

Lk. 5:17-26 “Who Can Forgive But God Alone?”

For the Children: Let's say a certain person in the church makes a particular kind of cookie or cake especially well. If you come home and find a plate of these cookies or that cake, you might say, "Ah, Mrs. So-and-So has been here!" Because no one else can make them like she does. Only God can remove our sin. So when the Lord Jesus removes a man's sins, it is clear that He is God. There is no one else who can help us by removing our sins. **Questions:** Why do many refuse to believe that the Lord Jesus can remove their sins? How do we receive that benefit from Him? How does the Lord's Supper teach us this truth about the Lord Jesus removing our sins?

Introduction:

First Point: Only God Can Forgive

- 1) A Point Agreed Upon: Both Christ and the Jewish leaders agreed that only God can forgive sinners their sin in the sense of properly and finally removing *all* their sin
- 2) The Penalty for Rebellion Against Him: Sin must be removed by God, for it is rebellion against Him. A debt to Him is established by our sin. He has set a penalty that fits such an enormous crime – eternal death. Only He has the infinite knowledge and power needed to deal with the penalty and pay such a debt for us. The Lord's Supper reminds us of what we deserve, so that we appreciate the extent of God's mercy in sending His Son to pay this debt

Second Point: Forgiveness Is Found Only in Christ

- 1) A Controversial Point: Where Christ and the Jewish leaders disagreed was on the issue of Christ's divine ability to forgive. Their (human) logic was: Only God can forgive; Christ claims to forgive; therefore Christ is blaspheming. For they assumed that He was a mere man. The Biblical logic is: Only God can forgive; Christ forgives; therefore Christ is God
- 2) A Healing Demonstration: Christ gives evidence of His divine nature by healing – by a simple word. Only God can *heal* in this manner. The question, "Which is easier, to forgive or heal?" points out that only God can do either! Christ's insight into the leaders' hearts gives further evidence of divinity
- 3) The Role of Faith: The faith of the paralytic and his friends is not the ground of either the healing or the forgiveness. But it is the instrument that unites them with the Christ Who is the ground. That faith is stressed in v. 20. See also vss. 13-14. Since the paralytic is joined to Christ, He pronounces the man forgiven. The leaders stand in contrast – having travelled a long way to find fault with Jesus, and even now only increasing in opposition after the miracle (6:2,7,11)
- 4) The Son of Man Revealed: All this shows that Christ is the Son of Man, the Messiah foretold in Dan. 7, given all authority in heaven and earth. He is the only One able to dismiss our sins, when we turn to Him in faith – as the Lord's Supper teaches and assures us

Conclusion:

