



1 And he entered into a ship, and passed over, and came into his own city. 2 And, behold, they brought to him a man sick of the palsy, lying on a bed: and Jesus seeing their faith said unto the sick of the palsy; **Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee.** 3 And, behold, certain of the scribes said within themselves, This man blasphemeth. 4 And Jesus knowing their thoughts said, **Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts?** 5 **For whether is easier, to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and walk?** 6 **But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins,** (then saith he to the sick of the palsy,) **Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house.** 7 And he arose, and departed to his house. 8 But when the multitudes saw it, they marvelled, and glorified God, which had given such power unto men. (Matt 9:1-8)

Jesus, in the previous chapter, has just cast demons from two young men which He sent into a nearby herd of swine. The two men were set free from these demons, but the swine rushed over a cliff into the waters below and perished. The herdsmen rushed into the city and told all. We are told the entire village turned out to meet Jesus – not to express gratitude for the goodness to those possessed of demons – but to prevail upon Christ to depart from their shores. They feared loss of revenue more than loss of their own souls. So Christ departs, since He is a gentleman and does not impose His company upon those who do not welcome Him, and proceeds across the Sea of Galilee to His own hometown. It is here that we pick up on today's text.

And he entered into a ship, and passed over, and came into his own city

It is likely that multitudes were anxiously following the movements of Christ by word of mouth. Every rumor of His coming was eagerly received. Were it the same today!

And, behold, they brought to him a man sick of the palsy, lying on a bed

Amazingly, there were men who had early heard of Christ's crossing to them from the Gaderenes. They had already, by their strong faith, gone to the home of their cherished friend and prepared him on a stretcher to bring to Christ. We are not told of the faith of the man afflicted by palsy, but the faith of his friends would prove sufficient. The man being brought to Christ had a serious illness. It was a CHRONIC illness much as sin is to every man born of woman. His illness had taken away his

liberty to move, to associate, and to speak out on matters of faith and life. Doesn't sin steal away our liberty in the same way?

Now this man is being brought to Christ, on the strength of his friends' faith, to make him whole. It is much like the woman taken in adultery being dragged before Christ – the only source of healing and forgiveness – by men who intended her no good at all. We have all needed a friend, or even a stranger, to bring us to Christ and introduce us to that great Personage and Lord. The man with the palsy was in a most miserable of human conditions. So were we before we were brought to Christ.

There are two powers revealed here in the text – the power of sin to destroy and make miserable, and the power of Christ to make whole and impart joy and liberty. We see in this account that our own faith may be essential to bring another to the point of being made whole in Christ. We learn, too, that often the efforts of more than one is necessary to bring one to Christ, and these must work in unison (in carrying the bed level at all corners).

*Jesus seeing their faith said unto the sick of the palsy; **Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee.***

Jesus' notice is fixed on the faith of the men who bring the victim sick of the palsy – not the victim. He sees THEIR faith and is moved to compassion and amazement. One point I will make at the onset of the account: the furthest thing from the mind of the man afflicted by this horrible ailment is most likely not forgiveness. He desires, above everything else, to be made free of the disease. But he does not realize that faith precedes freedom and liberty. In first aid, we learn that the most important consideration in treating a victim of some violent crime or accident is to STOP THE BLEEDING, if there is any bleeding. This is the medical procedure of 'triage' which requires treatment of the most serious and life-threatening condition first. Our most serious affliction is not leprosy, or palsy, or physical blindness! It is SIN. Sin kills finally and forever! Jesus treats that affliction first! ***Be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee.***

And, behold, certain of the scribes said within themselves, This man blasphemeth.

That's right! That same old gang of detractors and doubters that followed Christ everywhere. They still follow Him and doubt the miracles of life and love of which God is benefactor. They saw Christ heal blind Bartemeus; they saw Him call Lazarus from the grave at Bethany; they saw the young daughter of Jairus restored to life – yet, they believed not. Why not, do you suppose? I believe it was because they did not WANT to believe! If we believe Christ, we must abandon self. Our free wills must be exchanged for that Will (Mind) which was in Christ! No longer would they be king of the mountain, but Christ would be – so they traded their birthrights in God for a bowl of Esau's porridge. But never doubt – our thoughts are not kept from the notice of Christ. He knows our hearts better than we know them ourselves.

*And Jesus knowing their thoughts said, **Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts?***

Be not deceived, God is not mocked! Jesus knows all of our thoughts – past, present, and future! Perhaps these rascals were shocked that Jesus read their hearts without their speaking. Why do ANY of us think evil in our hearts? Because, until we have known Christ as Lord and Savior, we have all of the traits and characteristics of our father, the devil.

For whether is easier, to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and walk?

Jesus Christ is God also. He has His seal of authority to prove all things. Any man could falsely proclaim, **Thy sins be forgiven thee!** But what would be the result?

Our sin would remain just as excessively as before the words were spoken. But when the same words are spoken by Christ, they bear the seal of Divine Authority! In truth, they are not the same words when spoken by Christ. Our words are like gold-colored lead coins compared to His 24 karat solid gold words of the Realm of Heaven. He proves all things by the Power of His Word. It is easy for man to speak false forgiveness, but what of speaking true healing? Forgiveness is an inward and invisible work of Grace granted by God. Physical healing is an outward manifestation of miraculous proportion. The first is greater, but the second is more observable! The foolish high churchmen (Pharisee) have been asked a question they dare not answer. Nonetheless, the answer is immediately revealed to their doubting eyes!

But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (then saith he to the sick of the palsy,) Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house.

The Seal of Authority of Christ is a plain manifestation to those who doubt. The man, stricken with the palsy, has been healed of his most critical disease (Sin) and is now given liberty to move and to shout after being healed of his palsy. He not only arises from his bed, he obeys that voice of authority and picks up his bed, and carries his bed to his house. Liberty in Christ is a TOTAL liberty! We are no longer held down and bed-ridden, but have liberty not only to move, but to bear burdens and to go to our wonderful home that awaits all who belong to Christ. *And he arose, and departed to his house.*

But when the multitudes saw it, they marvelled, and glorified God, which had given such power unto men

It is paradoxical, indeed, that the multitudes of common folk recognized the miracle as coming only from God, but the Pharisees did not! Of course, even the multitudes did not recognize that it was God Himself that stood before them, in Christ, to perform this miracle. How many today see the miracles but not the hand of Christ behind them? How many walk the lonely road to Damascus, wanting to see Christ, when He walks right beside them?

Behold, I am with thee always, even unto the end of the world!