

THE HEALING OF THE MAN WITH PALSY

Mark 2:1-12

Intro: As we come to this incident in the life of our Lord, the healing of the palsied, or paralytic, man, I want you to keep in mind the point that I tried to make with you last Sunday regarding Simon, Andrew, James, and John. They had been called to follow the Lord, to be with Him, to enter into fellowship with Him, with the Lord's promise that He would make them – not that they would make themselves – but that He would make them, “fishers of men.” So far as we know, they did not have any idea of what the Lord meant by those words, “fishers of men.” But we do know that they did not begin by preaching sermons, or healing the sick, or raising the dead, or driving away demons. *Their first responsibility was simply to be with the Lord, and to hear Him preach and to watch Him work.*

In chapter 3 where the Lord officially “ordained” twelve men to His apostles, we read that the first purpose that the Lord had for those men was “that they should be with Him.” And following that He said,

14 . . . and that he might send them forth to preach,

15 And to have power to heal sicknesses, and to cast out demons
(Mark 3:14b-15).

He was primarily calling these men to a life of fellowship with Himself. “Follow me.” Be with Me. Go where I go. Learn of Me. Let me teach you.

This is a very important point for all of us to remember. The Lord has saved us primarily because He wants us to be with Him. Do you remember that last request of the prayer the Lord prayed which is recorded for us in John 17? Let me read it for you. Listen to His request:

24 Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world
(John 17:24).

None of us should ever forget this simple but most amazing truth: the Lord has called us and saved us because *He wants us to be with Him*. He wants us! Don't ever feel that He doesn't have time for you. He wishes that you would come to Him more than you do.

That is a truth that goes back to the Garden of Eden when the Lord came to Adam and Eve to be with them, and it has special emphasis in the life

of Enoch in Genesis 5: “Enoch walked with God.” And it delighted the Lord so much that Enoch didn’t die; the Lord just “took him.” Nobody is going to be happier in heaven than God will be, than the Lord Jesus will be, than the Holy Spirit will be. He saved every one of us because He wants us to be “with Him.” He want us to be with Him so that we can know Him, love Him, trust Him, and be with Him! If you never learn anything else from the Gospel of Mark, this is the best lesson of all. Don’t forget it!

The leper by his disobedience to the Lord, spreading the news about how the Lord had cleansed him of his leprosy instead of going to the priest to tell him, and to be ceremonially cleansed, had made it impossible for the Lord to continue in the city. So great were the crowds who came to him, that He had to move His ministry out into the desert, but the people even followed Him there. This is how chapter 1 ended.

The next event which Mark recorded is found also in Matthew and Luke. In Matthew you will find it in chapter 9, verses 1 through 8; in Luke it is in chapter 5, verses 18 to 26. Basically the accounts are identical. Matthew does call the reaction of the scribes as “evil.”

We don’t know how long of a period of time passed between the end of chapter 1 and the beginning of chapter 2, but you can see that in chapter 2 verse 1 “after some days” our Lord was “back in town.” Capernaum had become his adopted home. Some commentators believe that the word house should be translated “home.” Whatever it was, the people soon filled the house to capacity. There was no room for anyone else to get in. But instead of getting irritated by what had happened, the Lord saw that it was an opportunity to do what He loved to do: to preach. He preached the Word. He preached the Gospel. (See chapter 1, verses 14 and 15.) And so we can call our first point:

I. HOUSE-PREACHING IN THE CITY (Mark 2:1-2).

Again we have to say that we do not know how long the Lord had been preaching when four men came carrying a man with palsy on what we would call a stretcher, completely paralyzed, so weak that he could not walk. The Greek word is *παραλυτικὸν*, from which we get our English word, *paralytic*. The four men carrying the paralytic, or palsied man, were faced with a problem. They couldn’t get into the house with their patient because of the crowd. But it did not take long for them to figure

out what they had to do.

Let's call it:

II. GETTING THE PARALYTIC TO THE LORD (Mark 2:3-4).

If anyone would do today what those four men did in that day, they would be charged with trespassing, the destruction of property, and would be carried off to jail. But nothing like that happened in those days. They proceeded to open up a section of the roof so that they could let their friend down into the house right where the Lord Jesus Christ was. This shows how determined they were to get help for their friend. Some people would be inclined to call it foolishness, but the Lord saw it as "faith."

And so the next thing that we see is:

III. THE LORD'S RESPONSE (Mark 2:5).

None of the Gospel writers say that any of the four men said a word, not did the paralyzed man say anything. The Lord took their action not as an intrusion, but as an act of faith. And this tells us something about all five of these men. Only those who are true believers in Christ and the Gospel, can exercise faith. Expositors differ as to whether when the Lord saw "their faith," He was thinking of just the four who let the man on the pallet down through the roof, or was He also thinking of the patient. I personally believe that He was thinking of all five of them. He called the paralytic, "Son," which is a translation of the Greek word *Τέκνον*. It means one who has been born, or a born-one, and so it seems that the Lord was addressing him as a child of God. He knows His sheep. He can call all of us by name. In His infinite wisdom the Lord looked upon these five men as all members of the family of God. Who can fully understand the ways of the Lord? It might have been then and there that the palsied man was drawn to the Savior.

The Lord didn't say anything about the illness of the man on the pallet. He simply said, "Son, thy sins be forgiven thee." What are we to understand about these words from our Lord?

They could mean that this man's illness was the result of sinning that he had done. It could mean that the Lord was pointing out to him that the

cause of all sickness is sin, that there would never have been sickness if it had not been for Adam's sin, nor would there have been death. And how wonderful it is to know that eventually there will be no more sin, no more sickness, and no more death – and all because of the death of our Lord Jesus Christ on the Cross where in what appeared to be a catastrophic defeat our Lord came forth from the grave the Victor over sin and death and hell.

Surely by those words spoken by our Lord Jesus Christ, He was pointing out that man's greatest need was the forgiveness of his sins. It must have been a time of great illumination for Simon and Andrew, and for James and John, who must have been there.

But there were some men there that day who did not like in any way what our Lord said. And so now let us think about:

IV. THE OBJECTION OF THE SCRIBES (Mark 2:6-7).

Luke tells us also that some Pharisees were there. Who were the scribes and the Pharisees. They were the religious leaders of the Jews. But they hated our Lord and were very jealous of the way the Jewish people flocked to hear His preaching. They had no Gospel to preach. Their religion was a religion of works, of bondage, and ultimately of death. They accused the Lord of blasphemy meaning that they were charging Him with sin because He claimed to forgive the sins of the palsied man. They weren't saying this audibly. They weren't discussing it among themselves. They reasoned these charges in the hearts. The same things were going on in all of their hearts. And they thought by keeping quiet they could keep the Lord from understanding their feelings.

But, not knowing that our Lord was Deity, the Son of God, they did not realize that He could read their thoughts just as easily as if He could have heard their words spoken openly.

We all need to remember, as David said in Psalm 139:2, that the Lord understands our thoughts wherever we are. We can't conceal a single thing from the Lord. He knows us like an open book. And this was being demonstrated before Simon and Andrew, James and John. It was learning time for them. This is truth that we all need to know and remember. This was the reason that David prayed,

14 Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be

acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer
(Psa. 19:14).

V. THE LORD'S RESPONSE (Mark 2:8-11).

The Lord asked those Jews two questions. The first one is in verse 8. (Read.) He was referring back to their questions in verse 7. Our Lord's second question is in verse 9. What are the answers to these questions.

The answer to our Lord's first question about the two questions that He knew were going through the minds of the scribes, was the same. They thought He was speaking blasphemously because they did not understand that He was "the Son of God." The answer to the Lord's second question is the same. They objected to Him doing what only God can do, forgive sins, because they did not know that He was God, the Son. Once a person gets clear on the Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ, then everything begins to get clear.

How would you answer the Lord's second question in verse 9? Of the commentators that I consulted, I didn't believe any of them really tried to answer this question.

The question is, Which of the Lord's two statements would you say was the easiest – to tell a man that his sins were forgiven, or to tell him to get up, pick up his bed, and walk?

What the Lord had said at the first was the easiest because no one could check to see if the sins were actually forgiven. And if God is the only One Who can forgive sins, what does it take for Him to declare that it is so? That is where the Gospel comes in which the Lord was preaching. Even God can only declare that sins are forgiven on the basis of the work of Christ on the Cross. Millions of millions of people have been told that they are forgiven because of the confession they make, or because of money that they have paid, or because of some "good" work that they have done. But that is not how sins are forgiven. So if they believe that they are forgiven, they are believing a lie.

But if the Lord told a paralyzed man to get up, take up his bed, and then go home, you and everyone else can see whether or not the person who has spoken is telling the truth by exactly what happened in this case.

So to show the scribes and Pharisees the Lord had authority on earth to forgive sins, He told the paralyzed man to “arise, take up thy bed, and go to thy house.” And this is what He did.

VI. THE OUTCOME (Mark 2:12).

Three things:

- 1) The man got up immediately.
- 2) He picked up his bed.
- 3) He went home, and everyone saw him go.

But two other things followed:

- 1) The people were amazed.
- 2) They gave the glory to God, confessing that they had never seen anything like this.

But no lives were changed, at least none recorded by what the Lord had done.

Concl: What would Simon and Andrew, James and John, have been able to learn about the Lord Jesus from this incident in His ministry?

- 1) His patience and profit with the people.
- 2) His gracious openness to the four men who brought the paralyzed man to Him.
- 3) His delight with the faith of the five men.
- 4) His wisdom in dealing with the scribes and Pharisees.
- 5) His power in healing the palsied man.

But the important question for us is, what have we learned?