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Healing What Matters

Various Scriptures

Prayer: *Father, we just again thank you, Lord, we just thank you that you are a God worthy of all glory. We praise you for who you are and what you have done for us and for what this communion represents, Lord, it represents the gift of the cross. And so we just pray today as we are looking again into your life, Lord, into what you've done for us at the cross, we pray for, again, wisdom and grace and insight and the presence of your Holy Spirit. Give us the ability to again open up your word and make it make sense and make it of permanent value, we pray this Jesus' name. Amen.*

Well, it is the second Sunday of the month and this is again the day that we remember Jesus and his cross. And again Jesus on the night before he died celebrated for the last time a Passover supper with his disciples. It's in Matthew 26, which we read saying: *Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread and after blessing it broke it and gave it to the disciples and said, "Take, eat; this is my body." And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, "Drink of it, all of you, for this is my blood of*

the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you I will not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom." So Jesus took bread and wine and he offered them up as symbols of his flesh and his blood, then he asked the disciples to eat the bread and drink the cup in order to symbolically eat his flesh and drink his blood. And then he asked them to repeat that remembrance and this is what we call "the Lord's table." We particularly celebrate it once a month and we do that by meditating on what it is the Lord Jesus Christ did for us on the cross, by examining ourselves, and that's a matter of asking God's Holy Spirit to point out those areas where he's convicting us of sin, it involves confessing our sin and then participating in the elements. *John 6:53 says: So Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you."*

Well, we are in the gospel of Mark. And as I've mentioned before, all four gospels preach different aspects of the life of Christ. Matthew presents Christ as king, Luke presents Christ as man, John presents Christ as God in the flesh, and Mark, Mark presents Jesus as servant. In fact Jesus said in *Mark 10: "For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."* Well, we've seen as we've been looking at the

opening chapters of the gospel of Mark that Jesus as servant is at war with the kingdom of darkness. We followed Mark's gospel as Jesus gets baptized by John the Baptist and then gets sent out into the wilderness to be tempted by Satan, and after successfully resisting him, he returns and begins to assembling the disciples as a team. He calls Simon, he calls Andrew, he calls James and John and he begins to minister right there in Capernaum. In fact he announces the beginning of his public ministry. *Mark 1:14* says: *Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel."*

Well in essence Jesus is proclaiming the beginning of the advance of the kingdom of light into the kingdom of darkness. And he begins by teaching in the synagogue at Capernaum. And immediately he's embroiled in a conflict with a man who is riddled with demons. We looked at this last time. This is verse 23, it says: *Now there was a man in their synagogue with an unclean spirit. And he cried out, saying, "Let us alone! What have we to do with You, Jesus of Nazareth? Did You come to destroy us? I know who You are -- the Holy One of God!"* And again as I said last time, if you look at the pronouns you recognize this is not a demon, this is a group of demons that is inhabiting this person. *"Let us alone!"* they say, *"Did You come to destroy us?"* Then it's their apparent spokesman

who says to Jesus, *"I know who you are -- the Holy One of God!"* So make no mistake about it, I mean, the demons know their bibles, the demons know their theology very, very well and they know exactly who Jesus is. And as obscured, as uneventful as this little gathering that took place in this synagogue appeared, it was on a spiritual plane, a huge shot across the bow of the kingdom of the evil one, who at this point had firm control over the entire earth. In fact the apostle John states in *1 John 5:19: The whole world lies in the power of the evil one.* It was a power and a control that the enemy had no intention of relinquishing.

So now here on earth itself is Jesus directly attacking the kingdom of darkness that had exercised complete control over the earth. John's gospel captures that aspect of Christ's ministry when he says of Jesus in *John 1:4*, he says: *In him was life, and the life was the light of man. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.* Well, for the rest of Jesus's three years of public ministry, we're going to see played out this clash between the kingdom of darkness and the kingdom of light. It's a clash that ended on a cross. Sometimes the kingdom of darkness just tries to use raw power and other times it used subtlety, it used human failing in order to try to hinder Jesus at every step. But Jesus anticipated their every move. Jesus went into this conflict with his eyes wide open, knowing exactly who he was facing

and what he needed to do. And so in the first chapter of Mark, we see Jesus devoted to healing a demon-filled man and we see this really as sort of the very first blow of the kingdom of light. And then we immediately see a response, we see a counter blow from the kingdom of darkness. *"Let us alone!" they say. "Did you come to destroy us?"* Well, Jesus' answer to that question was clear, it was unequivocal. It was *"Yes."* 1 John 3:8 says: *The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil.* So understand, Jesus' public ministry is always playing out against the backdrop of this ongoing war that's taking place between the two kingdoms who have two completely opposite agendas, according to Jesus. This is what he said in John 10, he said: *"The thief comes only to steal, and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly."* Well, to read Mark's gospel is to see this conflict unfold. And we see that when raw power failed to move Jesus in the slightest, the enemy just switched strategies. I mean if intimidation doesn't stop Jesus, then making him into a celebrity would at least slow him down, and that's exactly what Jesus is up against. Like I said, Jesus' authority and his power could not be kept silent and just as he knew that it would, his fame became a huge problem. If you read in the scripture you see many, many times when Jesus heals someone, he tells them to be quiet about it, be silent. He said that because he knew precisely the nature of the mission that he was on, he was there to preach

the gospel. If you look in Luke's gospel, you go back to the very beginning of Jesus' public ministry, you see how singularly focused Jesus was on that one task. Luke shows us Jesus in the synagogue, he's reading from the Torah, he's reading from the book of Isaiah and he addresses the congregation by telling them in Luke 4: *"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed."* Well, the Jesus who proclaimed that at that point, he was a nobody. He was the son of a carpenter with no fame, no following, no power. So Jesus had to prove that he was no ordinary man. And so he used the miraculous to demonstrate that this no name from Nazareth was really God in the flesh. But Jesus knew full well that his exercise of authority and power over sickness and disease would soon change the thrust of his mission from the eternal to the temporary. The crowds would now be seeking him not for the eternal freedom of their souls but instead for the temporary care and feeding of their bodies. He knew the enemy was going to thrust celebrity upon him and that would change the dynamic of his mission. He also knew that this was not a problem that was going to go away and that it was not good news. And so you see this picture of Jesus, he's torn by his compassion for the physically broken and his need to be about his primary mission.

At this point in Mark's gospel, Jesus' fame has already forced him to leave his home base and travel throughout Galilee and even there we see him in our text this morning about the business of miraculous healing. We pick up Mark's gospel at Mark 1:40, it says this, it says: *And a leper came to him, imploring him, and kneeling said to him, "If you will, you can make me clean." Moved with pity, he stretched out his hand and touched him and said to him, "I will; be clean." And immediately the leprosy left him, and he was made clean. And Jesus sternly charged him and sent him away at once, and said to him, "See that you say nothing to anyone, but go, show yourself to the priest and offer for your cleansing what Moses commanded for a proof to them." But he went out and began to talk freely about it, and to spread the news, so that Jesus could no longer openly enter a town, but was out in desolate places, and people were coming to him from every quarter.*

Well first let's look at the healing. Jesus heals this man, and in so doing he embraces one of the strongest taboos that there was within his culture. You just don't touch a leper. Mark once again, he just gives us the bare bones of the story. Mark only tells us that Jesus is approached by a leper. If we look at Luke's account of the very same thing, he fills the details in by telling us in his gospel that this man's leprosy was in advanced stage. Here's Luke's version of the same thing. He says: *While he was in*

one of the cities, there came a man full of leprosy. And when he saw Jesus, he fell on his face and begged him, "Lord, if you will, you can make me clean."

You know, leprosy doesn't really have the impact here that it did then and in that part of the world. I mean, we in the West really have no idea how devastating the disease leprosy is. And again, leprosy is a generic term that's applied to a variety of skin diseases that have disastrous consequences, from limbs falling off and your teeth falling out and body parts simply rotting. It was a terrifying disease that required the diseased one to be completely removed from society, including even his or her family. They were required to shout out if they saw any strangers approaching that he or she was unclean. I know when we were in India, we got to see firsthand just how devastating a disease this is. I mean we attended once, and I'll never forget this, we attended a worship service at a leper colony and I'll never forget seeing a drummer enthusiastically drumming away on a drum with drumsticks attached to the stumps of his hand with ropes. He had no more hands but he was still enthusiastically worshiping the Lord that way. See, the awful thing about leprosy is not just the disease but the complete social isolation it causes. If you're a leper, the only company you could possibly have is other lepers and it was so bad that if you were even seen petting a dog, the dog was then killed because

they were then terrified that the dog would bring in the leprosy. Jesus again, he's on his mission, he's preaching the gospel, and he's confronted with this man with an advanced case of leprosy and again we see Jesus do something astounding. *Mark 1:41* says: *Moved with pity, he stretched out his hand and touched him.* He not only heals the man but he touches him. And again it says he touched him deeply. And again, this is a cultural violation of the highest degree. It's also a biblical reversal of the law, a law that said that you are not to touch one with such a disease lest you become defiled as well. And we see that in scripture, I mean, when Moses' sister Miriam was afflicted with leprosy in Numbers 12, we see Moses appealing to God for healing and he grants it and Moses heals her but he heals her by sending her out of the camp for seven days. When Elisha heals Naaman of leprosy in 2 Kings, he instructs him that you must go to the Jordan and bathe in the Jordan seven times. Well in neither case would Moses or Elisha touch a leper. His disease represented defilement, and a priest touching him even unintentionally would become defiled as well. But not so with Jesus. Jesus' absolute perfection reverses the polarity of the flow of defilement. Instead of Jesus becoming defiled by the touch of a leper, the leper instead becomes instantly healed by the touch of Jesus. It is a glorious display of compassion and healing, but it is a distraction.

Remember why Jesus is already out here in this part of the country? Word had already gotten out that Jesus was healing and he's drawing crowds from everywhere. And so he was driven to leave that place because that very same celebrity status that he knew the enemy would use would again derail his ministry. Again we looked at how this happened last month. Jesus had previously confounded his disciples by abruptly leaving these huge crowds that they had gathered. The disciples think this is amazing. It says here in *Mark 1*, it says: *And Simon and those who were with him searched for him -- 'cause they couldn't find him. It says: And they found him and said to him, "Everyone is looking for you." And he said to them, "Let us go on to the next towns, that I might preach there also, for that is why I came out."* His disciples are blown away. They can't -- what are you doing? They can't understand what he's doing, but Jesus understood something it would take his disciples years to understand. The fact is every single one of Jesus' hearers was broken in a way that had eternal consequences, and only Jesus knew what those consequences were. You see, every single one of them and us was on our way to an eternity outside the presence of God, because every one of us is born fallen, broken, and sinful. Jesus alone was able to take on the penalty of your sin and my sin by laying down his perfect life as the substitute for my life of sin. And the miracle that Jesus was offering to virtually everyone who heard him wasn't just a temporal body made temporarily whole,

it was a soul set free from death by the payment that Jesus would make for them on the cross. Jesus knew that every one of those bodies that he was about to heal and restore was still going to eventually die, and that he was here to solve the problem of death eternally. Jesus knew exactly why he was here. It was to glorify his Father by rescuing hopelessly lost sinners. It was to transform hearts, to shape and mold us into the very image of the Son for the glory of the Father. And nothing was more important to him than that, not even physical sickness. So Jesus heals this leper, and the very thing that he's concerned about happens. Again, we pick up verse 43, it says: *And Jesus sternly charged him and sent him away at once, and said to him, "See that you say nothing to anyone, but go, show yourself to the priest and offer for your cleansing what Moses commanded, for a proof to them."* But he went out and began to talk freely about it, and to spread the news, so that Jesus could no longer openly enter a town, but was out in desolate places, and people were coming to him from every quarter.

You know, it's amazing, the pass that the leper gets from most commentators for what really was an act of complete disobedience. Jesus didn't just say, hey, keep this on the down low, don't make a big deal about this. He sternly charged him to say nothing. Well in response, the leper goes out -- quote -- "blazing the

information out" as one translation puts it. And I think we get it. I think we understand, his joy was so great that he couldn't contain himself. But he did disobey a clear commandment from the one who knows all things, including how damaging his enthusiasm could become. In the end the leper ended up doing precisely what the enemy wanted, making it so Jesus -- quote -- *"could no longer openly enter a town,"* and he did it by disobeying, he did it by disobeying Jesus. That's why God says it is better to obey than to give sacrifice. We need to consider the source. When you start wondering whether or not I need to obey God, understand he knows the beginning from the end. We don't. We see through this glass darkly. We barely have a clue.

As the elders begin to pass out the bread, consider the compassion and the urgency of Jesus' mission. And as they're passing out the bread, we want to consider the warning that God gives in 1 Corinthians 11. God says: *But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this reason many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep. For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world.* As I say each month, communion is extremely serious business and to enter

into it in an unworthy manner is to literally court disaster. How do I know if I'm worthy? Well, if you're not absolutely confident that you are a child of the King, if you have not by faith trusted in Christ as your Savior, if you first need to be reconciled to your brother or sister before you bring the sacrifice of your presence to this altar, then don't take communion, just pass the elements on. I say it all the time, no one's going to think you're strange, they're going to say, I get it, I understand why, you don't feel at this point that it's an appropriate thing. I also point out on the other hand, you can make the mistake of thinking unless I'm spotlessly flawless, I'm not worthy to receive communion, and the devil loves that mistake as well. Because being a child of the King doesn't mean that you don't sin, it doesn't mean that you don't ever fail. It means that you do recognize that your salvation is actually a gift that you did not earn, something that came to you as a gift by your Lord and Savior. And each month I go back to this quote from Dane Ortlund. I hope by this time you've all memorized it because it sums it up so perfectly. It says, "In the kingdom of God, the one thing that qualifies you is knowing that you don't qualify, and the one thing that disqualifies you is thinking that you do." You also have to understand that when we do fail, we are aware of our failure, we are aware of our sin because we have the Spirit of God living inside us. It is God's Spirit who convicts us. And so we grieve as children who

know that we have a heavenly Father who longs to forgive us and cleanse us, who says in *1 John 1:9*: *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.* So being a child of the King doesn't mean that you're spotless and sinless. It means that you understand that as we sin, if we sin, we understand we have someone who's speaking on our behalf in heaven, we have an advocate. *1 John* says: *My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have an advocate with the Father -- Jesus Christ, the Righteous One.* And so it's all because we have Jesus' righteousness and not our own that we're free to eat from his table. And so if you love the Lord, don't deny yourself the privilege that Jesus purchased for you. And as we say, he lived the life that we were supposed to live and then died the death that we deserved to die in our place so that we could be made worthy of partaking in this table, so that we, too, could follow undistracted in his footsteps. Consider for a moment the compassion of Jesus. Consider the struggle that he had, the mission that he had. Consider what he thought of celebrity.

1 Corinthians 11:23 says: *For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, "This is my body which is for you. Do this remembrance of*

me." So take, and eat.

Well, we're about to enter chapter 2 of Mark's gospel and as soon as we enter chapter 2, we find a similar compassionate distraction that's facing Jesus. Let me just pick up at verse 1 of chapter 2. It says: *And when he -- this is Jesus -- when he returned to Capernaum after some days, it was reported that he was at home. And many were gathered together, so that there was no more room, not even at the door. And he was preaching the word to them. And they came, bringing with him a paralytic carried by four men. And when they could not get near him because of the crowd, they removed the roof above him, and when they had made an opening, they let down the bed on which the paralytic lay.* It's amazing to see how far the enemy can take even a good thing and use it to distract us from our mission, which is to preach the good news. And it's very obvious that Jesus' reputation had preceded him. He returns to Capernaum and the scripture says that he was -- quote -- "at home." We don't know what that means. I don't know if that was a home base that he returned to again and again or just an area that he frequented, but we do know that folks knew that this is where Jesus could be found. And so we find this house, this place that he calls "home," it's overrun with people. And there's so many people that you can't even get near the door. So imagine the love, the care and the concern as well as the desperation of these four men

who look at the situation and say, we got to go up on the roof. And they go up on the roof which was in all likelihood a flat roof made of mud and straw that they laid on sticks which were laid across the rafters. And the scripture translated, says, "they removed the roof." Actually what the text says is they "unroofed the roof." Basically what they did, they just took it apart, they took apart the straw and the mud and the sticks. And so they open up the roof and they begin letting down their friend with apparently four ropes. Verse 5 says: *And when Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, "Son, your sins are forgiven."* Now some of the scribes were sitting there, questioning in their hearts, *"Why does this man speak like that? He is blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone?"* Well, let me just back up a little bit and understand what it is that is moving Jesus here. Jesus is always moved by great faith. Jesus was moved by the leper and the leper's breaking all kinds of social protocols by approaching him out in the open while he's there with his followers begging for a healing. And here Jesus sees these four people who are moved to wreck the roof to get around the crowds that had been mobbing the building in the first place. But note what he gives. Note what he offers the paralytic. He addresses the greatest need this man ever had, and it wasn't his paralysis, it was his sin. And so Jesus addresses that great need first. He says, *"Son, your sins are forgiven."* I mean that statement immediately causes two

very different reactions, one amongst the religious rulers and one I assume most of the people in the room felt, because I confess the first time I read it, I felt it as well.

At first let me just look at the religious leaders' reaction. It says in verse 8: *And immediately Jesus, perceiving in his spirit that they thus questioned within themselves, said to them, "Why do you question these things in your hearts?"* Well, first thing you have to notice is that Jesus is the God man, that he's perfectly capable of reading folks' inner thoughts. If you look at the text, it says nobody said a word. There was no discussion. Scripture says they questioned these things within themselves. Jesus -- quote -- "immediately perceived in his spirit what it was that they were questioning." I don't know about you but I recognize and I realize when I'm praying frequently that I'm speaking to a God who knows my inner thoughts. Oftentimes I'm taken aback when I'm praying. I'm realizing, hey, I can't pull one over on you, God, you know me. You know me better than me. That's a tough one. And so sometimes that's a relief, sometimes that's a conviction. I mean it's understanding that God sees into the very core of my being and he sees all of the nonsense and the baloney and the pride and the sin, and yet he still insists that he loves me. It's incredibly liberating to know in your heart of hearts that the God you are praying to knows the very deepest, darkest thoughts that

you have and still seeks to have fellowship with you. And looking at this situation, Jesus knows precisely the reaction that he's going to receive. He understands that by offering the paralyzed man the greatest gift he could possibly receive -- forgiveness of sin, he knows that gift is going to go highly unappreciated. I mean the religious leaders think, oh, blasphemy. The others are probably just confused. I mean a desperation that led them to open up that roof and let the man down by ropes was not a desperation about unforgiven sin. It was far more about a body whose arms and legs would no longer cooperate. But here's what Jesus knew and what we so often forget. A healing from paralysis that the man received from Jesus was strictly temporary. I mean some time after receiving that healing, that man's arms and legs would once again no longer cooperate because, like all of us, he was going to die. He would enter into the state that every one of us enters into at some point by virtue of our mortality. And now if we just do some elemental math, we might get a glimpse of why Jesus addressed the paralyzed man's sin issue first and foremost. I mean let's just say for argument's sake that the man would live another 40 years having been restored by Jesus. Well, he still has to face the ultimate sickness that every one of us faces, and that's death itself. And so Jesus' first offer, and again, this is an offer that was given to the paralytic some 2,000 years ago was for a healing of sin and life eternal. Having the benefit of being here

in 2020, we can say that's an over 2,000-year benefit that the paralyzed man has enjoyed with a promise being of an extension of this benefit onward into eternity. Let's say that the man just was healed by Jesus without the benefit of healing from sin. And let's say he had the benefit of the use of his arms and legs for another 40 years. Well, he still had to face death. So let's see, we have 40 years of temporary physical healing versus over 2,000 years and counting so far, of eternal healing. Well, if you had the perspective of eternity that Jesus had, which one do you think would be the better offer? A restoration of my physical body for 40 or so years or a complete restoration for all of eternity of body and soul in heaven with Christ along with a promise of a brand new fully restored body in the resurrection. I mean comparatively speaking, simply healing paralysis seems like a parlor trick compared to the forgiveness of sins. But then we have to count the cost. We have to count the cost of what Jesus is extending to the paralyzed man. You know, when Jesus healed on numerous occasions, it said that he felt power go out from himself. We have in the gospels the account of the woman with the issue of blood coming up behind Jesus and touching his garment, and Jesus makes a statement about that power in Mark 5, he says this, he says: *And Jesus, perceiving in himself that power had gone out from him, immediately turned about in the crowd and said, "Who touched my garments?"* See for Jesus to heal the paralytic required only the outflow of power

from his limitless omnipotence. For Jesus to heal the paralytic of his sin required the sacrifice of the only one capable of and willing to lay down his perfect life as a payment to justice itself for the paralytic's sin.

As the elders begin to pass out the cup, I'd like us to think a little bit about the cost of Jesus' offer. I mean one cost was almost infinitesimally small and the other one was unimaginably huge. And hence, Jesus, knowing the calculus going on in the minds of all those around him, knowing what they were thinking, that they were thinking that the paralytic's great need was not forgiveness, it was actually healing, says in verse 9: *"Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Rise, take up your bed and walk'?"* That's a question that applies equally well to us today. One of my great concerns about the church today is that it tends to get caught up in what is, compared to eternity itself, the trivial, the prosaic. I mean, sure, you can say that it's true that God wants you to have healthy kids, he wants you to have a well-ordered financial life and even a great marriage, but compared to those things that really matter, whether or not your soul will live forever in eternity with Christ or without God forever in hell, that's a question treated with a stunning level of indifference. I mean Jesus knew when he healed the paralytic that healing paralyzed limbs was a piece of cake and that healing souls

would cost Jesus his own blood. It was a price that he was willing to pay because he loved us that much. So Jesus says to the crowd and especially to the religious leaders brooding about his claim to forgive sins, he says this: *"But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins"* -- he said to the paralytic -- *"I say to you, rise, pick up your bed, and go home."* And he rose and immediately picked up his bed and went out before them all, so that they were all amazed and glorified God, saying, *"We never saw anything like this!"*

Well, Jesus addresses the major problem first -- it's not healing, it's sin. Seen from eternity's perspective, the physical body is something you can almost put in the same category as baby teeth. I mean, we don't sweat losing them because we know we're going to get new ones. Jesus knew this paralytic in a very short time would once again be re-paralyzed by the death that awaits all of us. But he also knew that the one eternal issue in his life could be healed, and it wasn't paralysis, it was sin. And the practical reality is once you realize that this body really only is temporary, it is only a shell, and that in Christ at some time you will get a brand new perfectly operating one, well that knowledge alone can radicalize the way you view life itself.

Consider the underground church in Iran. It's a perfect example.

I mean the gospel there is growing in leaps and bounds. And it's advancing through people who realize that if they get caught sharing this gospel, they are facing imprisonment, rape, torture, and possibly execution. I heard one Iranian Christian member of the underground church who was putting her life at risk constantly. And she said this, she said that none of those threats ultimately matter. She said -- quote -- "They can take my body because I don't care. I'm getting a new one, a perfect one anyway." See, that's the eternal perspective that Jesus had and it's one that he wants us to have as well.

Paul states flat out that we who know Jesus have this glorious future in store, not just for our souls but also for our bodies. Listen to what Paul says, speaking about our bodies, he says this in *1 Corinthians 15*, he says: *So is it with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable; what is raised is imperishable. It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power. It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body.* Then he goes on to say: *Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust -- that's Adam -- we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven -- that's Christ.* Jesus knew that he could offer the paralytic a temporary short term fix of his paralysis or an eternal healing from sin that would

grant him a resurrected body no longer made in the image of Adam but eternally now made in the image of Christ.

As you take the cup, consider verse 9: *"Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Rise, take up your bed and walk'?"* And again, as Paul puts it, he says in 2 Corinthians 4:16: *So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.* So consider for a moment precisely what Jesus was after when he healed the paralytic. One is transient, one is eternal. What healing really matters? Think on that for a moment.

1 Corinthians 11 says: *In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."* So take and drink.

This is the part that we call head, heart, hands, and feet, where we just try to understand practically what does it mean to remember Christ. And I want to recount just the other day I ran into an old

friend, somebody I had met some over 40 years ago. This was a fellow that I had shared the gospel with many, many times and each time I shared it with him, he considered it at some point but he ultimately rejected it. And when I first met him, he was alert, he was in great physical shape, he was healthy and just now meeting him some 40 years later, he is sick, he is weak, he's diminished, and he's suffering from spiritual sclerosis, which is a hardening of the heart. And I was thinking of him and I was thinking of Paul McCardel and again, just the idea Paul's celebrated his 92nd birthday and you know he is sick, he is weak, and he is greatly diminished and he's afflicted, but he's gloriously saved. Many, many years ago he realized that he, too, was paralyzed by sin and when the offer was made to him of forgiveness of sin and eternal life, he took it. And now what is in front of him? An imperishable, glorious, powerful new body made in the image of Christ. His outer self is wasting away, there's no doubt. But even his affliction is preparing for him an eternal glory beyond all comparison.

I was struck by the words of Charles Spurgeon, the great preacher of the 19th century who was sharing these words upon the death and funeral of a dear saint from his church. This is what he wrote, speaking of this man. He says: "He was a man valued for the truth, indefatigable in labor, self-denying in duty, always

prepared to follow his Lord and to the utmost of his ability, serviceable to the church." I thought if that's not Paul McCardel, I don't know what that is, that's perfect. He says: "Speaking of the funeral, he said, now there were tears shed there. Do you know what they were about? There was not a solitary tear shed about his soul, for we knew it well. We were perfectly assured that he had ascended to heaven. You do not weep because your father, brother, wife, husband has ascended to heaven. You'd be cruel to weep about that. None of you weep because your dear mother is before the throne. But you weep because her body is in the grave, because those eyes can no more smile on you, because those hands cannot caress you, because those sweet lips cannot speak melodious notes of affection. But I have comfort for you. That very body will rise again, that eye will flash with genius again, that hand will be held out in affection once more. Believe me, I am speaking no fiction. Yea, you shall see that body once more. And here is comfort for you, too, you poor sufferers who suffer in your bodies. Scarcely a day passes but you are tormented with some suffering or other. Here is a comfort for you. That poor old rickety body of yours will live again without its pains, without it's agonies. That poor shaky frame will be repaid all it has suffered. Don't fear to suffer in your frame because your frame will one day share in your delight. Every nerve will thrill with delight, every muscle move with bliss, your eyes will flash with the fire of

eternity, your heart will beat and pulsate with immortal blessedness, your frame shall be the channel of beatitude. Comfort yourselves then, ye sufferers, weary languishers upon the bed, fear not, your bodies shall live."

You know there's only one reason why that is true and it's because Jesus Christ loved you enough to face death itself so that we could have life, not just in our spirits but in our bodies as well. Let's praise him in prayer.

Father, we just thank you for the gift of your Son. We thank you for the love that Christ had for us, a love so grand, so great and so deep that he was willing to undergo the cross in order to redeem not just our souls but our bodies as well. Father, I am thankful that all of those who have gone before us, all of those whom we have lost, Lord, we will see them, we will recognize them, they will be in glorious bodies as we have known them and we will be able to eternally recognize and see and enjoy them in eternity as well. Thank you, Lord, for that gift. Thank you for loving us enough to pay the incredible price it cost to produce that gift. And I praise you in Jesus' name. Amen.