

Gospels class 22-Jesus heals a paralyzed lowered through the roof

Good morning/afternoon, everyone.

Today we'll be picking up where we left off last time in our study of the Gospels, beginning at the top of page 20. To catch us quickly up to speed in the story flow, last time we talked about Jesus healing Peter's mother-in-law right after leaving the synagogue in Capernaum where He had healed a possessed man, then after sundown He healed many other people—perhaps hundreds—in Capernaum.

Then He traveled around Galilee teaching in the synagogues and healing. You may from time to time come across s like “Jesus' first missionary tour” or “first missionary tour of Galilee” or something similar. This refers to what we covered last time, when Jesus travelled around Galilee teaching in the synagogues and healing.

Then we covered how Jesus healed a man with a severe case of leprosy, rescuing him from his hopeless and helpless situation and telling him to go to the priest to be certified as cleansed so he could be restored to his family and community.

We also saw last time that Jesus went out to deserted places to pray to His Father and to recharge His spiritual batteries with God, but people kept following Him wanting to be healed. We also talked about how perhaps as many as one out of every five to 10 people living there then lived had a serious chronic illness, disease or crippling injury. We also saw that Jesus' healing of the leper created so much excitement that He had to lay low for a while, possibly several weeks to several months, until the excitement died down. And that sets the stage for where we'll continue the story today, when Jesus returns to Capernaum after having been away teaching in other areas of Galilee.

I want to mention some themes we see developing in what we've covered so far. We've been focused so much on the details in these studies that sometimes we need to take a step back and look at the bigger picture of what the Gospel writers are conveying. I mentioned in one of the background messages when we began this series that Matthew, Mark, Luke and John aren't recording events as we would write a biography today. Biographies weren't written like that back in that time. They were written in such a way as to make specific points about the person. Each of the Gospel writers wrote to particular audiences and wrote to make specific points, but you have to read the Gospels carefully to pick up on those points.

They also organized their material in certain ways to make these points. This is why we sometimes see events recorded in a different order than they're recorded in another Gospel. We see this here in the Gospel of Luke, who is a meticulous writer. Luke organizes the events in a specific order starting in chapter four and continuing in chapter five where we'll read today. What we see is that Luke is building a theme of Jesus establishing and expanding His divine authority. Notice this theme Luke is building in these two chapters:

Luke 4:1-13: Jesus establishes His authority over Satan the adversary in the temptation in the wilderness.

Luke 4:14-30: Jesus claims Messianic authority when He teaches at the synagogue in Nazareth.

Luke 4:31-37: Jesus establishes His authority over demons in casting out demon at the synagogue in Capernaum.

Luke 4:38-44: Jesus establishes His authority to heal temporary diseases by mass healings in Capernaum.

Luke 5:1-11: Jesus establishes His authority over nature with the miraculous catch of fish.

Luke 5:12-15: Jesus establishes His authority over chronic, terminal disease by healing the leper. And today we'll continue this overall theme of Luke with the following, which is:

Luke 5:17-26: Jesus establishes His authority to forgive sin with the healing of the paralytic.

So let's pick it up there, beginning in Luke's account in **Luke 5:17**, and notice a few things.

17 Now it happened on a certain day, as He was teaching, that there were Pharisees and teachers of the law sitting by, who had come out of every town of Galilee, Judea, and Jerusalem. And the power of the Lord was present to heal them.

Word has definitely gotten around about Jesus. Not everyone is coming to Him for healing or to learn from His teaching. Some are coming for very different motives, as we'll see. And notice who has come—**“Pharisees and teachers of the law.”** And they have come not just from Galilee, but from as far away as Judea and Jerusalem, about 60 to 70 miles south as the crow flies. They're coming to check Him out.

Last time we read about Jesus healing the leper. And after healing the leper, what did Jesus tell the leper to do? To go the priest (in Jerusalem) and be certified that he was leprosy-free. Where did some of these Pharisees and teachers of the law come from? From Jerusalem. Why Jerusalem? Probably because they heard about this healed leper coming to Jerusalem from Galilee, a man who had been healed by Jesus of Capernaum, and they decided they'd better go check it out. To put it bluntly, they've come to spy on Him to see what He's saying.

But notice this detail that Luke adds: **“And the power of the Lord was present to heal them.”** So even though they were wrong and their motives are wrong, that didn't prevent God from being able to heal others who were there.

Now let's switch over to Mark's account, which has a little more detail.

Mark 2:1-12

2:1 And again He entered Capernaum after some days, and it was heard that He was in the house.

“After some days” indicates that a considerable time has passed since the preceding events. Possibly weeks or months have passed during which Jesus was traveling around Galilee teaching in the synagogues and healing. It's interesting that Matthew 9:1 now refers to Capernaum as “His own city,” which emphasizes again that Capernaum is now His base of operations and He will branch out from there.

2 Immediately many gathered together, so that there was no longer room to receive them, not even near the door. And He preached the word to them.

One of the study questions I sent out earlier was, “What does the setting of the story of the paralyzed man lowered through the roof tell us about Jesus' popularity?” As it says here, so many people were gathered that no more could fit in. People were also packed outside around the door, and people couldn't even get close to the door to hear Him. So obviously He has become very popular in His teaching.

3 Then they came to Him, bringing a paralytic who was carried by four men.

The next verse says he was being carried on a “bed,” and from that some people get the idea that you have four men here, one on each corner of a wooden-framed bed like we're used to. But the only people who had beds something like our beds today were the very wealthy. The “beds” that

most people slept on were thin pallets more like a thick blanket, or maybe a very thin mattress filled with some kind of soft stuffing. Because this man is paralyzed and can't get around on his own, but has to be carried, I think it's likely that he's being carried on something like a stretcher with a thin mattress or pad, and that's what his "bed" is here. I think that makes sense to have one friend at each corner, so he's likely being carried by four men. We assume these were four friends, although the Gospels don't specifically say that. They may also have been relatives or a combination of friends and relatives.

4 And when they could not come near Him because of the crowd, they uncovered the roof where He was.

Mark writes that they "**uncovered the roof**"—what does that mean? **Here's an artist's** reconstruction of how houses were built in Israel at that time. They had flat roofs, and those were a regularly used part of the house. This illustration depicts houses in Capernaum with the Sea of Galilee in the background. Notice that on this roof in the foreground and those behind it we see woven mats with fish drying on them. They didn't have a way to refrigerate the fish that they caught there, so to preserve them they would lay them out in the sun to dry as we see here. So the flat roofs would've been used for this purpose.

In the background you see this awning providing some shade and some more mats or rugs there. In this hot climate the roof was the coolest part of the house. If you wanted to cool off, you'd go up on the roof where you could feel the cool breezes blowing. It was fairly common to sleep on the rooftops at night because it was much cooler up on the roof at night. So it would've been typical during the dry season from roughly April to October or November to have mats or rugs or things like that up on the roof because you'd be using it quite regularly. So when Mark says that they "**uncovered the roof,**" that most likely means that they moved whatever mats or rugs or other things may have been up on the flat roof of the house.

You might notice also these steps that led from ground level up to the roof. This is also fairly typical and you can see steps like these in some of the excavated areas of Israel if you know what you're looking for. Sometimes people just had ladders, but obviously you're not going to be carrying a paralyzed man up to the roof with four men trying to climb a ladder. So this house obviously had steps to get up onto the roof.

4 And when they could not come near Him because of the crowd, they uncovered the roof where He was. So when they had broken through, they let down the bed on which the paralytic was lying.

Mark writes that "**when they had broken through**"—what does that mean? Let's look at how **these houses were constructed**. Most houses in Israel then were made out of mud brick laid on a stone foundation. That's why when you go to Israel you see these short walls that are only about a foot high. That's all that's left because above that was mud brick and the mud brick has long since turned to dust and dirt. But in Capernaum they had all this nice basalt stone to work with, so the houses were made of stone held together with a kind of mortar and plastered so the walls were smooth and sealed against the weather.

But what about the roofs? **Here's what the inside would've looked like.** This is a reconstruction of a first-century house. You can see the walls made of stone with small windows for a little bit of light and air circulation. We discussed this earlier, but when we read that Jesus and His stepfather Joseph were "carpenters," the Greek word there is *tekton*, which means a builder. What did they build with there in Galilee? Mostly with stone because suitable building wood was scarce. So Jesus and Joseph weren't carpenters, they were stonemasons. They would've built

houses like this.

Because suitable building wood was scarce, rooms were fairly small, usually no more than about six to eight feet wide because it was hard to find straight wood longer than that for beams to span the walls. So they would put beams up there several feet apart, and then laid some kind of **material like reeds** across the top of the beams. These would support that material that would actually form the roof. On top of this they would spread out a layer of clay or dirt mixed with clay or lime if they had that.

Here's what a cross-section of the roof would look like. You can see the cross-beams, and it's hard to make out the reeds, but you can see some of them. And on top of them is this layer of clay or dirt mixed with lime that would pack down to something almost like concrete. They have also found these stone rollers that apparently were used to roll this mixture and pack it down and make it harder and more waterproof. And of course the roofs would've been sloped a little to allow the rain to run off them. But all in all, it was a good method that was used right up until concrete became cheap and widely available in the last century.

So when Mark writes that **“when they had broken through, they let down the bed on which the paralytic was lying,”** what he's saying is that apparently they used some sharp pointed sticks or hoes or other tools to break through this packed-clay roof, then broke through the reeds, and **lowered the paralyzed man down on a stretcher** into this very surprised room full of people!

You can just imagine Jesus in this packed room of people when suddenly there's a pounding on the roof and dust starts flying and dirt starts falling and a hole opens up and starts growing larger and larger and then this paralyzed man is being lowered down right into the room where Jesus is teaching. I just love that picture on so many levels!

But notice that Luke 5:19 says they **“let him down with his bed through the tiling”**—what does this mean? We know that the **Romans used tiles like this** for their roofing. So which was it? Is there a conflict between Mark who describes a flat clay roof or Luke who describes a tile roof? Actually there is no conflict, there's just a translation problem. Luke says they let the man down **through the keramos** in Greek. *Keramos* means anything made out of clay. It's the root of our modern word *ceramics*. So the King James translators and others following their lead translated *keramos* as “tiling,” which is made out of clay, when it actually meant **this flat roof**, which is also made out of clay. So there's no conflict there, just a misinterpretation because the translators didn't understand the construction method used for roofs in that day.

So when both Mark and Luke write that **“they let down the bed on which the paralytic was lying,”** I think also supports the idea that the man was **on some kind of frame** like a stretcher. Otherwise, when they lowered him down, it would be like lowering him down in a sack. And since the man is paralyzed, if they lowered him like in a sack, he could've suffocated or risked being badly injured. But the man's friends, or maybe it's his relatives, obviously care for him and are going to a great deal of effort to see that he has the opportunity to be healed.

Continuing the story in Mark's account in **Mark 2:5—**
5 When Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytic, “Son, your sins are forgiven you.”
 This is interesting. It says that Jesus saw “their” faith. Apparently it's not just the faith of the paralyzed man, but also the faith of his friends or relatives. And they obviously have faith that Jesus can and will heal the man. They don't go to all that effort of carrying their friend to the

house, finding they can't even get close to Jesus to get His attention, and then they come up with the plan to climb up on the roof, get the tools to break through the roof, figure out where to break through so they're between the wooden beams, and lower the man down before Jesus.

They obviously have faith, and their faith is demonstrated by their works as shown here. They didn't give up and wait around for some other opportunity, no, they had faith and they were going to see their friend healed and they weren't going to let anyone or anything stand in their way! This is a good lesson of faith in action. Faith isn't just sitting back and letting God take care of everything and thinking we don't have to do anything.

Why did Jesus say to this man, **“Son, your sins are forgiven you”**? Because the common perception was that someone suffering like that had to have committed serious sins to be afflicted like this. We see from another incident that even Jesus' disciples believed that people who were sick or diseased or crippled or blind were that way because they were being punished for sin. Notice **John 9:2**, where Jesus heals a blind man:

2 And His disciples asked Him, saying, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?”

So they clearly thought the man was blind as a result of punishment for his sins or his parents, that they were being punished by having a child born blind. And Jesus sets them straight. This is not to say that some diseases or illnesses are *not* the result of sin. Some clearly are the result of sin, various cancers that result from smoking, or venereal diseases that result from sexual sins. But we can't say that something like this man's paralysis was punishment for his sins or his parents' sins. There are just too many other factors at work, including things like genetics, diet, environment and the like.

Back to Mark 2:5, why did Jesus say, **“Son, your sins are forgiven you.”** Why didn't Jesus say, *“I forgive your sins”* or *“God forgives your sins”*? Why does He use this passive wording of *“Your sins are forgiven you”*? *Active* wording has a subject and verb like *“I forgive”* or *“God forgives.”* *Passive* wording doesn't include the subject and verb together. It doesn't say who is actively doing the forgiving—just that the man is being forgiven. What's odd about this is that Hebrew, which Jesus is likely speaking here, very rarely uses what's called the passive voice. So Jesus uses it deliberately, and His audience knew exactly what He meant and He implied by it.

This wording is a *remez* back to a number of verses from **Leviticus chapters 4 and 5** which describe the animal sacrifices that people were to offer for committing sins. These verses describe how the person is to take the animal to the priest to be sacrificed and then each verse concludes with these words about the sin the person had committed. The animal is sacrificed, and because of that sacrifice, these verses say the following:

4:26 . . . and it shall be forgiven him.

4:31 . . . and it shall be forgiven him.

4:35 . . . and it shall be forgiven him.

5:10 . . . and it shall be forgiven him.

5:13 . . . and it shall be forgiven him.

5:16 . . . and it shall be forgiven him.

5:18 . . . and it shall be forgiven him.

Everyone there who heard Jesus use this unusual passive wording knew exactly what He was saying and implying—that only God could declare sin forgiven. No human being can forgive sin. No priest can forgive sin. No minister or elder can forgive sin. *Only God* can forgive sin. And by

declaring this man's sins forgiven, Jesus was declaring that He was God.

Did the people hearing those words understand what Jesus was saying and implying? You bet they did. Notice their reaction here in **Mark 2:6-7:**

6 And some of the scribes were sitting there and reasoning in their hearts,

7 “Why does this Man speak blasphemies like this? Who can forgive sins but God alone?”

So yes, they clearly understood the point Jesus made. They clearly understood that He was claiming to be God. And because of that, they accused Him of the sin and crime of *blasphemy*. They caught the *remez*. They understood that Jesus was claiming to be God by pronouncing the man's sins forgiven.

This is the first time we come across a confrontation between **Jesus and the scribes**. Who are the scribes? We've talked earlier about the Pharisees and the Sadducees, but who are the scribes? Let's talk about them for a few minutes, because we'll come across them a lot in the Gospels. Notice first that the scribes are “sitting” in what seems to be a standing-room-only crowd. Luke also mentions this in verse 17, saying these were “Pharisees and teachers of the law.” The fact that they were *sitting* rather than standing or among those jostling to get close enough to hear shows that they were respected among the people there that day. And that was generally true. The scribes, the Pharisees and the Torah teachers or teachers of the law were well-respected as godly men—particularly in this area of Galilee that is heavily populated with religious Jews.

Who were this group of people called “scribes? Here is what the *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* says about them: “The existence of law leads necessarily to a profession whose business is the study and knowledge of the law; at any rate, if the law is extensive and complicated. At the time of Ezra and probably for some time after, this was chiefly the business of the priests. Ezra was both priest and scholar . . .

“The priests were therefore also in the first instance the scholars and the guardians of the Law; but in the course of time this was changed. The more highly esteemed the Law became in the eyes of the people, the more its study and interpretation became a lifework by itself, and thus there developed a class of scholars who, though not priests, devoted themselves assiduously to the Law.

“These became known as the scribes, that is, the professional students of the Law. During the Hellenistic period, the priests, especially those of the upper class, became tainted with the Hellenism of the age and frequently turned their attention to paganistic culture, thus neglecting the Law of their fathers more or less and arousing the scribes to opposition. Thus, the scribes and not the priests were now the zealous defenders of the Law, and hence, were the true teachers of the people. At the time of Christ, this distinction was complete. The scribes formed a solid profession which held undisputed sway over the thought of the people.”

It goes on to explain that they are referred to by several different terms in the Gospels—“scribes,” “teachers of the law,” “scholars,” “lawyers” and “doctors of the law.” They are called “lawyers” and “doctors of the law” not in the sense of how we use the term “lawyer” today, but because they were viewed as experts in how to interpret and apply the laws of the Bible. They are actually all of these things—scholars, teachers, scribes and experts in the law. The laws of the Bible didn't cover every single situation that might arise, so these men studied the laws and elaborated and extrapolated them to cover every conceivable situation that might come up.

In the Gospels they are nearly always mentioned alongside the Pharisees or the chief priests. And this makes sense because they were the students and teachers of the law and debated and made decisions on how the law applied as they saw it. Earlier we've talked about some of the nitpicky ways they interpreted and applied the law, such as regarding the Sabbath.

To give some examples, they defined a burden as anything that weighed more than two dried figs, so you couldn't carry anything that weighed more than two dried figs on the Sabbath. You couldn't spit on the ground on the Sabbath, because that disturbed the soil and was a form of plowing, which was work. A tailor couldn't leave a pin or needle in his garment on the Sabbath, because that was carrying an unnecessary burden.

You couldn't heal on the Sabbath, because that was unnecessary work, but if the situation was life-threatening, you could take action on the Sabbath. You could put a plain bandage on a wound on the Sabbath, but not one with ointment on it because that would be classified as healing or going to too much work on the Sabbath. If your house was on fire on the Sabbath, you couldn't pick up your clothes and carry them out of the house, because that was carrying a burden, but you could put on all the layers of clothing that you could wear and take the clothes out of the house that way. You couldn't wear sandals that had small metal nails holding the sole together, because that was carrying unnecessary weight.

These were the kind of rulings they made as to how the law regarding not working on the Sabbath applied. And this approach extended to every other aspect of life and the law as well. And of course, this brought them into conflict with Jesus Christ because while He upheld the Sabbath, as we see repeatedly in the Gospels, He didn't uphold their rules about such things as you couldn't heal on the Sabbath, as we talked about last time.

So what's going on here in Capernaum this day? We see that *they are checking out what Jesus is saying* to see whether what He says agrees or disagrees with their rules and interpretations of the law. Jesus, with His different ways of interpreting and applying the law, *is a threat* to their power and positions. That's why we see them allied with the Pharisees on the one hand, and with the chief priests, who are primarily Sadducees, on the other hand. **We see them allying** with each other because they are all lining up *against* Jesus of Nazareth

They all have their reasons for wanting Him out of the picture, even if it means killing Him. He is a threat to the Sadducees as we saw earlier because He threatens their control over the temple and how they have made it into a huge money-making operation, and He is a threat to the scribes and Pharisees because His interpretations of the law make more sense than theirs and presents God more accurately as a truly loving Father and not as a stern and harsh judge who is just looking and waiting for some excuse to punish them.

And notice also that, even though Jesus knows what they're likely up to, He allows them to sit there in respected positions in the home in which He is teaching. He doesn't disrespect them or insult them or go out of His way to antagonize them. But He does perceive what they're thinking, so He uses this as a teaching moment, as we see next.

8 But immediately, when Jesus perceived in His spirit that they reasoned thus within themselves, He said to them, "Why do you reason about these things in your hearts?"
9 "Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven you,' or to say, 'Arise, take up your bed and walk'?"

Jesus now really puts His opponents in a dilemma. Because anyone could say, "Your sins are

forgiven,” but there would be no way to prove whether that was true or not. There was simply no way to tell. But to say, “Your sins are forgiven—now take up your bed and walk”—that would prove right then and there whether He had divine authority because either the man would be healed or he wouldn’t. And since by their own definition the man was paralyzed because he was a sinner, if he were to get up and walk again that would prove he had been forgiven of those sins and was no longer a sinner by their standards.

So Jesus even offers a test that can demonstrate to them by their own standards whether the man had been forgiven or not. So He says—

10 “But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins”—He said to the paralytic,

11 “I say to you, arise, take up your bed, and go to your house.”

Jesus had the power to do both—to forgive sin and to heal the man. So He did both. And this word translated “power” can mean either “power” or authority” or both. It’s the same word we discussed earlier when we read about Jesus teaching as one who had “authority” or *smicha* in Hebrew. Jesus plainly says here that He had the power or authority to forgive sins—which of course only God can do.

Notice also the *remez* here where Jesus again makes the point that He is God. He refers to Himself as “the Son of Man,” which is a *remez*, a hint, a look back, to Daniel’s prophecy of the One who would rule over the Kingdom of God in **Daniel 7:13-14**—

13 “I was watching in the night visions, and behold, One like the Son of Man, coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought Him near before Him.

14 Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom the one which shall not be destroyed.

So Jesus twice here in this sentence claims to be divine or to be God. And He did so a third time as we already covered, when He applied all those verse in Leviticus 4 and 5 to Himself. So three times here He claims to be God. He doesn’t come out and say it directly, but he says it in a distinctly Jewish way. And as we saw, the scribes and Pharisees got the message—which is why they accused Him of blasphemy.

We should also consider here the question of just how are sins forgiven? Were they forgiven by the sacrifice of the animals at the temple? No, they weren’t. It took a sacrifice much greater than that. What did it mean to Jesus Himself when He said, “your sins are forgiven.” What went through His mind at that point? What had to go through His mind at least in part is *how* those sins would be forgiven. And that price was *His life*. Notice **Hebrews 10:11-14**—

11 And every priest stands ministering daily and offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins.

12 But this Man [Jesus Christ], after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever [the sacrifice of Himself], sat down at the right hand of God,

13 from that time waiting till His enemies are made His footstool.

14 For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified.

The only way that man’s sins were forgiven is the same way our sins are forgiven—which is through Jesus Christ sacrificing His life for us. He knows how this is going to end. It’s not going to be pretty. But then, the consequences of sin never are pretty. And it’s going to cost Him His life. Don’t *ever* read over those words about forgiveness and take them for granted. Forgiveness is God’s free gift to us, but that doesn’t mean it comes without cost. It came at the greatest cost

imaginable.

Returning to **Mark 2:11**, Jesus tells the paralyzed man—

11 “I say to you, arise, take up your bed, and go to your house.”

12 Immediately he arose, took up the bed, and went out in the presence of them all, so that all were amazed and glorified God, saying, “We never saw anything like this!”

That’s quite an amazing story on many levels. I love the vivid description of it because you can so easily visualize every detail. You can just see the people standing there with their jaws dropped onto their chests saying, **“We never saw anything like this!”**

What was it about all this that they had never seen? We know they had seen healings before, because last time we covered how after sundown on the Sabbath in Capernaum the people there brought to Him many who were sick with all kinds of diseases and He healed them. So why are they now saying, **“We never saw anything like this!”**? What was different? What was different is that now Jesus *was proclaiming His authority to forgive sin*. They had certainly never seen anyone proclaim that they had authority to forgive sin before. I like the way Luke summarizes it in **Luke 5:26—**

26 And they were all amazed, and they glorified God and were filled with fear, saying, “We have seen strange things today!”

They had indeed seen strange and amazing and remarkable things that day. And even more strange and amazing and remarkable things would follow.

We’ll stop and pick it up from there next time. But let’s ask some questions as we wrap up. As I’ve mentioned before, there are **four key questions** we should ask when we’re reading Bible passages to understand their meaning for us:

- What does this teach us about the nature and character of God the Father and Jesus Christ?
- What does this teach us about the way They interact with Their people and mankind?
- What does this mean for your relationship with God the Father and Jesus Christ?
- What does this teach us about how we should think, act and live?

- **What does this teach us about the nature and character of God the Father and Jesus Christ?**

1. God is incredibly merciful – *He can forgive a person who was not even expecting to be forgiven.*

We saw this with the paralyzed man. He didn’t come for forgiveness. He might not have even known that he even needed forgiveness. But He received it anyway.

2. God can and does at times give more than we ask.

The man came for healing and received forgiveness as a bonus. He came for an outer healing and received an inner healing as well.

- **What does this teach us about the way They interact with Their people and mankind?**

1. We start in a state of spiritual paralysis like the paralyzed man. *God’s rescuing us from that state and restoring us to a right relationship with Him begins with forgiveness.*

When we are first called, we are nothing spiritually. Spiritually, we are like the paralyzed man—unable to move, unable to do anything, helpless because our sins have cut us off from God. We

have to be rescued from that spiritually helpless and paralyzed state, and that begins with God's forgiveness through Jesus Christ's sacrifice. We see that every year at Passover.

2. *God's work with us starts with rescue, then leads to restoration.*

Essentially the same comments. God steps in to rescue us first, to begin working with us, and if we allow that to happen, it leads to restoration of a right relationship with Him—and ultimately to salvation and becoming His children in His eternal family and Kingdom.

• What does this mean for your relationship with God the Father and Jesus Christ?

1. *Faith isn't always just sitting back and letting God take care of everything and thinking we don't have to do anything. At times faith requires action.*

Would the paralyzed man have been healed had his friends not had such faith and determination to see God act for him? Probably not. A paralyzed man by his very condition doesn't get out and about a lot so the odds that he would ever personally encounter Jesus in this paralyzed condition and be healed by Him weren't very great. It would be sheer chance. But the man's friends knew that and were determined to do whatever it took to see God heal their friend. They could've had all the faith in the world, but had they sat back and waited for Jesus to come to them, their friend likely would've never been healed.

2. *Are we glorifying (praising) God for what He has done for us?*

Luke 5:25 says the paralyzed man **“departed to his own house, glorifying [or praising] God.”** The next verse, as well as Mark's account, say that the people who witnessed this glorified or praised God. Do we give credit where credit is due for where we are and for what God has done for us? That's a lesson we should learn from their reaction.

• What does this teach us about how we should think, act and live?

You could copy the last two items here as well, the two about acting in faith and about praising God, since they fit in both categories. But I want to give you two others as well.

1. *What kind of friend are you to those with disabilities?*

Think about the example of the friends of the paralyzed man. They really went above and beyond in helping their friend, who wasn't in a position to do anything for them in return. They truly showed love and concern for their friend.

2. *Sometimes we carry our friends, sometimes our friends carry us.*

Sometimes we help others, and sometimes it's the others who help us. Friendship should be a two-way street, with both parties helping the other—at times even doing the equivalent of carrying one another when the occasion calls for it. That's what friends are for—to be there and knowing you can rely on one another, no matter what. We see a great example there with the story of the paralyzed man.

Any questions? If not, we'll wrap it up there.