

Luke 5:18–25

Healing of sick of the palsy

18And, behold, men brought in a bed a man which was taken with a palsy: and they sought means to bring him in, and to lay him before him.

The word “palsy” is *paralytikos*, which means “suffering from the relaxing of the nerves of one’s side, disabled, weak of limb” (Thayer 484).

“Palsy can result from cerebral damage, injury sustained by the spinal column, or disease of the central nervous system, characterized by a lack of ability to move or to exercise full bodily functions” (*IBD* 3.646).

In *Science and Health, with Key to the Scriptures*, Mary Baker Eddy describes the disease as a function of mortal mind.

375:21 Palsy is a belief that matter governs mortals, and can paralyze the body, making certain portions of it motionless. Destroy the belief, show mortal palsy that muscles have no power to be lost, for Mind is supreme, and you cure the palsy. If palsy was thought to be the result of past sin, it could have meant that the man had indulged in appetites and passions in his youth such as drunkenness, debauchery, gluttony and self-indulgence.

What qualities of thought did the four men possess that inspired them to bring this friend to the attention of Jesus? And are these the mental qualities that we must have to bring about healing? Were they not expressing genuine faith, an expectancy of healing, confidence in Jesus and great persistence? What love they must have felt for their friend! The stories they must have heard about Jesus and his demonstrations of the divine healing power must have compelled them to bring their friend into the presence of the Christ. Jesus later acknowledges their faith.

19And when they could not find by what way they might bring him in because of the multitude, they went upon the housetop, and let him down through the tiling with his couch into the midst before Jesus.

“Jesus was preaching in the covered gallery or verandah of the house, and the hole was made, not in the roof of the house, but in the roof of the verandah. The house was probably Peter’s, and one of considerable size, as befitted a man of some means. Perhaps it had a single gate or door opened into a large square courtyard, planted with trees. Round it were the various apartments of the house opening directly into the courtyard” (Dummelow 656).

Unfazed by the multitudes of people at the door of the house, the four friends went around the side of the building and took the paralytic man up the side stairs and onto the roof. From this higher position they boldly let him down into the middle of the veranda where Jesus was teaching, right in front of Jesus and the crowd.

20And when he saw their faith, he said unto him, Man, thy sins are forgiven thee.

It is important to always pay attention to whatever Jesus says and does in his healing work and also to be aware of the specific words used in the text. The verb, “to see,” is *eido* in Greek and means “to perceive with the eyes, to turn the mind to, to behold, to know, understand, perceive” (Thayer 173). It is a mental quality of insight and conviction. It says that Jesus **saw** their faith.

“Faith” in Greek is *pistis* and means “the conviction of the truth of anything, the conviction of good, confidence or belief that [Jesus] could heal him” (Thayer 512).

How was Jesus seeing this man?

One word for son or child is *huios* in Greek. “*Huios* gives evidence of the dignity of one’s relationship and likeness to God’s character” (Hebrew-Greek Key 1764). One who is Godlike is the image and likeness of God. Was this Jesus’ son? Was he really saying to this man, “Do you know who you really are as God’s child, his precious son”?

“Not only drunkenness, but various other sins of self-indulgence produce paralysis. Jesus, who knew at a glance the whole history of the case, first removed the sick man’s spiritual trouble, and then healed him” (Dummelow 656).

Jesus recognized the man’s need for spiritual restoration. The thoughts of the man needed to be addressed. Pride, envy, self-seeking and lust are just a sample of the kinds of sinful thoughts that might have been in this man’s consciousness. Sin and sickness are related as cause and effect.

Mrs. Eddy explains the relationship between sin and sickness in her writings:

No 31:21-22

Physical and mental healing were one and the same with this master Metaphysician.

392:4-5

To cure a bodily ailment, every broken moral law should be taken into account and the error be rebuked.

419:1 (only)

A moral question may hinder the recovery of the sick.

411:20-21

The procuring cause and foundation of all sickness is fear, ignorance, or sin.

“The miracle that is now to be described was only the most glorious and worthy to be recorded of many then performed; and what made it so was doubtless the faith which was manifested in connection with it, and the proclamation of the forgiveness of the patient’s sins that immediately preceded it” (Jamieson 3.141).

21 And the scribes and the Pharisees began to reason, saying, Who is this which speaketh blasphemies? Who can forgive sins, but God alone?

“My Son, your sins are forgiven. Only six words, but their meaning is inexhaustible. Among those meanings certainly is this, that Jesus inevitably probes to the deeper causes of disaster. We do not know the details, either clinical or spiritual, of this man affected with paralysis. We know that in Jesus’ time it was common to regard physical ills as a punishment or consequence of sin. It may well be that the paralytic himself believed that his paralysis was due to sin. We have no certain warrant for assuming that Jesus believed it. But whatever the details, Jesus saw that the man needed more than physical mending: he needed spiritual restoration” (IB 7.670).

Only God has power to forgive sins, and if Jesus has really blasphemed, the penalty for this transgression is stoning to death.

22 But when Jesus perceived their thoughts, he answering said unto them, What reason ye in your hearts?

The scribes were blind, skeptical and unbelieving. Instead of recognizing the import of Jesus’ new teaching of God, they accused him for departing from tradition. Scholastic theology was a

barrier and obstruction to their receptivity to healing. But Jesus read their thoughts and questioned their hardness of heart.

23Whether is easier, to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Rise up and walk?

“‘Whether is easier,’ said He, ‘to say, Thy sins are forgiven; or to say, Arise, and walk?’ The former, of course, is easier. Any impostor can say, ‘Thy sins are forgiven,’ because it is impossible for men to know whether the words have taken effect or not. But not everyone can say, ‘Arise, and walk,’ because if such words are spoken without authority, the speaker is at once convicted of imposture” (Dummelow 656).

To profess the power to forgive sins is easy because the change occurs within the consciousness of the one being forgiven. But to ask a paralytic man to get up and walk, there must be visible proof.

24But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power upon earth to forgive sins, (he said unto the sick of the palsy,) I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy couch, and go into thine house.

Jesus truly had divine authority to forgive sins. If God can forgive them, then certainly His image can. “He did the miracle which they could see that they might know that he had done the other one that they could not see” (*EBC* 8.633).

“Arise” in Greek is *egeiro* and means “to arouse from sleep, to awaken, to rise up” (Thayer 165). Jesus did not assist him physically. The man had to do it himself.

Perhaps Jesus revealed to the man that the bed no longer dominated him because he had dominion over all of the mortal lies associated with the concept of *bed*. The burden of a guilty conscience was gone and he was free! We all can exercise the “divine authority” that our Leader describes in *Science and Health*.

393:10

Exercise this God-given authority. Take possession of your body, and govern its feeling and action. Rise in the strength of Spirit to resist all that is unlike good. God has made man capable of this, and nothing can vitiate the ability and power divinely bestowed on man.

25And immediately he rose up before them, and took up that whereon he lay, and departed to his own house, glorifying God.

Absolutely no recovery time was needed, no physical therapy, no recuperation, no process. Jesus spoke the word and immediately the man was free! There is nothing between God and His image. When sinful beliefs are eliminated through Christ, Truth, the outward manifestation vanishes. Without a cause, there can be no effect.