



“The Healing of the Paralytic”  
Luke 5:17-26

**Idea:** Jesus can and will forgive your sin.

**Intro:** If your friend was in dire need of medical attention, to what lengths would you go to secure the help needed? A group of guys had a friend who was in a similar situation. This friend had been paralyzed for a long time. They had watched him suffer for years. He had sought help from every doctor he could find, but no modern medical treatment had been able to restore the use of his limbs. One day, the friends of this man heard stories about all kinds of people being healed of all kinds of diseases. What they heard was amazing. It was almost too good to be true, yet the stories had been verified by several people. These guys even knew a few of the people who had been healed. They decided to figure out a way to get their friend in front of the man who had healed all those people.

A short time later, they heard that the man behind these stories of healing was in their town, so they decided to take their friend down to meet him. When they arrived at the house it was crowded, and there was no way to get their friend inside. It seemed like their hopes were again dashed, but one of the men suggested they cut through the roof and lower him down in front of the healer. This idea was bold, dangerous, and costly. How would they explain it to the homeowner or authorities? Nevertheless, they decided to proceed because this might be their only chance to get their friend inside and maybe healed.

As we move forward in Luke’s Gospel, we find this exact scenario taking place. A group of four men are going to go to great and exorbitant lengths to get their paralytic friend in front of Jesus. We will discover that he will not only be healed physically, but something even greater will take place. The Lord Jesus will forgive his sin and transform his life.

Read Luke 5:17-26.

**Inquiry:** From Matthew’s account we learn that Jesus had left where He had been preaching and healing to cross over the Sea of Galilee in a boat to where He had been staying (Matt 9:1). Mark tells us that this place was Capernaum (Mark 2:1). His residence quite possibly could have been Peter’s house. He had stayed there before. News of Jesus traveled fast, so many people had gathered that day in and around his home. On this occasion, it was not just the people from Capernaum who had gathered. The religious officials from Galilee, Judah, and Jerusalem had come to investigate what He was doing. They had every right to investigate as the teachers of the people (Deut 13; 18:15-22). They had interrogated John the Baptist, so now they have gathered to question Jesus of Nazareth.

These men could not have picked a better day to observe Jesus in action. Luke points out that “*the power of the Lord was with Him to heal*” (vs. 17). This description is another way to say that on this particular day, there was a special unction or anointing with Jesus. He was going to do something amazing! There was a special charge in the air. The paralyzed man being brought to Jesus by his four friends was going to miraculously leave on his own two feet, but even more wonderful, he was going to leave with a clean heart. Let’s examine the healing of the paralytic. There are five dimensions that I want us to see.

### **1. The faith of the porters.**

These four men loved their friend, and they were willing to do whatever was necessary to get him before Jesus. They would not be deterred by an unyielding crowd. Likewise, they would not be impeded by blocked entrances. These men out of love went to the extreme of vandalizing another man’s property in order to achieve the goal of getting their paralyzed friend in front of Jesus.

These four men also possessed conviction. They were convinced Jesus was their friend’s only hope. If they did not find a way to get him before Jesus, he was lost. He would never be healed. There was no other way.

Along with love and conviction, they possessed great faith. There is no way they would have gone to such outrageous extremes if they did not believe that Jesus could and would heal their friend. R. Kent Hughes describes their faith as being persistent, creative, and sacrificial. It was persistent because they did not give up when the doors were blocked and the crowd would not let them by. It was creative because they refused to idly stand by and watch their friend miss out on meeting Jesus. Instead, they devised a plan to get him in the house. And it was sacrificial because they would have to pay for the repairs to the homeowner’s roof.

### **2. The faith of the paralytic.**

The four porters were not the only ones who possessed faith. The paralytic willingly allowed the porters to carry him to Jesus. When the crowd was blocking the entrance to the house and there seemed to be no other way inside other than going through the roof, he was willing to go along. He believed Jesus was his only hope.

This man was willing to be carried by people who stared and possibly ridiculed them as they went up on the roof. As people inside and outside the house shouted at them to stop digging through the roof, he persisted and encouraged his friends to keep digging. He had to get to Jesus!

### **3. The doubt of the Pharisees.**

The porters and the paralytic man believed Jesus could and would heal. They had no doubt, which is evident by their willingness to dig through the roof. On the flipside, the Pharisees and teachers doubted Jesus.

In response to the men’s faith, Jesus said to the paralytic, “*Man, your sins are forgiven you.*” This statement caused an uproar among the Pharisees. They obviously understood that only God could forgive sin, but they failed to see that only God could heal the people from diseases and cast out demons. Jesus had healed “*every one of them*” (4:40). All the evidence they needed to believe that Jesus was in fact God was right in front of them, but they missed it. They doubted. They refused to believe in and on Jesus.

### **4. The authority of the Physician.**

The main thrust of this story is to demonstrate Jesus' authority to forgive sin. The Lord forgave the man's sin in response to his faith, which brought criticism from the Pharisees. He knew what was going on and had purposed to use this moment to reveal His authority to the Pharisees and the people.

This statement of forgiveness from an uninformed perspective seems somewhat cruel. This hopeful paralytic had come to Jesus seeking physical healing, but Jesus merely declared his sins to be forgiven. He said nothing and did nothing about his physical state. As always, Jesus knew what He was doing.

So, what was Jesus doing? First, the Lord understood and was revealing that the man's greatest need was forgiveness of sin. What a travesty it would have been to experience physical healing for a short time only to enter eternity without Christ. Second, forgiving sin was a much greater work than healing the lame man. Forgiveness would cost Jesus His very life. Third, the man may have been a paralytic due to the guilt of sin. Physical impairments sometimes have a moral backstory. Healing the physical before the spiritual would not have solved the real problem. Fourth, Jesus pronounced forgiveness so He could confront His detractors with the implications of the healing that was coming to the paralytic. The Pharisees naturally perceived forgiving sins to be the easier action because humanly speaking it could not have been verified. Jesus, however, put a lock on this spiritual logic by verifying the moral miracle of forgiveness by the physical miracle of healing.

*But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins...I say to you, rise, pick up your bed and go home.* – Luke 5:24

The authority of the Physician to heal the paralytic resulted in a healing that was instantaneous, thorough, and transforming. *"Immediately he rose up before them..."* (vs. 25). The healing did not take place over a period of time. No, it was instantaneous. He also *"picked up what he had been lying on..."* (vs. 25). The man immediately had strength in his legs and arms. The healing affected every facet of his body. It was thorough. He then *"went home, glorifying God."* The paralytic man had been transformed by Jesus. He came as a sinner who was crippled in both his body and soul. He left redeemed, healed in both his body and soul.

As this man went home, he bore something far more impressive than his bed. He carried with him a clean heart before God. He no longer possessed any remnant of guilt and shame before God. Jesus had forgiven him of all sin. This forgiveness was instantaneous, thorough, and transforming.

## 5. The amazement of the public.

The people who witnessed this incredible miracle were seized with amazement and they glorified God (vs. 26). They watched Jesus heal a paralytic physically and spiritually. The transformation was undeniable. Anytime we see God work in a person's life, it is amazing. It is amazing grace.

**Conclusion:** What would you do if your friend or family member was in dire need of medical attention? To what lengths would you go to secure the help needed? I have heard many stories of parents who went to the extreme to ensure that their children who had been diagnosed with cancer would be cured. They spared no cost or sacrifice. It is not hard for us to understand this kind of sacrifice and commitment. Likewise, it should not be difficult to see the need for people to find forgiveness in Jesus Christ. Like a parent contending for a child, believers ought to be willing to do what is necessary to get their sinful family and friends in front of Jesus.

How committed are you doing that? When was the last time you shared the gospel and your testimony with that person? Who have you invited to worship or small groups lately?

There is something else in this story that is amazing. The public watched Jesus forgive a man's sin and prove His authority to do so by healing him of his paralysis. In response, they glorified God in amazement of what had taken place. None of them, however, cried out to Jesus for the same thing. They did not say, "Jesus as you

forgave him of sin, please forgive me of my sins.” They experienced general amazement and gave general praise to God, but they did not worship Jesus or seek forgiveness for their sin. Today, we dare not read and examine this story only to express a general amazement and give general praise to God. Jesus does not want us to stand in awe of what He did for the paralytic only. He wants us to believe what He did there and believe on Him to do it in our lives too. Today, if you need to experience forgiveness for your sins, I have wonderful news for you. Jesus can and will forgive you of all sin.

Good news: God loves you. He created you and desires to know you.

Bad news: You are a sinner in rebellion against your Creator.

Best news: God has done everything necessary to justly deal with your sin and bring forgiveness and restoration to your life. Today, He calls you to turn from your sin and self and turn to Him as Savior and Lord. Have you received forgiveness in Christ? What would keep you from embracing the truth and believing on Jesus today? Do you need to follow the Lord in believer’s baptism?