

Matthew 9:1-7

Jesus sailed in a boat back across the Sea of Galilee to Capernaum which is called Jesus' home city. Capernaum was the home of Peter, and Peter's house became the headquarters for the ministry of Jesus. (Mark 2:1) The first recorded healing in this house was when Jesus healed the mother in law of Peter. Jesus grew up in Nazareth about twenty miles away. Capernaum was more centrally located with direct access to the Sea of Galilee. This would be comparable to moving from a place with no airport to a city with one so it would help you to save time with travel for work.

In this text people brought to Jesus a man lying on a bed. Matthew does not tell the story of removing the roof tiles and lowering the man before Jesus because they could not come inside the house because of the great crowd. The other synoptic gospels of Mark and Luke tell the great effort of the men to bring the paralytic to Jesus and going on the roof by way of the outside staircase, ripping off the roof tiles and lowering the man before Jesus.

Matthew focuses on the discussion that Jesus had with those present and his works to heal the paralytic of sins and paralysis.

Mark also tells us that four men carried the bed/stretchers of the paralytic. The man may have asked his friends and relatives to take him to Jesus. The text does not tell us where he came from and how far the journey was. It does tell us that the paralytic had people in his life that cared about him and were willing to exert great physical effort to bring him to Jesus. Their willingness to carry the man to Jesus and remove the roof tiles to lower their friend into the crowded room showed that they believed the journey and effort were worth it.

Kings and princes were also carried by men. They were carried on costly mobile chairs to show their affluence and power. They would sit in a regal position with a look of dominance. This was their choice of travel.

Cripples and paralytics are carried by men because of a lack of physical power and mobility. They lie on their backs as they are carried which declares weakness and a lack of power. They had no choice of their means of travel because they were unable to move on their own.

The more elaborate the apparatus that you were carried on showed your level of affluence.

If a king or great political leader been carried on his ornate, costly mobile chair to Peter's house they would have probably made way for the royal guest to come and be in Jesus' presence.

The paralytic did not have this luxury. It was a full house and no one was moving for him to enter.

The text says Jesus saw their faith. Faith is a belief and trust in God, his word and his abilities. Their faith was made visible because of their works. Their faith refers to the four men and the paralytic. All five came on the journey with faith. We know the paralytic had faith because sins cannot be forgiven without faith. Why would the four men bring the paralytic to Jesus if they did not believe Jesus could help?

When the men remove the roof tiles and lower the paralytic Jesus does not rebuke the men for destroying Peters' roof but he commends them and rewards them with the object of their quest, the restoration of their paralyzed friend.

We probably would have said in our hearts that these men are destroying Peters' house and disturbing Jesus' sermon. They are not civilized! Pagans!!!

People that were present were probably very surprised when the roof came off and the stretcher was lowered with the paralytic during the preaching time but they were even more surprised by what Jesus said next.

"Take heart my son, your sins are forgiven." Matthew 9:2

That is a big statement. *Jesus is declaring his Divinity and Divine power in this statement*

Four points in connection with this statement:

1. Sins can only be forgiven by the one who was wronged
2. Sins are committed against God
3. Jesus forgave the man's sins and by doing so was stating that the man had wronged him
4. By stating that the man had wronged him Jesus was declaring that he is God

Right away the religious leaders thought “This man is blaspheming.”

Luke 5:17 says there were “Pharisees and teachers from every village of Galilee and Judea and from Jerusalem.”

A lot of the best religious minds were probably present who knew the Jewish scriptures inside and out. Their response to Jesus’ words came back quick but it was in their minds and unspoken. The religious leaders were probably so taken back they did not immediately respond verbally. They may have been waiting to see what would happen next.

Mark 2:7, Why does this man speak like that? He is blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone?

If Jesus was a mere man and he saying he could forgive sins then that is truly blasphemy.

Jesus is fully man but he is not only man he is fully God also.

While Jesus is forgiving the paralytic man of his sins the scribes are sinning by declaring that Jesus’ words are evil. While the paralytic is having his sins forgiven the religious leaders are adding to their sin stockpile.

Matthew 9:4 “But Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said why do you think evil in your hearts?”

This also shows the Divinity and Divine power of Jesus because they were thinking these things and not speaking them. Jesus knew their thoughts and their hearts. Jesus responded to the questions they did not ask. No person knows another person’s heart. Only God knows our hearts.

Jesus responds to their silent questions by asking them questions. It was a 2 question oral exam that they did not respond to verbally.

1. Why do you think evil in your hearts?

Answer: unbelief

What is evil?

- A. Evil is doing and thinking the wrong God said not to. Things that are morally wrong.
- B. Evil is not doing and thinking the good God said to.

Evil is doing what is wrong in God’s eyes

To say that Jesus is speaking against God for saying to the paralytic man “your sins are forgiven” is evil. It is evil because it is not what God wants us to think or say because it is wrong.

2. Which is easier to say; your sins are forgiven, or to say rise and walk?

Answer: rise and walk

“Forgiving sins is more difficult than performing a miracle, as the scribes would know since they recognized that only God can forgive sins.” *Reformation Study Bible*

The paralytic came to be healed of his paralysis but Jesus addressed his sins first. This was the more important of the two. Forgiveness of sins is the greater healing. Jesus is also implying that the man's physical condition was caused by his sins.

The Old Testament declares that prophets of God did perform miracles through the power of God and people were healed. But no Old Testament prophet ever forgave peoples sins. That is something only God can do. No Old Testament prophet would even consider saying something like that. That is Ludacris. The Koran even states that Jesus performed miracles because Allah permitted it. They also say that Jesus in himself does not have power to heal. The New Testament declares that Jesus can forgive sins therefore, he does have power in and of himself to heal infirmities because he is God.

Jesus did the lesser deed to show that he could do the greater deed. Forgiveness of sins cannot be seen. Therefore, Jesus forgave the man's sins before he healed him of his paralysis.

If Jesus was a mere man and he was blaspheming against God he would not have power to heal the man of his paralysis. By healing the man of his physical infirmity Jesus was showing that he was not a sinner and was right with God, and by that showing that he could forgive sins.

Matthew 9:6 Jesus states that he "has authority on earth to forgive sins."

It is worded like this because sins can only be forgiven on earth.

There is no chance to receive forgiveness of sins after we die.

There is no second chance to receive forgiveness after we die like some religions teach.

This passage of scripture does not give the name of the paralyzed man and it records no words spoken by him. Though these verses speak volumes about him.

He believed Jesus could heal him though no one else had been able to.

He and his friends were willing to take drastic measures to come to Jesus because they believed he was the solution for their problems.

They did not question the words of Jesus, they only believed.

When he was told to take his bed and go home he immediately obeyed.

Four men walked to the house, five men walked away.

Four men came to Jesus carrying the burden of the paralytic man. The paralytic man came bearing the burden of his sins. All five returned home carrying none of the above.

Our society is big on reviews. Movie reviews. Book reviews. Music reviews. Food reviews

These are some of the reviews about Jesus' work in that house that day taken from the books of Matthew, Mark and Luke:

"We were afraid and glorified God."

"We were amazed and glorified God. We never saw anything like that."

"We were seized with amazement. We glorified God and were filled with awe. We saw extraordinary things that day."

The crowd's response was better than the religious leaders who believed Jesus was speaking against God. Although the crowds did not fully understand. They praised God who had given such authority to men. They saw Jesus as a godly man but you cannot be a mere godly man and go around forgiving sins. Even though they did not fully understand they did respond positively giving glory to God.

Conclusion

Things we learn from this scripture

1. Are you more like the scribes, the crowd, or the paralytic?
 - A. Do you not really believe what Jesus said and you find him untrustworthy
 - B. Do you see Jesus as a godly man but do not see him as Divine
 - C. Do you believe in Jesus and you will do anything to be in his presence
2. We may never be paralyzed like the man on the stretcher but paralyzing experiences will come to our lives. Those are the moments when we see that our situation is very serious and we realize there is nothing that we can do to change it. These moments scream of our smallness and helplessness.
 - A. In those moments will we give up
 - B. Or will we give it to God believing that he can do all things and all things well
3. It is also important that you have a support group to stand beside you in daily life and also when difficulties come.
 - A. We can help each other with our needs
 - B. We can encourage each other
 - C. We can help guide each other into making the right decisions
 - D. We can pray for each other. Isn't the definition of praying for others: bringing people, their situations and their problems before Jesus
4. Do you really believe that Jesus can do all things and especially in the midst of your most difficult times? Do you have that kind of belief, faith and trust in God?
5. Will you do anything to get before Jesus?

We have so many things that call for our attention and if we allow them they will block our way to Jesus. Work, Family, sickness, financial problems, marital problems, depression, bitterness,

These things may block our way to Jesus and become so big in our eyes that we cannot even see Jesus or the way to him.

The crowd may be blocking our view of Jesus.

The house may be blocking our view of Jesus.

The man made material may be blocking our way to Jesus.

That is when we need to take drastic steps and determine in our hearts that we will do whatever it takes to come before Jesus.

We need this kind of attitude in our lives everyday.

We will bust through all obstacles in order sit before Jesus!!!