

20. The Greatest Physician

February 14, 2016

My daddy was a medical doctor in South Korea. My older brother is a chief neurosurgeon in the top medical center there. He followed daddy's footsteps and made him proud. But when my daddy asked me what I wanted to be while I was in high school, I answered him, "I am gonna be an artist," because I didn't like studying. Thus, I went to the Sculpture Department of a Fine Art College. I am sure that my daddy was hoping that he could have another doctor son.

And guess what I do now as a pastor? I study the Bible. I am studying more now than when I was in college. I wonder how many angels who saw my future that was shown by the Lord were rolling in laughter on the floor of the Throne Room.

The Messiah's role as the Greatest Physician was clearly prophesied in passages like Isaiah 35:5-6. Jesus' miracles were a testimony not only to the fact that He was sent by God, but that He was the anticipated Messiah:

Isaiah 35:5-6 Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, And the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then the lame shall leap like a deer, And the tongue of the dumb sing. For waters shall burst forth in the wilderness, And streams in the desert.

Jesus' miracles were not primarily calculated for crowd effect. Rather, they were primarily done to minister to the humble needs of humble people.

This morning we will see Jesus meeting many people's medical needs while the Jewish religious leaders already hated Him for His truth and popularity. He was becoming a threat to their wealth and positions. Jesus was meeting more than medical needs with His miracles, actually He was forgiving them from their sins that no one can do except God.

A. HEALING FROM BLINDNESS

Matthew 9:27-34 When Jesus departed from there, two blind men followed Him, crying out and saying, "Son of David, have mercy on us!" 28 And when He had come into the house, the blind men came to Him. And Jesus said to them, "Do you believe that I am able to do this?" They said to Him, "Yes, Lord." 29 Then He touched their eyes, saying, "According to your faith let it be to you." 30 And their eyes were opened. And Jesus sternly warned them, saying, "See that no one knows it." 31 But when they had departed, they spread the news about Him in all that country. 32 As they went out, behold, they brought to Him a man, mute and demon-possessed. 33 And when the demon was cast out, the mute spoke. And the multitudes marveled, saying, "It was never seen like this in Israel!" 34 But the Pharisees said, "He casts out demons by the ruler of the demons."

I am sure that it was an eye opening experience for these two blind men literally.

Many things in this 21st century in America are easier for those blind people as well as other handicapped people. But can you imagine living during the time of Jesus in Israel where they often treated any handicapped people as if it was their fault to be handicapped and shunned them without any logical conclusion?

The two blind men followed Jesus and shouted this open recognition of Jesus as Messiah, because the phrase "Son of David" was a rich Messianic title. When Jesus

asked them what they want, they asked Jesus for the best thing they could ask for: mercy from the Messiah.

Blindness is often a picture of spiritual ignorance and unbelief in the Bible. The sinner must be born-again before he can see the things of God. And the believer must be careful to grow spiritually or he will damage his spiritual vision.

In the Jewish rabbis' understanding of demon possession, the rabbis thought that they could not cast out a demon until it told them its name. Obviously the demon that made a man mute could never be made to tell them its name. But Jesus had no problem with that kind of thing, the demon was cast out and the mute spoke.

It was never seen like this in Israel! For this reason, this miracle was particularly amazing to the multitudes, and showed not only the complete authority of Jesus over the demonic realm, but also the flimsy theology of the rabbis' traditions. However, it didn't sit very well with the Pharisees.

Out of their jealousy against Jesus, they attributed the work of Jesus as the power of satan. These people would not admit that Jesus was the Messiah. How, then, could they explain His miracles? Only by saying that His miracles were done in the power of the wicked one. They would repeat this charge later. In their unbelief, the Pharisees were playing right into satan's hands!

B. FORGIVENESS FROM GOD BEFORE HEALING

Mark 2:1-4 And again He entered Capernaum after some days, and it was heard that He was in the house. 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. 3 Then they came to Him, bringing a paralytic who was carried by four men. 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.

Can you imagine this little chaotic situation in this house? Instead of seeing this from the third person's eyes, let's see this through the eyes of our Lord Jesus:

1) When He looked up – v1-4

He saw the four men, through the gaping hole, on the roof with their sick friend. During the days of Jesus, houses had flat roofs which have been usually accessible by means of an outside stairway. It would not be difficult to remove the tiles and dried clay that comprised the roof and make an opening large enough to fit their friend through on his mat.

We have to admire several characteristics of these men. For one thing, they were deeply concerned about their friend and wanted to see him helped. They had the faith to believe that Jesus could and would meet his need. They did not simply say "Pray about it," or "Hope that he would be healed." They made all that commotion in the middle of His teaching to lower their friend through a hole in the roof.

By the time they completed in lowering their friend, all Jesus could see was their faces around the hole, anticipating a great miracle from this Miracle Worker Jesus.

2) When our Lord looked down

Mark 2:5 When Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytic, "Son, your sins are forgiven you."

The Lord saw the paralyzed man lying on his mat. I am sure that all the eyes in the room were running back and forth between Jesus and the man on the mat. But only on external. However, Jesus' eyes went past his crumpled body to the main reason of the man's problem – sin. Not all sickness is caused by sin, but evidently this man's condition was the result of his own disobedience to God. Even before He healed the man's body, Jesus spoke peace to the man's heart and announced that his sins were forgiven.

Forgiveness of man's sin is the greatest miracle that Jesus has ever performed. It meets our greatest need at the greatest cost to God, Himself. And it brings the greatest blessing and the most lasting results to mankind.

3) When our Lord looked around

Mark 2:6-7 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?"

He saw the critics who had come to spy on Him. These religious leaders certainly had every right to investigate the ministry of this new teacher and it was their duty. But they should have come with open minds and hearts, seeking truth, instead of with the critical minds for their own selfish interest and seeking heresy. This was the beginning of their official position that ultimately led to our Lord's arrest and death. Their error was in refusing to see who Jesus is: God the Son, who has the authority to forgive sins.

When the Pharisees said, "*Who can forgive sins but God alone?*" they were correct. Nobody can, not a pope, not a priest, not a pastor, but only God. Jesus declared that He had the authority to forgive as God. There are many cult groups like the Mormons and Jehovah's Witnesses that deny the deity of Jesus Christ and argue that Jesus had never claimed that He was a God. Here He made it plain and simple. It doesn't take a rocket scientist to figure out what Jesus said and meant.

When the scribes came to examine Jesus and His teaching, they already made a conclusion that He was not who He claimed to be. If they had their Scripture knowledge in their hearts instead of their heads, they would have acknowledged Him as the Messiah. Like these Pharisees and scribes, many believers or unbelievers use out-of-context Bible verses as shields to justify and even promote their sinful life. If you are doing that, I highly recommend you to stop it now, because you are committing more sins.

4) When our Lord looked within

Mark 2:8-10 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'? 10 But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins"-- He said to the paralytic,

Jesus saw the scribes' critical spirit and unbelief and knew that they were accusing Him of blasphemy.

This is the first time in the Gospel of Mark where Jesus took upon Himself the title "The Son of Man" which is the Messianic title Jesus loved to use for Himself. Other Messianic titles emphasize the fact that Messiah would be God, but this title emphasized that He would also be a man.

Daniel 7:13 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.

*Mark 2:11-12 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!”*

It was “harder” to heal the man than to forgive his sins, because forgiveness is invisible – no one could verify at that moment the man was forgiven before God. Yet it could be instantly verified whether or not the man could walk. Jesus is willing to put Himself to the test.

For men, both real and complete forgiveness and the power to heal are impossible, but for God, both are easy. It is a logical assumption that if Jesus has the power to heal the man’s disease, He also has the authority to forgive this man’s sins.

C. FRONT CENTER, YOU IRS AGENT

Mark 2:13-14 Then He went out again by the sea; and all the multitude came to Him, and He taught them. 14 As He passed by, He saw Levi the son of Alphaeus sitting at the tax office. And He said to him, “Follow Me.” So he arose and followed Him.

Matthew 9:10-13 Now it happened, as Jesus sat at the table in the house, that behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and sat down with Him and His disciples. 11 And when the Pharisees saw it, they said to His disciples, “Why does your Teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?” 12 When Jesus heard that, He said to them, “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. 13 But go and learn what this means: ‘I desire mercy and not sacrifice.’ For I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance.”

I wouldn’t be surprised if Matthew had several plaques of “the extortioner of the year” on his office wall as a Roman government IRS agent. Now he is leaving his cushy and really good money making job and everything behind to follow Jesus. The Jewish people rightly considered the tax collectors traitors because they worked for the Roman government, and had the force of Roman soldiers behind them to make people pay taxes. They were the most visible Jewish collaborators with Rome.

When Jesus called Levi, he did not argue or delay. He got up and followed Jesus, even though he knew that Rome would never give him back his job. He burned his bridges, received a new name – “Matthew, the gift of God”.

In v13, Jesus said, “I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners.” That covers every single human. When He said this, it was a reminder for the scribes that they, too, were sinners like the man on the mat.

Ecclesiastes 7:20 For there is not a just man on earth who does good And does not sin.

Matthew’s friends were spiritual patients who knew they needed a physician, and Jesus was the Greatest Physician whom they could have. He comes to us in our need. He makes a perfect diagnosis. He provides a final and complete cure. And He even pays the bill. What a Mighty and Compassionate God we serve!

But there are three kinds of “patients” whom Jesus cannot heal of their sickness of sin:

- 1) Those who do not know about Him
- 2) Those who know about Him, but refuse to trust Him
- 3) Those who will not admit that they need Him. The scribes and Pharisees were in that third category, as are all the self-righteous sinners today.

Unless we admit that we are sinners, deserving of God’s judgment, we cannot be saved. Jesus saves only sinners.

D. APPLICATION

Only God can forgive our sins completely, if we come to Him with repented heart.