

Friday, May 15, 2020 ▫ Read Luke 5:17–26

Questions from the Scripture text: What was Jesus doing in v17? Who were there from where? What was present, to what to them? Who brought whom in v18? What problem did they navigate in what way in v19? What did Jesus see in v20? And what did He say to whom? Who had a problem with this and why (v21)? What did Jesus perceive in v22? What did He confront them for doing? What comparative question does He ask in v23? Why does He say that He is going to heal the man (v24)? How does the man respond in v25 to his being both forgiven and healed? Who else respond similarly (v26)? What do they say?

Through this evangelist, the Holy Spirit gives us a unique bit of information: the crowd who had so filled this house that the men with the paralytic could not get him inside was mostly (entirely?) “Pharisees and teachers of the law.”

These Pharisees and teachers of the law have come out of every town of Galilee, Judea, and Jerusalem. That’s a pretty big conference of religious leaders—it’s no wonder that there was no room in the house.

We wonder if they knew that they needed healing. We wonder if they knew that they needed forgiving. Jesus was teaching, but did they know that they needed the “power of the Lord to heal them”?

The paralytic knew. The men with him knew. When Jesus saw their faith, He told them what they most needed to hear—what we each most need to hear, “your sins are forgiven you.”

Often, people come to Jesus for teaching, who need forgiveness and healing first. These Pharisees didn’t think that forgiveness could from Jesus, from listening to Him, or believing in Him—v21 makes it clear that this is not something that they were there for.

But Jesus mercifully redirects their attention and ours. He says, “your sins are forgiven you.” And He explicitly tells us the reason for healing the man: “that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins.” The fact of the matter is that this man who took up his mat and went home that day would be paralyzed again. One day, his legs would cease to function altogether, and he would lie down not on a mat but in a grave. Jesus was not “undoing the fall” in healing him. That ultimately comes to our bodies in the resurrection.

For Christ, it was actually easier to say, “rise up, and walk.” For Pharisees who thought that they could achieve forgiveness through their efforts, a paralytic walking was a “strange thing” that would amaze them, make them glorify God, and fill them with fear (v26). This was something beyond human ability. But Christ spoke sinlessly and truthfully. He knew that this forgiveness would come at the cost of His suffering under the wrath of God and dying. It was the hardest thing that was ever said, when Jesus said, “Man, your sins are forgiven you.”

But He has said it to all whose faith He sees—to whom He has given that faith by His Spirit, because He has died for them. “Man, your sins are forgiven you.” And it is when we come to Him with full confidence in His blood-bought forgiveness and resurrection that we are properly ready to hear Him teach us, not merely as an expert but our Savior, our Lord, and our God.

For what do you need forgiveness today? Healing? Who is Christ to you, as He teaches you?

Suggested songs: ARP119W “Lord, Let My Cry before You Come” or TPH382 “Speak, O Lord”