

Luke 5:17-26 – The healing of the paralysed man

What is your greatest need? What do you really need right now? Does God agree – what does he think your greatest need is? Our lives in the town can be very busy. In the busy-ness, we can lose our way. God may be trying to open our eyes to the truth. When we understand our true need, we can come to Jesus who has power to supply all our needs. But many people are looking for and preaching a false Jesus. In this passage we can meet the true Jesus who is much greater!

1. True need: what Jesus sees in us

Jesus was back in Capernaum, preaching. So many came that you could not even get near the door (Mark 2:2). He preached to them. Whilst he preached, a paralysed man was brought by four friends. They were determined to get him to Jesus, so they made a hole in the room and lowered him down. Paralysis is a picture of sin. We are born spiritually dead, and unable to save ourselves or have any fellowship with God at all (Ephesians 2:1-3, John 3:3-5). When Jesus saw the man, he saw a much deeper need than his bodily paralysis. He saw a sinner, heading to eternal judgment. He saw a fallen son of Adam, needing forgiveness above all other things. He also saw a man with faith in him as the Messiah. Therefore he gave him the thing he most needed: forgiveness (v20). Jesus told us to seek God's kingdom *first* (Matthew 6:33). Without forgiveness, our bodies may be strong but our souls lost – with forgiveness, our bodies can fall apart and die and yet we will be forever with Christ.

2. True faith: how we must come to Jesus

Why did Jesus forgive this man? Why not everybody in the room? Whom does he forgive? Verse 20 tells us it was because the man had faith. Forgiveness does not come to us by birth, by baptism or by good works, but by trust in Christ alone. Faith is worth more than silver and gold; it brings eternal life. Faith looks to Christ as the one we need. It believes he has all power over all the universe – over fishes (Luke 5:4-7), diseases (4:40), demons (4:35); all things. He is the Son of God who came from heaven to rescue us. The man and his friends believed this, and so they came to him. Many hear of Jesus, but will not come to him – or they will soon give up on the way. We must continue seeking until we find. It is the only one thing needed – but it is really needed! Have you kept on struggling until you have found him and found forgiveness from him?

3. True authority: who Jesus really is

What Jesus said was shocking to the religious leaders (v21). They said he was blaspheming; surely only God could forgive sins! But they were very wrong; religious leaders often are; religious leaders crucified Jesus. They should have bowed to him instead of judging him. Jesus was God, and knew their thoughts. They thought his forgiveness was empty words – easy to say, but with no reality. So, he decided to show them his power (v24). For him, all things are easy – his word has power over the whole universe. So, he told the man to get up and go home – and he did. Jesus has authority over all things. That is wonderful news; he really can forgive us! We do not read that the Pharisees repented; we read that the people were amazed – but did they now trust him as their own Saviour and Lord? Do you?