today that we must not block the path of wicked sinners who are coming to Jesus for forgiveness. We must always keep the doors of this Church open to whoever God brings in here. As I have told you before- I must take the position that if God brings them in here- he wants me to work with them, and it must never matter how bad they have been or where they have been or what sin they have committed. If God the Holy Spirit is drawing them, and if

God has laid His Holy Hand on them- and they are convicted of their sin and they are broken over their transgressions and they are desperately seeking forgiveness- and God has Sovereignly given them saving faith- we better take heed to ourselves, dear friends, and not block their way to Jesus because of how dirty they are or how stigmatized their sin has become in our culture or how long they have been that way.

I pray for the abortion doctor, I pray for the homosexual, I pray for the liberal Democrat, I pray for the conservative Republican, I pray for the child molester, I pray for the thief and the liar and the poor man who has to beg for a bone, and I also pray for the rich man who is consumed with materialism and is eaten up with pride and arrogance and covetousness, because if any one of these people do not repent and if they do not turn from their sin and if they do not trust fully in the finished Work of the Lord Jesus Christ- they will all perish in the very same hell.

The inspired, infallible, inerrant Word of the one true living God has clearly declared that no one is good, all men are sinners, all have come short of the Glory of God, no one is righteous in themselves- all our righteousness is as filthy rags, and without the outside gracious and merciful empowerment and enablement of the Holy Ghost- not one single human being on earth would love God or seek after God or even care one whit for God. We love God this morning, dear friends, only because God has wondrously and marvelously *allowed* us the honor and privilege to know and love God. Other than that- we would be no different from anybody else.

These self-righteous religious hypocrites honestly believed that this dirty sinful paralyzed man had no business being there- no business at all of touching Jesus- and so they were determined to keep this man away from Jesus. Remember- this crowd was made up of the religionists of that day- not just average people, but those who honestly thought that no self-respecting Messiah would want anything to do with trash like this man.

Now there wasn't any side door in this house and evidently there weren't any windows either- and so there wasn't any way for these men to get in to Jesus. And these men were desperate to get their friend right up there in front of Jesus and put that man right down there because the man was desperate and they had captured something of his desperation.

Now whether or not people liked it, whether there was comfort in that, whether there was a certain amount of embarrassment that they should have felt was long past- we want this man right in front of Jesus so He can't overlook him.

And **Luke 5:19** says:

But not finding any way to bring him in because of the crowd, they went up on the roof and let him down through the tiles with his stretcher, into the middle of the crowd, in front of Jesus.

Now I don't want to get too much into early Israeli architecture, this is not complicated. Most of the houses were one-story houses. This was probably a big house, sort of a ranch style house in the typical square form or rectangular form that houses were built in the world at that time, and they were built out of sticks and mud. And the walls were built and then it could be a large house, probably was a large house for a crowd like this- and just the crowd of the Pharisees and the scribes would have been big enough.

But spanning the walls of the typical house in Israel during this time were beams, and the beams were set below the height of the walls so that they would create a short wall and a roof, and then the roof would act as a patio. The beams would cross and then in between the beams would be a combination of sticks and mud in general that would be put in there. And that was the typical way to build houses back then so that they had sort of a mud roof and they would cover that with a form of sticks and mud that would make a patio on the roof and they'd have an outside staircase.

So you just walk up those stairs and you're on the roof. The climate over there was suitable to that and the second floor was a very common place to go and eat or talk or even pray. And there were times when the weather was good that you would even sleep up there as well. And that was the roof.

Now in this case it probably was a large house because the Bible said that the roof had tiles on it. Luke tells us that these men got up on the roof and they let their friend down through the tiles. And archeologists have told us that tile roofing did exist prior to this time in the Mediterranean region and even in Israel. And so the fact that this

roof had tiles on it showed that whoever owned this house probably had a little more money than the average men in Israel in that day.

So it might have been a fairly large house with a tile roof. And these men got up on top. And there must have been some kind of a patio area and some portion of that roof tiled, or else they were heavy tiles that could support people who walked. Now the word for "tile" is *keramos*, and that word comes from the same word from which we get our word "ceramic" from. And there are all kinds of tiles that you can walk on. So it wouldn't be brittle tile, but something suitable for a roof- something in a house that would be fairly expensive because it would then indicate that people who owned it had some means. And that would be consistent with having a meeting there big enough to house this kind of crowd.

So these men just start peeling off the tile. And they've calculated exactly where Jesus is down below so that they can take the right tiles off and put the man right straight down in front of Him because they do not want Jesus to miss this man. And this indicates the desperation of this man's heart, *"Please, get me there; I don't want to be outside; I must be right in front of Jesus"*.

And so they calculate right where that is, and Jesus is teaching and all of a sudden tiles start coming off above His Head. And you can imagine this stuff is dropping down around Him as they're taking the tiles off. Now Luke doesn't comment on this- but this had to be a very interesting scene. And then you can imagine the people wondering, *"What in the world is going on up there? There are guys peeling the tiles back."*

And the next thing they know- down through the hole comes this man- right down through the tiles in the roof- with his stretcher and all- right down in front of Jesus. And that's exactly where this man wanted to be.

And this drama is really fascinating to me. Imagine just sitting there listening to Jesus and all of a sudden- your thoughts are, *"What in the world are these guys doing?"* And if you're the owner of the house, you're saying *"What are these guys doing? They're taking my roof apart."* But it had already gotten to the point where with Jesus everything was drama anyway. And when they saw a guy coming down on a stretcher, their thoughts were probably, *"This could really be*

something. Can He heal this man?" And I want you to freeze that picture in your mind and then look at verse 20.

Seeing their faith, He said, “Friend, your sins are forgiven you.”

But that's a very strange thing to say to a man who came to Jesus for physically healing isn't it? I mean at this point- nobody had told Jesus anything about this man, and since he was obviously paralyzed- and laying on a cot and being let down by these men right in front of Jesus- the first thought would have been physical healing, right?

And I cannot even begin to tell you how many sermons have been preached from this passage that only talk about the power of God to heal as long as we have enough faith to tear open the roof. And the moral of that type of teaching is that Jesus basically wants to heal everybody who is sick- but He can't and he won't unless we build up our faith to the point that it is strong enough and demonstrative enough to get Jesus' attention. Other than that- forget it.

But please notice that Jesus never even addressed this man's physical condition in these Words, did He? Jesus never said one Word about paralysis being of the devil or how that as long as faith is manifested- people can receive physical healings or any of that. No, these Words from Jesus right here have to do with this man being forgiven from his sin- not being healed from paralysis.

And that is because Jesus knew exactly what was in that man's heart. And even more important than that- Jesus knew what this man *needed* and not just what this man *wanted*. As God, Jesus was Omniscient and He knew everything about everything, and He knew what this man was there for- even though most people who were present at that meeting that day and many hundreds of thousands of people who read this from this passage in **Luke** in our day always go right to physical healing here.

But that is because most people are very shallow and they look to the immediate, to the present, and to the natural things and not to those things that are really important and those things that are eternal and the things that really matter.

Far more important than being healed from his paralysis is that this man is saying here by talking his friends into tearing open the roof and letting him down is, *"I can't stand the weight of my sin and I need*

forgiveness." That is infinitely more important and infinitely more valuable than being healed from his bed of paralysis.

So here was a poor, prisoner, blind and oppressed, in the language of **Luke 4:18& 19**. Here was the perfect candidate for forgiveness- a man so deeply convicted of his sin that he is desperate to get to Jesus.

Now notice the first part of **Luke 5:20** again that says,

Seeing their faith...

... so *all* of these men had faith- all of them. Faith to do what? Is this talking about faith to be healed or faith to be saved? It is talking about the faith to be saved or in other words- this is saving faith. So the message here is that you cannot get saved by proxy. You cannot get saved because somebody else is believing for you. No, you must be graced with the gift of faith that it takes to be saved or else you will never be saved. God must graciously grant you the faith to believe or else you will forever remain in your sins. So it wasn't the faith of the four guys that saved this man- it was the faith that God had graciously given to him.

Now they all had faith in that they believed that Jesus could and would forgive this man as soon as they got him to Jesus- they trusted in that. And it was this hope and this faith that was the very *source* of their desperation. This man was lost and going to hell, and the single most important thing that he needed and the thing that his friends thought was so important that they were willing to tear off the roof to get- was forgiveness and certainly not physical healing.

And so we see that this was more than just ordinary faith- this is strong, insistent, persistent, dismantling faith. This is undefeatable faith- the kind of faith that overcomes all barriers, all barricades, all obstacles. This is the kind of faith that bears all things and hope all thing and endures all things. This is faith that never fails; faith that never quits; faith that never gives up; faith that will not be stopped and will not stop until it gets to Jesus. Brothers and sisters- I want to introduce you to saving faith.

Now we need to know that the prevailing teaching in our age about physical healing for the most part is completely unbiblical. Jesus healed people all the time without them having any faith at all. And sometimes Jesus healed people who had great faith. So the single most

important factor in physical healing is not faith- it is the Will of God. If it is God's Will to heal you- then you will be healed no matter how weak or strong your faith is, and if it is not God's Will to heal you- you will not be healed- no matter how weak or strong your faith is.

What kinds of prayers you pray, or what you claim in the Name of Jesus, or who does the praying, or what kind of gift the individual supposedly has- has got absolutely nothing to do with it. "Not my will by Thine be done"- that is everything when you talk about physical healing.

But what we must understand is that first of all this situation here was *not* primarily about being healed- even though this man *did* receive a miraculous healing. This situation is all about Salvation because if your sins are forgiven, my friends- then you're blessed and you are saved. This portion of inspired Scripture was written here in **Luke 5** to tell us that that Jesus saved this man from his sin. This is Salvation. And this indicates where the faith of the man was directed. It was directed at the matter of sin in his heart.

Now what is very strange here is that no one spoke- at least the narrative doesn't indicate that anybody spoke. They didn't make any requests at all which is very common in the healing accounts that we hear today. Everybody today walks up to the man who supposedly has the gift of healing and they tell him what is wrong with them so he knows how to pray, right? That is because this man who is supposed to have all these gifts and all this power is a sinful human being just like everybody else, and unless you tell him- he doesn't know. He has absolutely no clue about how to pray or what to pray for unless you tell him. That is because no one but God is Omniscient- no one. And it is very important to understand that the devil isn't Omniscient either. Satan doesn't know everything either. The only reason why it looks like the devil knows so much is only because he has had 6,000 years of experience working with people.

But unlike the snake oil salesmen of our day who lay claim to being able to heal with their gifts and their power- Jesus knew exactly what this man needed- even though nobody said anything. This man comes down through the roof and he's lying there in his paralyzed condition before Jesus. Now most people would have seen his paralyzed condition and assumed that the man's most pressing need was to be able to get up and walk.

And again that is because what moves us is emotions and what we see and what we hear and what we taste and what we feel and how our carnal minds think. We like public displays of power- open shows of glory; we like for people to stand up and yell and scream and beat their chests and cry out- even though most of that isn't even real. We like to see people healed for the very same reason why we like to see train wrecks- we want to see something spectacular that "wows" us and that overwhelms our senses.

But Jesus knew what this man's real need was. And Jesus looks right at what's in his mind. And He knew that this man was coming that day before this man did. Jesus knew that the Spirit of God was convicting this man of sin and was drawing this man to Jesus even before the man knew it. Yea, Jesus knew this man before God made the worlds, and Jesus was there when God set His Love on this man and predestinated this man before he was born; before he did anything good or bad, Jesus was there when God chose to give this man Mercy instead of Justice, and when God the Holy Ghost came to this man to regenerate him or birth him from above, and Jesus was there when the Holy Spirit Sovereignly gave this man eyes to see, ears to hear, and took out of him a stony heart and gave him a heart of flesh. Now look at the end of **Luke 5:20**, where Jesus speaks to this man and says:

... Friend, your sins are forgiven you.

Now the word, "Friend" here is an endearing term, like what you would call someone that you were dealing with that you really didn't know. So Jesus says, "Friend," and let me tell you something, God doesn't call people "friend" lightly. Matthew and Mark say that Jesus also said, "Son." So to Jesus - this sinful paralyzed man was both a friend and a son. "Son," Matthew writes, "take courage." "Friend, your sins are forgiven you,". And the verb here is in the pluperfect sense in the Greek that always means a permanent condition. So what Jesus is saying here is that "Your sins are now *eternally* forgiven." And that is Salvation.

This man has been shaken with grief and fear over his sins and that is what has gripped his soul. He is now desperate to get to Jesus because he's heard the Message of the Good News that Jesus has come to the poor, and the prisoners, and the blind and the oppressed to

forgive them for all their sins and save them, and he knows he is lost and his lostness is reflected and illustrated, and analogous to his physical condition. Yes, he wanted a heavenly *Healer*, but even more than that- this man wanted a heavenly *Forgiver*. Jesus knew what he wanted and Jesus knew what he needed.

Now I want to spend some time on this because it is central to Biblical Christianity. There are some powerful things that we need to get right in our mind and hearts about this because if we get this wrong- the rest of Scripture will not make any sense. Now I am going to deal with some very deep and important issues here- so you might want to take notes. And interestingly enough- this has a lot to do with what we are studying on Sunday nights in **Romans** about the *Ordo Salutis*- or the **Order of Salvation**. So you might want to pick up those notes as well. Here goes. These are some terms that you need to know and eight Biblical concepts that you need to get so listen up.

1. The Bible teaches that Salvation is a Sovereign Act of God when God mercifully and graciously chooses to save unworthy sinners by Grace alone through Faith alone in the finished Work of Christ alone. But the entire concept of Salvation involves more than us getting saved or being Justified. Salvation also includes Sovereign Election, the Effectual Call, Regeneration, the Gospel Preached, Repentance and Trust, Justification, Adoption, Sanctification, Death, and finally when we get to Heaven and are given new immortal bodies- Salvation will climax with our Glorification.

2. The Bible teaches that Saving Faith is a gift from God. The kind of faith that it takes for a lost person to trust in Jesus for Salvation does *not* rest inside the lost person by birth. You are not *born* with saving faith. All people do not possess saving faith. Saving faith is *given* to lost people by a merciful Act of God.

3. The Bible teaches that without saving faith- nobody gets saved. The Fall of Adam so radically and so negatively ruined Man that he cannot and will not repent and trust in Jesus until he has been granted this saving faith.

4. The Bible also teaches that nobody gets saved apart from genuine repentance. There must be a cognizant recognition of sin and that their sin is evil and that it has offended God, and the individual must knowingly and willingly turn away from that sin to God in order to be saved.
5. The Bible teaches that Regeneration is the same thing as being born again. So when somebody is regenerate- they are born again. When somebody has not been regenerated- they are lost.
6. The Bible teaches that Justification is when you repent of your sins and trust in Jesus for Salvation. You are justified when you hear the Gospel, believe in its Truth, repent of your sins, and Jesus forgives you of all sin, and you are washed in Jesus' shed Blood and his spotless Righteousness is instantly imputed to you by faith alone.
7. The Bible teaches that being born again is *not* the same thing as being Justified. In other words- being Justified is different from being born again.
8. The Bible teaches that Regeneration *precedes* Justification. Being born again comes before you are Justified.

Now let me tell you that no one is ever forgiven apart from faith- and no one has ever been forgiven apart from repentance. And so we know that if Jesus forgave this man's sins- then he must have believed that God would forgive him, and he must have had a penitent heart a heart that is not hard like stone- but a soft, fleshly heart that has been Sovereignly given to him that replaced that hard heart.

So Jesus saw true genuine repentance in this paralyzed man's heart. And Jesus saw in the man's heart a desire and longing to be forgiven. And Jesus also saw the wicked spiritual condition of this man, and so He said to him, literally, "*Friend, your sins are dismissed permanently.*"

And at that very moment- by His Own Personal Authority as God- Jesus absolved that man of all guilt permanently. So Jesus came to save sinners and here Jesus saves this sinner. And this man is the prototype of many to follow in Jesus' Ministry.

Now it is very interesting that all the Pharisees and all the Sadducees with all their rituals and with all their ceremonies and with all their washings and with all their prayers and with all their religious activities- they all remain self-righteousness and they all remain unforgiven.

But this one poor, prisoner, this blind and oppressed man, this paralyzed outcast, this one sad, wretched, vile sinner who was graced with a penitent heart, who was given the faith to believe, who was chosen from before the foundation of the world to be saved- this man who desperately wanted to get right in front of Jesus and have his sin exposed and forgiven- this man received what none of the Pharisees or Jewish leaders ever got- their sins forgiven.

* This is like **Luke 18**- where the sinful publican is beating on his breast and is forgiven while the self-righteous Pharisee who spent his time telling God how good he was- was not. Here is this very same thing right here with this paralyzed man. God has Sovereignly granted this wicked man saving faith that has convicted him and made him desperate for forgiveness while God has not granted saving faith to the Pharisees.

So here are two kinds of people in front of Jesus- the self-righteous and the wretched. The wretched are forgiven while the self-righteous are deluded and damned. So I ask you this morning- which one are you? Are you poor and miserable and wretched and blind and naked, or are you self-righteous and good? Jesus came only to save the wretched sinners who by God's Grace know they are lost and know they are sinful and who make no bones about it- they freely confess their sins and eagerly repent and willfully trust in Jesus, while the self-righteous spend their time talking about how much they have done for God and of how spiritual they are and how righteous they are.

On that day and at that moment- Jesus forgave this man's sins permanently based on saving faith and his repentance. Jesus did that very same thing for me one day and did that for most of you- didn't He?

One day- that glorious day when Jesus said, "*Your sins are permanently forgiven, friend, son.*" And that is the Christian Gospel. That is the Good News. Do you know that forgiveness today? Have you received that forgiveness? Has God granted you with saving faith?

Let's come and pray.

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The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. Be watchful and quicken your pace. Soli Deo Gloria. For the Glory of God alone.