

Jesus' Power Over Sin

Matthew 9:1-8, Mark 2:1-12, Luke 5:17-26

What is the greatest need of man? Our text tells us that the greatest need of man is not physical or material riches, it is not economic prosperity, nor for the healing of various diseases. Man's greatest need is forgiveness of sins. The question is, "Who then can forgive sins?" Matthew's answer is, only God in Jesus Christ can forgive sins (Matt. 1:21). Jesus alone is the Savior of the world (Acts 4:12, 16:31; Rom. 10:9). Matthew 9:1-8 focuses directly on our Lord Jesus reminding us of His power, His glory and His authority. Four features stand out in this story:

1. *The _____ of the paralytic*

We are told just one thing about this man that was brought to Jesus and that is- that he was a paralytic. The illness must have been debilitating for he had to be carried around by his friends. Think of his despair. Imagine the stress of having someone else had to care for all of his very basic necessities of his life. Add to his extremely low self-esteem that fact that society looks at him as a burden. But even more consider the man's deep sense of guilt arising from the fact that he was a sinner (Job 4:7, 8:4; John 9:1-2).

2. *The _____ of the friends*

Despite the challenge that his (four) friends faced, they were decided to bring him to Jesus. Jesus saw their faith (the faith of the paralytic and his four friends). They must have heard and believed that Jesus could heal him physically. Their faith became evident in what they went through just to get their friend to Jesus (Mark 2:4; Luke 5:19). Jesus, saw their faith and He says to the paralytic, "*Son... your sins are forgiven you.*" Jesus saw his repentant heart (Psalm 34:18; 51:17) and forgave him (Psa. 103:12; Mic. 7:19; Jer. 31:34).

3. *The _____ from the scribes*

The scribes grumbled asking (in their heart), "Who can forgive sins but God alone?" They accused Jesus of blasphemy (claiming to be God). They were right in saying that only God can forgive sins (Isa. 43:25), but they were wrong because they did not realize (and acknowledge) that Jesus is God. Jesus, reading their hearts asked, "*Which is easier: to say, 'You sins are forgiven you' or to say, 'Rise up and walk'?*" These scribes were looking for proof of Christ's claim. And when Jesus gave it to them by healing the paralytic, they simply refused the evidence.

4. *The _____ of Jesus*

The Lord Jesus healed the man as proof of His power to forgive. By showing the scribes that He had the power to do that which is visible (the healing), He is proving that He also has the power to do the invisible (forgiveness of sins). Jesus also attests His deity using the title "the Son of Man" (Dan. 7:13,18; Luke 9:26; 21:27; 22:69). Only man can bear man's penalty for sin and Jesus is also man. The title "Son of Man" also points to our Lord's humanity (Luke 9:22; 9:44, 18:31-33, 22:22, 48). *When the multitudes saw it, they marveled and glorified God, who had given such power to men.* They knew God was in their midst. They knew Jesus was a man, but they also knew that God was in Jesus.

Jesus has the authority and power to heal diseases and forgive sins. That power is still available to those who need it and want it. Why not come to Him today and receive the free gift of His forgiveness.