

Outcast & Paralyzed by Sin

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 14 January 2024

Preacher: Bill Story

[0 : 00] I think Fanny Crosby's Blessed Assurance, which was kind of perfect submission.

Did you feel that? Did you feel like that? Or what was the next one we sang? Jesus paid it all? That was more where I'm at.

That was more where I'm at. Speaking of which, take out your Bibles and turn with me to Luke 5. The first part of chapter 5, we saw Jesus teaching from a fishing boat, which happened to be Simon Peter's fishing boat.

And then Jesus asked Peter, who had been out fishing all night, right, and had caught nothing, Jesus asked Peter to put his boat back in the water, go back into the deep, not to fish, but for a catch.

And of course, when they did that, they reeled in, not reeled in, but netted a catch that was so great that they needed a second boat. And even with two boats, both boats were filled and began to sink, which caused Peter, remember, which caused Peter to fall on his knees before Jesus and plead, Lord, get away from me, for I'm a sinful man.

[1 : 38] Remember that? And Jesus, being not at all repulsed by him, told Peter, fear not.

From now on, you'll be fishing for men. And with that, Peter and the other disciples, or fishermen, left everything and followed him.

We pick it up from there. Okay? Luke chapter 5, verse 12. If you're able, please stand as I read from Luke chapter 5, beginning of verse 12. While he was in one of the cities, behold, there came a man full of leprosy.

And when he saw Jesus, he fell on his face and begged him, Lord, if you will, you can make me clean.

And Jesus stretched out his hand and touched him, saying, I will be clean. And immediately, the leprosy left him.

[2 : 55] And he charged him to tell no one, but go and show yourself to the priest and make an offering for your cleansing, as Moses commanded, for a proof to them.

But now, even more, the report about him went abroad, and great crowds gathered to hear him and to be healed of their infirmities. But he would withdraw to desolate places and pray.

On one of those days, as he was teaching, Pharisees and teachers of the law were sitting there, who had come from every village of Galilee and Judea and from Jerusalem.

And the power of the Lord was with him to heal. Excuse me. And behold, some men were bringing on a bed a man who was paralyzed.

And they were seeking to bring him in and lay him before Jesus. But finding no way to bring him in because of the crowd, they went up on the roof and let him down with his bed through the tiles into the midst before Jesus.

[4 : 16] And when he saw their faith, he said, Man, your sins are forgiven you. And the scribes and the Pharisees began to question, saying, Who is this who blasphemes?

Who can forgive sins but God alone? When Jesus perceived their thoughts, he answered them, Why do you question in your hearts?

which is easier to say? Excuse me. Which is easier? To say, Your sins are forgiven you? Or to say, Rise and walk?

But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins, he said to the man who was paralyzed, I say to you, Rise, pick up your bed, and go home.

And immediately, he rose up before them and picked up what he had been lying on and went home, glorifying God.

[5 : 24] And amazement seized them all. And they glorified God and were filled with awe, saying, We have seen extraordinary things today.

After this, he went out and saw a tax collector named Levi, sitting in the tax booth. And he said to him, Follow me. And leaving everything, he rose and followed him.

So it reads, let us pray. Father, teach us today. Open our eyes. Speak to us who are lepers and paralyzed. Speak to us cleansing.

Speak to us forgiveness. Speak to us liberty from our bonds. We pray in Christ's name.

Amen. Please be seated. I want to, before we begin, just consider what paralysis would be like.

[6 : 38] What would it be like to be paralyzed? What does that mean? Well, it means you're unable to move.

Right? That you have no control. It leads to complications like difficulty breathing, risk of infections, weakness.

Add to that emotional complications like frustration, depression, fear. So, what if paralysis were a spiritual condition?

Can, because in this story, Jesus connects sin with his paralysis. So, so, what is, so I'm not trying to spiritualize here.

I'm trying to apply, I think, what Jesus is connecting. Can sin cause paralysis? Can our sin cause us to be stuck and bound and trapped so that we spiritually can't move?

[7 : 59] Which leads to complications like discouragement and depression and weariness and wanting to give up? And, and what kind of sin could paralyze us?

Well, I think if we think about it, just about any. But I think I can be paralyzed when I don't pray and I stay paralyzed because I don't pray.

Right? For me, or for sloth or for neglecting spiritual things, neglecting gathering, hardness of heart, all kinds of things.

In Luke 5, what we have here today are two striking miracles, a leper and a paralytic. We have two people who are stuck and isolated by their sin.

and I think sin is connected to both of them. A leper is required for his cleansing to go to the priest and offer offerings, sin offering, a burnt offering, an offering for atonement, which connects it to sin in some way.

[9 : 24] And clearly the paralytic comes, well, he doesn't come, his friends bring him, and the first thing Jesus does is forgive his sin. So Jesus is connecting them.

So the other thing I want you to notice at the outset here is Luke's arrangement. Luke is writing in an orderly way.

Luke is writing in a thoughtful way. He's not just putting down stories. He has thought about how to put them down. He arranges it carefully.

He's not messing with the information. The details, or he's not messing with the truth. He's just simply putting it down in a way that shows us something. And so I want you to notice that on the outside picture, the beginning of chapter 5, verses 5, excuse me, chapter 5, verses 1 through 11, we have the story of Simon Peter, the fisherman.

And after the great catch, he is struck with his own sinfulness. He calls himself a sinful man. And then Jesus says, don't fear, you'll be catching men from now on.

[10 : 43] And then Peter leaves everything and follows him. He leaves everything and follows him. That's radical. He's radically changed.

And then on the other side of the story, after these two miracles, look down at verse 27, 28, we see then this call of Levi, who is a tax collector.

And tax collectors are known in the New Testament to be what? Crooks. Sinners. Right? They eat with prostitutes. They're just, you know, they're just bad people.

So Jesus calls a tax collector to follow him, and he leaves everything and follows him.

Okay? So at the beginning of chapter 5, and then after these two miracles, we have these two callings, these two mission statements. Right? These two followers who are sinful people, they leave everything and follow him.

[11 : 46] And then in the middle, in between those, Peter and Levi, we have these two miracles. Okay? We have the leper, and we have the paralytic. I think they're connected.

I think Peter and Levi, right, are just like the leper and the paralytic. Okay? They're changed. Okay?

So there's an inside picture and an outside picture. So let's get to these two miracle stories. He highlights these two miracles. Now, Luke has mentioned that Jesus heals people. He's mentioned before, right, that there's been, he casts out demons, and he kind of just has mentioned them in general. Now he's going to focus on two. Now in chapter four, he's going to focus on how this unfolded with the leper and then how it unfolded with the paralytic. So he's highlighting these two miracles. Two pictures. One, in verses 12 through 16, is the picture of the leper, a leper who is cleansed.

[12:55] Interesting. Interesting. Not a leper who's healed, but a leper who's cleansed. Okay? That's the distinction. And then secondly, we see the paralyzed man who's brought to Jesus.

He's forgiven. So you have a cleansing and a forgiveness. Just an interesting picture. So let's look at the leper first. First, we have the picture of the leper. Here we see Jesus purifying someone who has been isolated by his uncleanness.

A leper is someone who has been isolated by his uncleanness. He is separated from society. He is an exile, an outcast, an outsider.

He's been shunned because he's unclean. Okay? Now, could you imagine a spiritual condition like that? Do you ever feel isolated because you're unclean?

Okay? Maybe this applies to you then. He starts it in verse 12. Luke says, while he was in one of the cities, there came a man full of leprosy.

[14:11] Now, our translations are missing a word. Anybody have an older translation? A new American standard from 1977?

Anything like that? No? See, the translators of the newer English versions take some words out because, you know, they're not necessary. And they're not, to get the justice story.

They're not changing any theology or anything. But they are changing an emotional part of the story. Luke includes the word, behold. Behold?

We don't use that in English anymore. Behold? We just throw that word out because that doesn't mean anything, right? When Luke says, behold, there came a man full of leprosy. When he says, behold, it's like somebody saying, look, look!

Behold is a way of saying, you need to pay attention to this. This is unique. Okay? That's what behold means. Okay? Shouldn't take it out.

[15:18] Just my opinion, right? Behold, there came a man full of leprosy. In other words, this is not what normally happens. Lepers are supposed to be out by themselves.

They're not supposed to come in to a city. They're not supposed to come in where people are. So, something very unusual is happening.

Behold, a leper. Not just a leper, but a man full of leprosy. So, we see a pariah of society come. Now, what is a leper? A leper is somebody who has some kind of a skin disease that has forced him into isolation. And I'm not going to go through, you could read Leviticus 13 if you would like to know more about it, what all those skin diseases look like.

There's all kinds of different kinds. There's a whole, there's about 80 verses in chapter 13 of Leviticus that talks about this. So, if you're really interested, have a good time with that.

[16:18] What it is, overall though, it is not like what is called leprosy in modern times. Or what's also known as Hansen's disease.

It's not like that. That's different. This is a visible irritation on the skin where if it, it's not any kind of irritation or rash or inflammation on the skin.

If that goes away, then that's not leprosy. Leprosy is something that over a period of time, if it doesn't go away, in fact, if it grows and it spreads, then it's leprosy.

Also, it has to turn the hair on your skin white. Okay? So, it has a visible sign to it. Okay?

And only the priest are the experts at recognizing what is and isn't. Okay? So, there's a process of quarantine and examination and either you are or you're not.

[17:25] This is a man who's full of it and he, as a result of being diagnosed or identified as one who has a leprosy disease, he then is isolated.

Permanently until he's cleansed. How are you supposed to get cleansed, by the way? If it's permanent. Yeah. Yeah. In fact, the end of Leviticus 13 says this, the leprosy person who has the disease shall wear torn clothes and let the hair of his head hang loose and shall cover his upper lip and cry out, unclean, unclean.

Right? Just so other people are warned. He shall remain unclean as long as he has the disease. He is unclean. He shall live alone and his dwelling shall be outside the camp.

Okay, so I want you to understand the condition of this person. Not only does he have some kind of physical ailment, but that ailment has made him an exile, an outcast, an outsider.

And so he takes the risk, verse 12, of coming into town and finding Jesus. He must have heard about Jesus somewhere. I don't know where, but he's heard about him.

[18:57] So it says, when he saw Jesus, verse 12, he fell on his face and begged him, Lord, if you are willing, if you will, you can make me clean.

So notice his approach. He falls, he begs, he's desperate. He's humble. If you are willing, is that how we should pray, by the way? Lord, if you're willing.

You think that's okay? Is that, is that not having faith enough? Because the faith movement people say you shouldn't do that. Faith people say, no, no, God's always willing to do it.

Well, I don't know. I read scripture here. It kind of worked. Kind of worked. Jesus actually likes this prayer, doesn't he? This is a prayer, by the way. He's talking to Jesus.

Lord, if you will, if you're willing. So there's a humility there. He is desperate, absolutely, but there's a humility there. If you will.

[20:04] The faith comes in the next statement. You can. You can. I know you can. I think that's a wonderful way to pray. Lord, if you're willing.

You can. I know you can. If you will. Because we know the rest of the Bible, there's times when God is not willing, right? For his own purposes.

But here we have a prayer of faith. And then what's Jesus' response? Verse 13. Jesus stretched out his hand and touched him.

Okay, now is that okay? What happens when Jesus touches a leper? He becomes, well, no, he becomes unclean.

He becomes unclean. He becomes unclean. Get the picture? He takes on the uncleanness. Doesn't hurt him, by the way.

[21:13] He takes on the uncleanness. I think that's striking. And the fact that he touched him. Do you think that might mean something to a man full of leprosy, who's been isolated probably for at least months, if not years?

I mean, first human contact. Why would Jesus do that? Because he's a tender, compassionate. He must have seen him and go, oh, let me give you a hug. No, he just touched him. I was thinking of elf there just a minute. And then he says more strikingly, right?

So he touches him. And he says, I will. I am willing. And then he cleanses him by saying, be clean. Just the word. Be clean. Like Genesis one, let there be light. He says to the leper, be clean.

[22:25] And what happened immediately? Right? Am I reading it right? Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. He said, as soon as he says, be clean, immediately the leprosy left him. That was it.

He didn't have to touch him. We know that. Jesus did that because he cared about him. But the word of Jesus cleanses the man. The word of Jesus purifies us.

It is his word. It is his word. That has the power. And then he tells him, right? Go. Verse 14.

Charged him to tell no one, but go and show yourself to the priests and make an offering for your cleansing as Moses commanded for a proof to them.

So Jesus is simply saying, do what the law says. What the law says in Leviticus 14 is you have to go through this process. We think, well, but Jesus cleansed him.

He's clean. The leprosy is gone. Why does he need to go to the priest? Well, so that he can have contact with people again, so that he can be officially declared by the priest clean.

[23:31] By the way, do you think priests see this very often? Do you think they've seen it? They're probably going to show up at the priest, you know, the temple and they're going to go, I don't remember what we do.

We better go check. Right? It's like, haven't had one of these for a while. If ever. Because they alone, only the priest can delay or declare him.

Okay. Acceptable now. You can return to society. You can go back to your home. You can go back to your employment.

I mean, this is life changing. He's restored. What was the impact? We see verse, oh, then it says, as a proof to them.

So that's interesting. So Jesus wants to show the priest. Right? Do as Moses said, but why? Why? As a proof, as a testimony to them, as a proof to the priest.

[24 : 37] That's interesting. Jesus wants the priest to know something radical is changing. And by the way, when we read later in the book of Acts, you know, some years later, after Jesus has raised from the dead, Acts tells us that, oh, that a whole bunch of the priests came to faith.

Yeah, I wonder why. Hey, remember? Remember? And that, you know, they're the ones that get the whole thing about sacrifice and blood and all that.

All right. So what happens? Verse 15. So now, Luke says, now even more, even more, there's already been crowds, but now even more, the report about him went out and great crowds gathered to hear him and to be healed by their infirmities.

infirmities. So crowds keep coming. But then Luke includes this statement, verse 16, but he, but Jesus would withdraw to desolate places and pray.

And actually, the language could be written this way. He was withdrawing to desolate places and was praying. In other words, it was a regular practice to withdraw and to pray.

[25 : 58] When the crowds come, he would regularly get away and pray. Get away and pray. Why? Well, it's interesting following this incident and then leading to the next one, verse 17, where he's going to have the first appearance of Pharisees and scribes, the first opposition coming against him.

He's praying. He's praying. He's praying. He felt the need to do that. Do you feel the need to do that?

I'm not going to ask you if you regularly, I'm not going to give you this kind of guilt thing of, do you know, do you get away and pray and should be done, blah, blah, blah. I was going to ask, do you feel the need?

Do you feel the need? Right? Do you feel the need? Right? That'll direct you. Feel the need. Well, so let's apply this story of the leopard.

Do we have any spiritual lepers here today? Don't raise your hand. Do you feel your need for cleansing? Do you feel your uncleanness? Does that uncleanness at times isolate you?

[27 : 26] You know, if you feel guilt and shame, that's kind of a natural thing. It makes you withdraw from people. The last thing an unclean person wants to do is be around clean people.

I guess. I don't know. I mean, I know when I am falling away from the Lord, I don't want to be around Christians. Not because Christians are going to make me feel bad.

It's just, I just want to withdraw, you know? I just want to be away. It's a natural thing. Do you remember when we were in 1 John just a few weeks ago?

Maybe it was a month ago. A few months ago. Maybe it was a year ago. I don't know how long it was. Is it a while ago? I don't remember. Seems like yesterday. 1 John chapter 1.

Remember? I mean, I love John. He just says it straightforward. John said, This is the message we heard from him and proclaim to you that God is light.

[28 : 34] God is light. And in him is no darkness at all. So, what are the implications of that? John says, Well, if we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, guess what?

We're lying. We're lying. Because he's light. We're in darkness. We're lying. And we do not practice the truth. But, if we walk in the light as he is in the light, we walk in the light as he is in the light.

Even when we're unclean. If we walk in the light as he is in the light, what happens? We have fellowship with one another and the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sin.

In other words, what Christians do when they're dirty and when they feel guilty and when they feel shameful, when they are unclean, is they get in the light.

We don't do what is the most natural thing and that's to hide, right? We do the unnatural thing because it's a matter of faith. We come to church.

[29 : 47] We come and have fellowship with one another because we're all dirty and we all come to sit and stand and walk in the light because that's where we get clean. That's how God works.

God's ways are not our ways. Then he goes on. He says, if we say we have no sin, oh, I'm good. I don't have any sin. Then we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.

On the other hand, if we confess our sins, if we freely admit our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness, he will always forgive the one who owns up to their sin.

Always. Always. He is faithful to do that. He is right to do that. If we say we have not sinned, then we make him a liar and his word is not in us.

So in God's light, all unclean lepers who walk in his light will be cleansed and purified and forgiven. So let's look at the other picture.

[30 : 52] So if you're not a leper, maybe you're a paralytic. I don't know where you fall in today. Or you've been one at least. Maybe you're not right now, but maybe you have been. So look at the next story, verse 17.

In the second story, it's the story of the paralytic, the paralyzed man. And here I think what we see is Jesus unshackling those paralyzed by sin. Jesus unshackling, he's setting them free, he's liberating those who are paralyzed by sin.

They're paralyzed, this is a man who's physically paralyzed, but Jesus forgives his sin and then sets him free from his physical paralysis. First he sets him free from his spiritual paralysis.

So I want you to notice who comes first, verse 17. For in the gospel, look, this is the first appearance of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law who are also known as scribes.

First time they show up. And this is an official, it's interesting. Apparently Jesus has drawn their attention. Reports are going out and the reports have made it all the way down to Jerusalem.

[32 : 02] So we have Pharisees and scribes from Galilee, Judea, and Jerusalem. All right? So they're all interested in him. And we get this comment at the end of verse 17 that the power of the Lord is with him to heal.

That's interesting. It's just interesting. Why does he say that? Well, Luke's probably giving us, something's going to happen. Keep watching. You know?

Tune in next week. Verse 18. So who else comes?

Well, behold. There he is again, verse 18. Now this time the translators included. I don't know why they included here. They don't, the other one, but anyway, they did say behold. So Luke is again saying, hey, hey, hey, something else is going on.

You got to watch, watch. You never hear, you won't believe this. Behold, some men were bringing on a bed a man who was paralyzed and they were seeking to bring him in and lay him before Jesus.

[33 : 06] So we see officials there inspecting Jesus. Then we see these men. They're not even named. The Gospel of Mark says there's four of them.

Men carrying in this guy on a cot, basically, on a stretcher. They're bringing a paralyzed man to Jesus.

Isn't that a picture of praying for others? Isn't that interesting? Because I think there's spiritual picture applications to this.

Here's a paralyzed man. He can't get to Jesus. He's paralyzed. Imagine if you are or you know someone who is absolutely paralyzed, not physically, but they're spiritually paralyzed.

They're just stuck. Maybe they're depressed. Maybe they're, they've just been, they feel their shame. I don't know what it is. They can't come.

[34 : 16] You tell them, but they still don't come. Why? Because they're stuck. They need you to bring them. And you don't have to drag them physically. You could just go before the throne and talk to Jesus about it.

Hey, Lord, I know about this person. They're stuck. That's what these guys are doing. And then we're told, verse 19, so that they're just seeking to bring him and lay him down in front of Jesus and then let Jesus do whatever he does.

Verse 19, but finding no way in because of the crowd. Now, at that point, a lot of people would stop and quit, right?

That can't get in, try another day. You know, just forget about it. Too many obstacles, too many things in the way. Maybe that's like when we pray for others and we don't see anything happen. Maybe we're praying for a family member and we're praying for a friend or we're praying for something and it just doesn't look like God's listening. Right? And maybe we've been praying for a long time and we're just thinking maybe God's saying no.

[35 : 29] And so we give up. You shaking your head no? Don't give up. Don't give up. Why? Because Jesus tells us to keep coming.

Right? We're going to find that later. Aaron Luke is going to talk about praying. It's going to be like keep seeking, keep seeking, keep seeking, keep knocking, right? Keep knocking, keep coming.

Because the one that keeps on coming, that's the one that, right?
 Jesus' picture of prayer is always, it's going to take a while. Okay? So here's a picture of these guys. So the roadblock, okay, can't get in the door.
 What do they do? Well, verse 19, well, there's a roof. And in those, and homes in those days, they had an outward, outside stairway. So you could go, you could go up on the roof.
 It's not like they brought a ladder with them or something. There is, you know, ladder issues, no jokes about ladders. They had a ladder on the house and they climbed up on the roof. The roofs were flat, basically, right?
 [36 : 33] So they, and the roofs were made to walk on. The roofs were made to do other things on top. People, Peter would go up on the roof and pray and that kind of stuff. So the roof was basically another room with a wall, a short wall around it so that you didn't fall off, but it was meant to go up.
 So you had ladders up there. So they go up and Luke just says, they let him down with his bed through the tiles into the midst before Jesus.
 Luke makes it sound like, you know, yeah, they just let him down through the tiles. In the other gospels, we found out that, well, they had to do some digging first because it's a thick roof. You're going to walk on it.
 It's going to be thick. It's got clay. It's got all kinds of things put together. Here he says tiles. It's just another word for clay. It was a thick roof. So they had to dig through it.
 You imagine the homeowner sitting down below right going, okay, what's going on? I don't think State Farm is going to cover this. Right? So they dig a hole big enough to get the man in the stretcher down.
 [37 : 44] gee, it just so happens that when they let him down, he's right in front of Jesus. And what's the, you know? Or maybe they're clearing out of the way and Jesus walks to where that is.
 Either way, they lay him before Jesus. And verse 20 says, when he saw their faith, huh, what's faith look like? How did he see their faith? Well, they're digging through the roof.
 They're digging through the roof kind of faith. They're, they're, I'm overcoming obstacles kind of faith. Faith that's determined to get to Jesus no matter what it takes.
 And even if I got to pay for that roof later. Because all I know is I got to get my friend in front of Jesus and then Jesus can take it from there.
 I just need to get him to Jesus. And I'm going to do whatever it takes to get him there. That's faith. That's faith. And then, kind of surprising, you know, you let him down there, you bring him, obviously he's paralyzed, he needs healing.
 [38 : 58] And what, what does Jesus do? What in the world is Jesus doing? Verse 20, and when he saw their faith, he said, you're healed, get up and walk.
 Right? No, he didn't do that. That's what we're expecting. He said, man, your sins are forgiven you. Now I'm thinking about the guys up on the roof going, what'd he say?
 What'd he say? Wait a minute, we put a hole in this guy's roof for that, you know. He needs healing. Why does he forgive him?
 That's not why they came. It's not what they're seeking for. It's not what he needed. Or was it? See, Jesus knew the bigger issue.
 Jesus knew what the real need was, what the greatest paralysis was, what the real problem was, was sin.
 [40 : 00] Why he's stuck. See, because the outward, we have lots of outward problems that we can identify and we can say, Jesus, you know, if you'll take care of this, I'll be better.
 Yeah, we're better for a little bit, you know. But the real thing, remember Jesus said, come to me, all who are weary and heavy laden, I'll give you rest.
 Was he talking about physical rest? I'll give you rest for your what? Your soul. How do you get soul rest? Because the soul is where you're anxious.
 The soul is where you get depressed. The soul is where you fear and you have phobias. The soul is where you're up at night. Right? The soul is where you can be elated or you can be down in the dust.
 That's your soul. How do you get rest for that? A nap won't cure that. Time off won't cure that. Only Jesus cures that.
 [41 : 07] And so when he says, sir, man, your sins are forgiven, I wonder what his face looked like. What did the man's face look like when Jesus said that?

I got a feeling he wasn't disappointed. Right? I got a feeling. It's like, I'm good, take me home. Because there's nothing more meaningful than Jesus saying to you, your sins are forgiven. Canceled. So, verse 21, well, maybe Jesus forgot that the Pharisees and the scribes were there when he said this.

I don't know. I have a hunch that he knew exactly what he was doing and he's going to push this issue. And he's going to do it because they're there. So they, over here, verse 21, the scribes and the Pharisees begin to question, saying, who is this who speaks blasphemies?

This is the first official visit. It's like the Pope coming from Rome. This is, these are the Pharisees coming from Jerusalem. These are the official dudes going, he's yay or he's nay.

[42 : 26] And first impression from Jesus, oh, this man's trouble. Okay? And as the chapters unfold in the Gospel, Luke, we're going to see, yeah, the opposition's going to grow more intense.

And eventually, they're going to want to kill him. Okay? This is the first mark against him. Who is this who speaks blasphemy? To speak of blasphemy is to speak and revile God somehow, to take his name in vain or to slander his name.

Or, in this case, to act like your God, to think that you have the ability or the authority or the right to say what only God can say.

And so, they're saying, who can forgive sins but God? Jesus doesn't have that right. No man has that right to forgive a man's sins. Only God does. So, you see where Jesus has put himself?

He knows exactly what he's doing. He wants that question in their minds. He wants them to know, ultimately, who they're rejecting when they reject him.

[43 : 36] And they will know. They will know exactly who he is. And they'll still reject him. In fact, they'll still kill him. And every person who rejects Jesus knows exactly who they're rejecting.

They may deny that. They may say it's something else. They may suppress the truth. They may say, I don't believe in God. God doesn't believe in you. God doesn't believe in atheists. God doesn't believe in agnosticism.

God does not. Because God says, no, you know. You know. You can deny it all you want, but you know. And you know exactly who Jesus is.

I'm saying that because Scripture says that. I'm not trying to. God doesn't believe I'm saying that God doesn't believe in God. So they claim that he's blasphemous. He's claiming to be like God.

Verse 22, we see Jesus again.

He perceives their thoughts. The text actually says, the Greek text actually says, he knew. He knew. Doesn't just perceive. Didn't just kind of see it in their faces. He knew their thoughts.

[44 : 49] He knew exactly what they were thinking. He could read their minds. It's kind of like Hebrews 4.13. You know, we're laid bare before him who knows us.

He knows everything about us. There's nothing we can hide from him. He answered them. So he just questions them. They ask a question. He asks a question. Why do you question in your hearts?

Verse 23, which is easier to say, your sins are forgiven you or to say, rise and walk? So which is easier? You thought about that? Which is easier? It's kind of like one of these riddles.

You know, which is easier to say, your sins are forgiven or to say, rise and walk? Which one's easier? Well, they're both easier to say, aren't they? But what does he mean what's easier?

Isn't it easy to say your sins are forgiven and nobody knows whether that's true or not? Because if you say, rise, to a paralytic, rise and walk, isn't that harder?

[45 : 48] Because if he doesn't rise and walk, then you're a big fat liar. In fact, Jesus is appealing to Deuteronomy 18, which talks about how you prove a prophet.

If a prophet makes a statement, then his sign better come true. If his sign doesn't come true, then don't listen to that man. In Deuteronomy 18, it says, but if it comes true, and actually, Deuteronomy 18, verse 15, is where God reveals to Moses, there's somebody coming after you that's just like you.

There's another prophet I'm going to raise up from Israel that's just like you, Moses. Well, not just like you because they don't have to listen to you, but if they don't listen to him, trouble.

They better listen to him. And in the same context, it talks about what he says will come true. So I think Jesus is appealing to that. Which he says now in verse 24, but that you may know, that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins.

He says to the man who's paralyzed, I say to you, rise, pick up your bed and go home. So that you may know that the Son, the Son of Man, that's Jesus' reference to himself, that you may know that

the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins.

[47 : 18] He has the power and the right and the authority to forgive. This authenticates him as a true prophet. It actually authenticates him as more than a prophet.

what's the result? Verse 25, immediately, the paralyzed man rose up before them and picked up what he had been lying on and went home glorifying God.

He did exactly what Jesus said. And Luke tells us it happened immediately. immediately. I don't know, when somebody recovers from long-term paralysis, do we have any doctors here?

Dr. Luke, I'm sure, would be fascinated by this whole study. Dr. Luke is a physician, right? So he's thinking about leprosy and what that involves. He's thinking about a paralyzed man, what that involves. And for a paralyzed man whose legs, I'm sure, have atrophied, right?

There's no strength. There's no muscle movement. Even with people who can't move, you go and you exercise them, right? You do therapy and stuff. That's important to do. Here's a guy that didn't do that kind of stuff back then.

[48 : 32] Here's a guy that immediately stands up and walks. How does that happen? Well, how does leprosy immediately leave somebody? Right?

How does the guy with the hand, the shriveled hand suddenly come back? You know, how do you do that? You don't see that on TV miracles, do you? You don't see these kind of things on TV miracles.

You just don't see it because these are real miracles. And it proves that he has the authority to forgive sin.

So let's get to the application. Asked if you're a spiritual leper today, the answer, if you are, if you're feeling that, then the answer is 1 John 1.

Walk in the light, confess to the light for cleansing. What if you're paralyzed? Maybe you're both.

You know, you feel unclean and paralyzed by your uncleanness.

[49 : 37] Maybe that's, you know, I'm taking A, B, and C. You feel stuck, trapped, disabled by your sin.

You can't get unstuck. You can't fix yourself. You cannot. I'm not talking about somebody who's not a believer. They're all, you know, when we first come to Jesus, that's how we come.

We come paralyzed. We come stuck. We come, we can't fix ourselves, right? So we come to Jesus. What about a Christian? Can you get stuck again? Yeah, yeah, of course we can. Of course we can.

Get stuck again. So what do we do when we're stuck and we're trapped and we're disabled? Well, one, I would suggest find some friends to pray for you, to bring you to Jesus because maybe you, you're struggling with even doing that for yourself.

Right? Because maybe in your being paralyzed, you kind of have pushed God away. Not kind of, maybe you pushed him away and you've isolated yourself and you know that's not good for you, but that's just where you are.

[50 : 49] And sometimes we need others to carry us to Jesus when we can't, when I can't. So we have to be brave enough to tell somebody, okay? For one. And if we got nobody, you do have Jesus.

Jesus. And your prayer doesn't have to be anything fancy. It doesn't have to be anything that's written in scripture. It's just what I learned in depression years ago is sometimes your prayer is just simply this, Jesus.

Or as Paul says in Romans 8, you know, he says groanings, right? Right? The Spirit interprets our groanings. Just, you know, if that's all you can do, just do that. It's not about how we say it or how we articulate it.

God hears your heart. Get something out to him. Get it started. Okay? Here's Colossians 2.

It talks about our conversion. He says, you, speaking to believers, you who were dead in your trespasses. By the way, I think I'd call that paralysis, wouldn't you?

[51 : 59] Dead in your trespasses? Yeah, I think that's pretty paralysis of deadness. Okay. You were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcisionary flesh God has made alive together with him.

How? By having forgiven us all our transgressions, our trespasses. By canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands.

The law said you're guilty. This he set aside. He took all of those legal demands of the law, everything that we failed at, he's taken it and nailed it to the cross.

I'm sorry, Delinda. I'm really sorry. I mean, what an image.

Forgiving us, canceling our debt, he set aside, nailing it to the cross. That's where it is. So not only your past debts, but your present debts and your future debts.

[53 : 04] He's taken them all. So whether you're coming to Christ the first time he's done it, he's done that for you. Whether you've been a Christian for a while and you're feeling stuck in your deadness again or your paralysis, remember he's taken it and he's nailed it to the cross.

He does not look at you that way. Though you feel it. If you've never experienced God's forgiveness, if your sins have totally handicapped you, disabled you, trapped you, paralyzed you, overwhelmed you, Jesus is able to set you free.

Jesus is able to liberate you from your bondage. So seek him and pursue him. Do all that you can to get to him.

If you're a Christian, if you've gotten stuck again, let me ask you some other questions. These are just honest questions. These are not guilt questions. Please. They're just honest questions.

If you've gotten stuck again, why have you withdrawn from him? Ask yourself that. Why have I withdrawn from him? If I'm stuck, I've withdrawn from him in some way.

[54 : 26] And what is keeping you from going to him? He's not keeping you from going. Okay? He is not, he is waiting, seeking.

He may bring some stuff around and, you know, maybe a few pebbles and then a boulder and then a clobber. I don't know. He's going to get you. Come sooner than later because he wants you. He doesn't want you stuck. And as we've already read in John, you know, if we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, if we're just pretending and posing, you know, we're just liars.

But as John says, if we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have this fellowship with one another. We have this commonness with one another because we're all unclean who only get clean because we come into his light.

And if it's something between me and God, I confess it. I confess it. I admit it. Why is that so hard sometimes?

[55 : 45] Why is that hard? It's not physically hard, right, to just say, okay, Lord, I blew it again. I did, you know, this is what I did. Why is it hard for us to come sometimes?

Why is it hard for us to admit something to God? What is that? It's another paralysis thing, isn't it? Called pride or stubbornness or that two-year-old rebellion, you know, that two-year-old rebellion. You know, that's where we learned it when we were two. that one. When we first learned the word no, right? Right. Okay.

So let us pursue him. Let us pursue him. He is able to purify us from our uncleanness so that we're not isolated and he is able to unshackle us from the things that paralyze us in our sin.

So let us go to him. Let's pray. Father, we thank you for your word. We thank you for these pictures because we see in the picture of the leper and we see in the picture of the paralyzed man, and we see ourselves and one or the other or both.

[57 : 15] We feel it, Lord. We feel it with the leper. We feel isolation that has been caused because of our uncleanness. We don't want to live like that, Lord, so help draw us back.

We know, we say like the leper said, if you're willing, make us clean. Cleanse us again. And Father, for those who are paralyzed, those of us who feel stuck and aren't even able to bring ourselves to you, we pray, Lord, that you make our friends aware that you'd give us courage to let others know that we need others to pray for us and spark within us, oh, Father, in our paralysis that even the ability to groan or to cry out your name so that you might make us clean and make us whole and grant us once again that peace that passes understanding.

This we pray in Christ's name. Amen.