

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

62- Saving Faith in a Paralyzed Man- Part 1

February 28, 2010

Luke 5:17-20

It's a joy this morning for us to worship the Lord together by turning to His Word. And we are blessed today to pick back up on our Journey through **The Gospel According to Luke**. Last week, I completed our short vacation from **Luke** by looking at the Characteristics of a Strong and Healthy Church that was taught by the great Apostle Paul in **Titus 2**- and today we are back in **Luke**. If you missed any of those teachings- it would be good for you to get a copy.

Now as we work our way through the **Gospel of Luke**- we find that like the other three Gospels- **Luke** is an *expandable* Gospel. As we read the stories on their own, and the accounts, and the historical events that are recorded here- for the most part they can be easily understood. But as we look a little more closely- these events and these statements by Jesus have a way of expanding as we uncover the cultural background, and look at the linguistic background, and as we understand the geographical background, and then as we dive into the theological background- these words expand to a richness and a value in our lives that is almost impossible to exhaust. Truly it is a depth that is way beyond us.

And I think that's why the Apostle John said that the books of the entire world could not contain the things that could be written about Jesus Christ. Every time we get close to Him- which we are all the time in the Gospels- we find ourselves wrapped and shrouded in a depth of wisdom, and a depth of spiritual reality that is understandable only in a way that our limited minds could comprehend.

So again today we'll take a very simple story about a paralyzed man and try to plumb the riches of it.

Now today we want to examine verses 17-20. Now the story of this paralyzed man actually goes all the way down to verse 26- but we'll have to reserve the second part for later. But at the end of verse 20 we read:

Friend, your sins are forgiven you.

And this is probably the single most important statement that Jesus could ever tell anyone. **"Friend- your sins are forgiven you."** Nothing that Jesus could ever do for us and nothing that Jesus could ever say to us could ever be as great as Jesus forgiving our sins. Nothing else even comes close. Not physical healing, not financial blessings, not even spiritual power- nothing is even remotely as important as Jesus forgiving our sins. Nothing is even remotely in the same universe of importance as being forgiven of our sins by Jesus. And the fact that the people of the Church seldom think like this today is very troubling to me. But without our sins being forgiven- nothing else matters.

Now beyond all argument- the greatest Preacher Who ever lived was Jesus Christ, and beyond all argument- the single greatest Message that Jesus ever preached was the Message of forgiveness from sin. And that single Message is still the greatest Message ever preached. The Message that God will mercifully forgive all your sins if you repent and ask Him rather than having to *earn* that Forgiveness through obedience is the Good News- it is the "Euangelion", or the Gospel.

And like I have told you many times- the *reason* that the "Good News" is "Good" is because there is some really "Bad News". And it is the "Bad News" that makes the Gospel to be "Good News" and not simply "News". And the "Bad News" is that we are all guilty, we are all sinners, none of us are innocent, none of us are good, and none of us are righteous in and of ourselves. We have all transgressed the Law of God many, many, many times. And that's bad. But the "Bad News" doesn't stop there because God is perfectly Just and He is infinitely Righteous, and so as a Just and Righteous God, the God of the Bible, must Judge all sin or He would cease to be Just. And that is real "Bad News" for us sinners because God's Wrath is against us because of our sins, and His

Wrath against our sins is so hot and so terrible and so eternal that nobody can stand up in it or pass through it.

The Bible declares that God is infinitely Holy and infinitely Pure and infinitely Righteous, and that we are infinitely sinful so we are doomed if left to ourselves. No amount of human effort to improve your own morality, no amount of effort to obey God's Law, and no amount of human effort to become good enough to not be judged will cause any of us to stop sinning. We have to know that Sin is so deeply engrained in the DNA of all humans that neither the multiplied Threats of Divine Wrath, nor the multiplied Promises of Heavenly Rewards found constantly throughout the Bible is strong enough to cause any of us to cease from sin on a long term basis.

And the Law of God that is revealed in the Old Covenant did nothing but highlight our inability to be righteous and it confirm our fallen lostness. So by and through the Law of God- no one is made righteous because no one can fully obey the Law, and thus, the only net result of the Law of God is that every single human being on earth is correctly condemned as being a transgressor of the Law, and in and of ourselves we have no hope. That's the "Bad News", and nothing we do by and through our own power can change that.

Now the net result of correctly understanding what the Bible clearly teaches about your own sinfulness and about your own total inability to fix your sin problem, coupled with the knowledge that because we are sinners- the Wrath of God is bearing down on us like a freight train at 300 miles an hour and we are all chained to the railroad tracks- the net result of understanding all of this correctly is that Mercy becomes magnificent. Because if you cannot obey God's law and you cannot cease from sin and God's Anger is against you- what else can a condemned sinner look to other than the Mercy of God?

And so the New Covenant is "Good News" precisely because in that New Covenant- God the Father, through the finished Work of God the Son and in the Power of God the Holy Spirit- Sovereignly and Mercifully forgives all of our sins, and He Sovereignly and Graciously imputes the perfect Righteousness of Jesus to us- even though we are still sinful which allows us entrance into Heaven. And that is "Good News" indeed!

And Jesus came to preach *that* Message of Hope and Mercy, and Jesus came to Personally offer Himself as the Sacrifice to *guarantee*

that glorious Forgiveness to all who come honestly to God- desperate for Mercy, and to all who freely confess their sins and willingly turn from them- and Jesus Personally lived a sinless life- being tempted in all points like as we are- yet without sin- to *guarantee* that glorious Righteousness so that unworthy sinners may be gloriously saved by Grace through faith and not by Works.

And that is why I say to you that forgiveness from sin- of which we are all undeniably guilty- is the single most important and Benefit and Blessing and Gift that God could ever provide for us. Forgiveness is the door to all the other blessings. Forgiveness is the door to all the other blessings in this life. And Forgiveness is the door to eternal life in Heaven. And so the matter of Forgiveness of sin is the heart of the Christian Gospel. And that Message has been preached now for 2,000 consecutive years.

But here is the catch- you cannot preach the Christian Gospel about Forgiveness unless you understand sin and its horrible consequences. And you cannot fully understand sin unless you understand two other things that are primary- The Absolute Sovereignty of God- not only in Creation- but also in Salvation, and the Radical Ruination of Man that came about as the result of the Fall.

If you do not understand God's Sovereignty then you do not understand that the Justice of God demands that God judge all sin. And if you do not understand The Fall- then you cannot possibly understand the eternal consequences of sin and the utter inability of Man to cease from sin.

To understand that all men are sinners and that all men are alienated from God and that all humanity is headed toward eternal hell where they will forever be punished for their sins, and then to understand that God- in His Sovereign Mercy and by His Sovereign Grace has devised a means by which He will forgive sinners all their sins so they may escape His Just Wrath against their sins and enter into eternal bliss in the Glory of His Heaven- is the Full Gospel that is in such short supply these days.

And all true preachers preach *that* Message- both the Bad News and the Good News- without hesitation and without apology and without being ashamed of it to the point where we try to *minimize* the Bad News or try to make it look more attractive or try to disguise it as being something else.

Please turn with me to **The Acts 13**. In **The Acts 13:38&39** the Apostle Paul said:

38 Therefore let it be known to you, brethren, that through Him forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you,
39 and through Him everyone who believes is freed from all things, from which you could not be freed through the Law of Moses.

And back in **The Acts 10:34**- we see that great passage that is the essential element of the Christian Message, when the Apostle Peter said:

34 ... I most certainly understand *now* that God is not one to show partiality,
35 but in every nation the man who fears Him and does what is right is welcome to Him.
36 The word which He sent to the sons of Israel, preaching peace through Jesus Christ (He is Lord of all)—
37 you yourselves know the thing which took place throughout all Judea, starting from Galilee, after the baptism which John proclaimed.
38 *You know of* Jesus of Nazareth, how God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and with power, and *how* He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him.
39 We are witnesses of all the things He did both in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They also put Him to death by hanging Him on a cross.
40 God raised Him up on the third day and granted that He become visible,
41 not to all the people, but to witnesses who were chosen beforehand by God, *that is*, to us who ate and drank with Him after He arose from the dead.
42 And He ordered us to preach to the people, and solemnly to testify that this is the One who has been appointed by God as Judge of the living and the dead.
43 Of Him all the prophets bear witness that through His name everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins.

Now please turn with me to **Ephesians 1**. And beginning in **Ephesians 1:3**- the Apostle Paul wrote that great confession of God's Sovereign election in Salvation when he said:

3 Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly *places* in Christ,
4 just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love
5 He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will,
6 to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved.
7 In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace

So this is the great theme of the Christian Message- the Merciful Forgiveness of Sins through the Death, Burial, and Resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. And if you want to know what is distinctive about Christianity- this is it. God Almighty will forgive all your sins through Jesus which changes forever your relationship to God. And then instead of God being your Judge- God Himself becomes your Savior- in fact- God actually becomes your Father.

And instead of sending you to a devil's Hell in an act of Just and Proper Divine Retribution against your many sins- God takes you to Heaven in an act of gracious and merciful kindness- even though you certainly don't deserve that. And God will do all of this because your sins have been forgiven through the finished Work of Jesus Christ.

So that is the Message that Jesus came to preach, and that is what Jesus Personally came to do- to provide and to purchase and to assure and to guarantee that Forgiveness. And to do that- He had to die on the Cross and He had to Personally absorb the fullness of God's Judgment that rightfully belonged to us. And so because the Wrath of God- that should have been poured out on us- was poured out on Jesus- there is, therefore, now no Divine Condemnation to us who are saved, and we are now free to enter into Heaven! Now there isn't any "Better News" than that!

And I am at a loss to try to explain why so many ministers today who have the *opportunity* to preach this glorious Message of Forgiveness on national television and on the radio and in books don't- but they talk about things that are infinitely less important and utterly meaningless compared to saying this.

And I believe with all my heart it is because they either don't believe that God is really that Sovereign, or else they really do not believe that Man is that lost or both. Nobody in their right mind would be talking about money or physical health or how to interpret dreams if they really and truly thought that we are all wicked sinners, and unless God forgives us- we are doomed for all eternity.

Now even though most people understand that this is the Message of the *New Covenant*- most people today do not understand that this was also the very same message of the *Old Covenant*. We must realize, dear friends, that the 39 Books of the Old Covenant do not preach a different religion from the 27 Books of the New. The 66 Books of the Holy Bible preach one single Message- that God in His Infinite Mercy will forgive the sins of the guilty by Grace through Faith. It is interesting to hear people talk about the Judeo/Christian Religion as though Judaism- as practiced today by the unbelieving Jews- is the religion of the Old Covenant. Nothing could be further from the Truth. All of the major characters of the Old Covenant who were saved- were saved the very same way that we are saved today- by Grace through Faith.

Jesus said that everything that Moses and the Prophets wrote in the 39 Books of the Old Covenant was about Him- and so anybody who rightly understands the *partial* Revelation of God in the Old Covenant will automatically come to Jesus through the perfected Revelation of the New Covenant. Period- end of statement. And so if they do not come to Jesus- then they do not rightly understand the Old Covenant. And so all of those people who teach from the Old Covenant today- if the summation of all their understanding of the 39 Books of the Old Covenant is not the Forgiveness of sins through the Death, Burial, and Resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ- then those people do not rightly understand what God revealed to Moses and the Prophets. And that includes every Jew on earth.

We must know that Jews are not saved any differently from Gentiles. Every man is a lost sinner- whether he is Jew or Gentile- and every man must repent and come to Jesus for the Forgiveness of sins- whether he is Jew or Gentile; and everyone who is saved is saved mercifully by Grace and through the agency of *saving* Faith in the finished Work of the Lord Jesus Christ- whether he is Jew or Gentile.

Nobody is saved by their obedience to the Law, *nobody* is saved by performing good deeds in their community, *nobody* is saved by partaking in Communion, *nobody* is saved by being baptized, and *nobody* is saved by speaking in tongues.

From Adam in the Garden in **Genesis** to John in his vision in **The Revelation**- we see God acting in a forgiving way toward undeserving sinners. That is the whole saga of Redemption. At the very beginning when Adam had sinned and God has cursed him- immediately it is God Who pays absolutely no attention at all to Adam's weak efforts at covering his own nakedness with fig leaves, and so God Sovereignly sets about to kill an animal and Personally makes garments to cover Adam and Eve- showing that Salvation is of the Lord and not the product of human effort.

And we saw this so clearly in the lives of those four old people that Luke told us about in the previous Chapters - Zacharias and Elizabeth and Anna and Simeon. These old people lived their entire lives under the Law and they had the most to lose by abandoning the partial Revelation that God gave to Moses as the neared their deaths- but these old people all rejoiced at Jesus because they understood that everything that God gave to Moses pointed to Jesus, and when they finally saw Jesus- or in the case of Zacharias and Elizabeth- when they just heard that He was coming- they eagerly and joyfully embraced Him as Lord and Master!

Now please turn with me back to **Exodus 34**. And in **Exodus 34:6&7**- after Moses had broken the original tables of stone- and he wanted to see the Glory of God- God appeared to Moses and the Bible says that God proclaimed the Name of the Lord to Moses and walked by Moses as told Moses Who He was- God said:

6 ... The LORD, the LORD God, compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness and truth;
7 who keeps lovingkindness for thousands, who forgives iniquity, transgression and sin; yet He will by no means leave *the guilty* unpunished, visiting the iniquity of fathers on the children and on the grandchildren to the third and fourth generations.

And here in this proclamation- in verse 6- God Himself used four similar statements about Himself when He summed up the

completeness of His Forgiveness. He is a Merciful God, He is a Gracious God, He is longsuffering, and He abounds in goodness and Truth.

And then in verse 7- God says about Himself that He keeps mercy for thousands- not everybody- but for a lot of people- and look at the second phrase in verse 7:

... forgives iniquity, transgression and sin ...

So even back in the Old Covenant- we see that God revealed Himself to Man as being merciful, and a God Who forgives iniquity, transgression and sin. And that's His Desire because that is His Nature. God is a saving God by Nature. So it is incorrect to think about God in the Old Covenant as being this angry vengeful destructive God and think about God in the New Covenant as being this sweet loving and forgiving God.

God never changes and He is the same today as He was before He created Adam. And back then immediately after Adam sinned- it was God Sovereignly moving toward this unworthy sinner in Mercy shedding the blood of animals to cover his nakedness.

Nehemiah 9:17 says,

... You are a God of forgiveness, Gracious and compassionate, Slow to anger and abounding in lovingkindness

And to show just how extensive that forgiveness is- **Psalm 103:12** says:

As far as the east is from the west, So far has He removed our transgressions from us.

Now how far is the East is from the West? That's infinite. So God has infinitely removed our sins from us.

Over in **Micah**- there is a remarkable testimony given about the goodness of God in the matter of forgiveness and **Micah 7:18** says:

18 Who is a God like You, who pardons iniquity And passes over the rebellious act of the remnant of His possession? He does not retain His anger forever, Because He delights in unchanging love.

19 He will again have compassion on us; He will tread our iniquities under foot. Yes, You will cast all their sins Into the depths of the sea.

And certainly the golden tongued prophet Isaiah understood the forgiving nature of God because there are a number of quotes from his prophecy that we could read. But listen in particular to **Isaiah 55:7:**

Let the wicked forsake his way And the unrighteous man his thoughts; And let him return to the LORD, And He will have compassion on him, And to our God, For He will abundantly pardon.

And in **Isaiah 38:17** it says,

... It is You who has kept my soul from the pit of nothingness, For You have cast all my sins behind Your back.

And in **Isaiah 43:25**- God Himself says:

I, even I, am the one who wipes out your transgressions for My own sake, And I will not remember your sins.

... In other words, by blotting out our transgressions and by not remembering our sins- those Sovereign actions on God's part puts His Own Grace and Glory on display for the whole world to see and marvel.

Now all of these Scriptures were revealed to Man under the Old Covenant and they testify about God being a merciful and forgiving God by His very Nature. So from the very beginning- way before Jesus was ever born- the God of the Bible is the Sovereign, Merciful, Divine Forgiver of unworthy sinners.

And He alone can do that. He is the only God, the only holy God, and the only all Powerful God Who can do this. He is the only God Who has been offended by all our sin; it is His Character and His Nature and His Person that we sin against. King David said in **Psalms 51:4**

Against You, You only, I have sinned And done what is evil in Your sight, So that You are justified when You speak And blameless when You judge.

...and the reason David said that was because God is the only God, the only eternal God. There is no other God beside Him, and it is He, the

one single holy eternal God, Who is offended by our sin. It is His holy Will and holy Law and Holy Person that is violated against when we sin and nobody else.

And because that is true- He alone then becomes our Judge and Executioner. So that logic must go forward and thus it is also true that it is only God Who has the Right and the Authority to forgive sin since He alone is the offended One. And since God alone is the Judge of all the earth- He alone sits on the Divine Bench to Sovereignly give Mercy to whom He will give mercy, and to Sovereignly give Justice to whom He will give Justice.

Now please keep all of this in mind- that only God can forgive sins since only God is the offended Party as we return back to Luke. Because in our passage back in **Luke 5**- Jesus did a very astonishing thing. Jesus actually and in reality forgave that man his sins. Now it doesn't say that Jesus simply *said* that He forgave the man- but that Jesus actually and in reality *issued* Divine Sovereign forgiveness of sins to that man.

And here is the \$64,000 issue. Because when Jesus did that- when Jesus pronounced the forgiveness of sins to that man- He was either doing the Sovereign Work that only God can do- or else Jesus was committing absolute blasphemy. And there is no room here for any compromise whatsoever. Either Jesus was, in fact, God Almighty in a human Body, and as God- Jesus had the Right and the Authority to Sovereignly give this unworthy sinner Divine Forgiveness for his sins, or else Jesus was an evil blasphemer and not worthy of any compliment.

And that is why I say that those who reject Christ's full Deity but give Him titles like "prophet" or "good man" or "teacher" or "humanitarian" are completely inconsistent in their thinking because if Jesus was in any way blaspheming here- if He was trying to offer to this man what only God Almighty can give to an unworthy sinner- the forgiveness of his sins- then Jesus is evil, and if Jesus is evil- then He is neither "good" nor is He a "teacher" nor is He a "humanitarian", and He certainly is no prophet of God.

So if you reject that Jesus was fully Deity- then you must also then say that Jesus was a very evil man for even trying to do here what only God can do. So only by saying that Jesus was God in a body can you continue to say that Jesus was even a good man.

And even though many people are confused about the full Deity of Jesus Christ in our day- make no mistake about it, dear friends- this was the issue here with the Pharisees. How do we know that? Please read with me **Luke 5:21:**

The scribes and the Pharisees began to reason, saying, “Who is this *man* who speaks blasphemies? Who can forgive sins, but God alone?”

Now I have to give these guys credit for one thing here- their theology about the subject of Divine Forgiveness of Sins was spot on. They were absolutely right about this- nobody *can* forgive sins except God Almighty. Nobody. Not one single priest on earth- not a Levitical priest back then nor a Roman Catholic or Episcopalian or Anglican priest today has the ability or the right or the power or the authority to forgive your sins; no minister can forgive sins, no prophet, no other sinful human being can forgive the sins of another sinful human being in an eternal sense except God.

So the Pharisees certainly knew enough about the Character and Nature of God through their relentless study of the 39 Books of the Old Covenant to know that *they* certainly did not have that kind of power.

Now it is true that we can forgive one another for an offense that we commit against each other- but that is far different from forgiving an offense that somebody commits against God. Only God can do that.

Now we tell lost sinners all the time that if they repent and seek forgiveness from God that He will grant it- and we can say that because we are simply repeating the Promise that God revealed in the Scriptures about Himself- but none of us can actually grant those sinners that forgiveness. That is strictly in God's Prerogative- and these Pharisees knew that.

So we have one of two possibilities. Either Jesus was, in fact, God, and because He is God- He had the Right and the Power and the Authority to forgive sins, or the second possibility is that Jesus was a wicked and evil blasphemer. And the Pharisees decided that Jesus was a wicked and evil blasphemer, and in making that assessment of Jesus- they blasphemed the Holy Spirit and they condemned their own souls to hell.

So in reality- this passage reaches a high-water mark in the Ministry of Jesus. We haven't been here before. This is the first time

Jesus has said this to somebody. He has been talking about preaching the Good News to the poor, prisoners, blind and oppressed. And He has been giving that Message in synagogue after synagogue, and in town after town- all around Galilee. But this very straightforward, very open, very blunt statement, "*Man, your sins are forgiven you,*" we haven't heard that before.

So, right here- Jesus is claiming to have the Authority and the Right and the Ability to forgive Sin. And by making that claim- Jesus is boldly and unapologetically claiming to be God. And this is so powerful because either Jesus is God or else He is a blasphemer and needs to be put to death. There is not any room for any compromise here.

So by making this statement- it is all or nothing; everything is on the table now; there is no turning back; it is either just this way or else everything fails. Jesus is not just a well-intentioned teacher. He is either a blasphemer or He is God Almighty in a human Body. And that is the choice.

So you can't come to Jesus with any of this patronizing nonsense about Him being a good teacher or a prophet that so many people spew out today. Either Jesus is Lord or else He is a liar or perhaps He is a lunatic. But He is one of those three things. And let's talk about that for a minute.

If Jesus *knew* that He was *not* God and yet He went around saying He *was* God- then Jesus was the worst of all people. That would make Jesus to be evil; He would have been a deceiver- because He was portraying Himself to be someone that He knew good and well He wasn't, and that is not innocence or nobility- that is on purpose and it is evil. So if Jesus knew He wasn't God and yet said that He was- then Jesus was evil and nobody should believe or follow Him.

Now if Jesus said He was God because He honestly thought that He was- then we have to say that Jesus was weak minded and He was mentally unstable and needed to be on medication, and He needed to be kept off in a place somewhere where He couldn't hurt Himself or anybody else, and He should be treated with mercy and compassion- but He should certainly should not be followed or believed any more than we would follow or believe any other mentally unstable soul.

So if either one of those two possibilities are true and Jesus was either a Liar or a Lunatic- then he should not be believed or followed by anyone. But here is the catch. If Jesus was either a Liar or a Lunatic-

then by definition- He could not possibly be a good man or a prophet or a teacher or someone who was noble or worthy of emulation. So those who reject Christ's full Deity like the modern Jews and the Muslims and the Jehovah's Witnesses and the Mormons and the Atheists must never say that Jesus was a Good man or someone worthy of us to follow.

The third possibility is that Jesus was exactly Who He said He was- God. And as God with a human Body- Jesus was the One and Only of the Father, and was the most unique Person in all of human history because He was fully God and fully Man. And as God- Jesus had the very same Power and the very same Authority and the very same Ability and the very same Nature and the very same Characteristics of God the Father. And this is exactly what the Bible says and this is exactly what we believe and this is exactly what we confess.

Now 1700 years ago- the Christian Church wrestled over this very issue for 42 years. And they debated and fought over the question of whether Jesus was of the very *same* Substance of God the Father or was Jesus of a *similar* but *different* Substance than God the Father. And the guy who brought the heresy into the Church that said that Jesus was of a similar but different Substance than God the Father was a guy named Arius, and the guy who stood up for Biblical Truth about the full Deity of Jesus back in the fourth century was a guy named Athanasius.

And the battle over the full Deity of Jesus centered on one letter of one word. And even though he was persecuted and excommunicated- and at one point in the debate Athanasius was the only Bishop in the entire Christian Church who held to the full Deity of Jesus- every other Bishop had been deceived by the teachings of Arius- who is the father of the Doctrine of the Jehovah's Witness Organization.

And at that moment- Athanasius became the Father of Biblical Orthodoxy by standing on what the Holy Ghost revealed about Jesus in **John 1:1-5&14** which says:

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

2 He was in the beginning with God.

3 All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.

4 In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men.

5 The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.

14 And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.

And after 42 years- the Christian Church formally and officially rejected the heresy of Arius and proclaimed that Jesus was of the very same Substance of God the Father. Arius was excommunicated and his teachings were thrown into the trash bin of history for about 1600 years until a Baptist preacher by the name of Charles Taze Russell dug them back up and was deceived by them and began to teach them, and today millions of people all over the world are deceived by the very same ancient heresy of Arius that denies the full Deity of Jesus Christ. So this is a big deal.

So, either Jesus is Yahweh in a human Body or else He is a deceiver or else He is mentally deranged because He *thinks* He's God when everybody knows He just needs to be on medication.

And there is no higher offense under Heaven than for some sinful fleshly carnal human being to say that they are God and to go around acting like he is God. This is the single most heinous crime that can be committed against God by any human being. And the Pharisees and the scribes knew this. So this was a very dramatic moment here.

But Luke has already solved this dilemma for us and we already know that Jesus is God. How do we know that? Because over 5 Chapters- Luke has made it abundantly clear to us. First there is the testimony of angels. Then there's the testimony of Zacharias and Elizabeth. Then there's the testimony of Joseph and Mary. Then there's the testimony of Anna and Simeon. Then there's the testimony of the shepherds who heard the angelic chorus. Then there is the testimony of John the Baptist. Then there's the testimony of God the Father as he speaks out of Heaven when Jesus was baptized and said,

“This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased.”

Then there's the testimony of God the Holy Spirit Who descended on Jesus at His baptism and remained. Then there is the testimony again of His triumph when Jesus totally vanquished Satan in the temptation in the wilderness. And then there's the testimony of His

absolute Power and Authority over organic diseases, His absolute Power and Authority over demons, His absolute Power and Authority over Death, and then there is the amazing account of the fishing story we just studied where Jesus shows His absolute Power and Authority over Nature itself.

And all of these testimonies that Luke is so careful to give us over these five Chapters prove to us Who Jesus is- that He is 100% God and 100% Man at the same time, in the same Body, without conflict or contradiction.

So to those who have read the evidence that Luke has irrefutably put forth before us- there is no doubt, there is no confusion, there is no hesitation, there is no apology- Jesus Christ is fully God with a human Body.

So when Jesus says here-

Friend, your sins are forgiven you.

So after 5 Chapters of irrefutable proof- this statement by Jesus doesn't shock us in the least. We already know that only God controls nature; we already know that only God controls demons and only God controls holy angels. We already know all of that. And we already know that only God can produce a birth in a virgin womb. So we already know that Jesus is God.

But this is the very, very critical point, however, when Jesus moves out of the physical realm, and He moves out of the spiritual realm in dealing with angels and demons, and he moves into the moral realm and deals with sin. And even here- in no uncertain terms, without any hesitation- Jesus just matter of factly claims to be the Divine God Who forgives sin.

And Jesus still forgives today, dear friends. Jesus is still in the business of being fully God and fully Man. And as God- Jesus walked this earth for 33-1/2 years without any sin at all. He was tempted every minute of every day just like we are - yet unlike any of us- Jesus never one time yielded to temptation and Jesus never sinned. Jesus lived a perfectly sinless life and because of that- Jesus developed His Own perfect Righteousness that is given to everyone who repents and trusts in Him for Salvation.

So from the very beginning- God was a saving God by Nature and as God- Jesus went about to seek and to save those who were lost. Have you trusted in Jesus today? Have you come to Jesus so that He might save your soul? Have your sins been forgiven by this God/Man- Jesus Christ?

Let's come and pray.

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The Covenant of Peace Church 13600 John Clark Road Gulfport, Mississippi 39503 228.832.7729 www.covenantofpeace.net

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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.