



World Christian Fellowship

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God only can forgive Part 02.

Luke 5:17-26, *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. ¹⁸Then behold, men brought on a bed a man who was paralyzed, whom they sought to bring in and lay before Him. ¹⁹And when they could not find how they might bring him in, because of the crowd, they went up on the housetop and let him down with his bed through the tiling into the midst before Jesus.*

²⁰When He saw their faith, He said to him, "Man, your sins are forgiven you."

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

²²But when Jesus perceived their thoughts, He answered and said to them, "Why are you reasoning in your hearts? ²³Which is easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven you,' or to say, 'Rise up and walk'? ²⁴But that you may know that the Son of Man has

power on earth to forgive sins”—He said to the man who was paralyzed, “I say to you, arise, take up your bed, and go to your house.”

²⁵Immediately he rose up before them, took up what he had been lying on, and departed to his own house, glorifying God. ²⁶And they were all amazed, and they glorified God and were filled with fear, saying, “We have seen strange things today!”

The verdict of God on man is that man is guilty and helpless.

God is all three branches in one.

He is the legislative branch,

He is the judicial branch, and

He is the executive branch.

Jesus’ statement of your sins are forgiven stunned the Pharisees and the scribes.

V 21, *And the scribes and the Pharisees began to reason, saying, “Who is this who speaks blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God alone?”*

The scribes and Pharisees their minds started to sort out what they had just heard. They knew their theology and only God could forgive sin and Jesus had just forgiven the man, He had just declared the guilty innocent.

They also believed that most sick people were sick because they were sinful. So, they got the picture, and their brains began to reel with this.

They did not say they anything!

Their minds just began to function Jesus was continuing to teach and speak while their minds were whirring with this incredible statement they had just heard.

If Jesus was a man, this was blasphemy of the worst kind. This is the first time in Luke's gospel they accused Jesus of being a blasphemer but as you go through the record of the gospels, Matthew, Mark and Luke and John, this became their constant perspective.

Every time Jesus claimed to be God, they saw it as blasphemy. Ultimately, they determined that what He did not by the power of God, but by the power of Satan. They had to have an explanation that was supernatural, so they attributed His works and words to Satan. They accused Him of being a blasphemer.

Now the worst crime you could commit within the framework of Judaism was blasphemy because blasphemy was a direct assault on God, and they revered God.

They did revere God in their own sort of twisted way. Jewish tradition said that there are three ways you blaspheme God.

One, you speak evil of the law of God. When apostle Paul came to Jerusalem after his last missionary journey, they accused him of speaking against the law. That was a kind of blasphemy. Any attack on Scripture, which was the law of God to them, and even their extended law that had developed beyond Scripture, any attack on what they saw as the law of God was a blasphemy. That was the first kind of blasphemy.

Secondly, it was to slander God Himself. To speak evil of Him. To reject the law, to depreciate the law, to curse the law, scorn the law. Worse was to curse the name of God, to speak evil against God Himself. But the worst of all, the worst of all was to put something in His place as God, any idol, any other god in violation of the first commandment, worshiping any idol raised up in the place of God.

Thirdly, the worst form of that was to act as if you are God. Blasphemy upon blasphemy!

Their distorted minds were just overwhelmed by this. Claiming to be able to forgive sin.

Moved this paralytic from the category of the guilty to the innocent, from the unjust to the just. This is the most outrageous blasphemy conceivable.

This man is talking as if He is God. He might as well have said He's the Creator of the universe, that He's the Holy One of Israel, that He's the Redeemer of Zion, that He's the holy and Almighty One, the eternal judge, the God of glory. He might as well have said that because they think, "Who can forgive sins but God alone?"

You cannot come to Jesus with any patronizing idea of being the good teacher.

Jesus is either God or He is a blasphemer.

The religious leaders got what Jesus was saying. They rejected Him because they did not get what He was saying.

Who can forgive sin but God alone?

Now they knew the Old Testament law. Leviticus 24 told them exactly what to do with a blasphemer. And this is the most extreme form of blasphemy imaginable.

Leviticus 24:10-16, *Now the son of an Israelite woman, whose father was an Egyptian, went out among the children of Israel; and this Israelite woman's son and a man of Israel fought each other in the camp. ¹¹And the Israelite woman's son blasphemed the name of the Lord and cursed; and so they brought him to Moses. (His mother's name was Shelomith the daughter of*

Dibri, of the tribe of Dan.)¹² Then they put him in custody, that the mind of the Lord might be shown to them.¹³ And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying,¹⁴ "Take outside the camp him who has cursed; then let all who heard him lay their hands on his head, and let all the congregation stone him.¹⁵ "Then you shall speak to the children of Israel, saying: 'Whoever curses his God shall bear his sin.¹⁶ And whoever blasphemes the name of the Lord shall surely be put to death. All the congregation shall certainly stone him, the stranger as well as him who is born in the land. When he blasphemes the name of the Lord, he shall be put to death.

Everybody gets involved so everybody sees the price of cursing God.

Leviticus 24:23, *Then Moses spoke to the children of Israel; and they took outside the camp him who had cursed, and stoned him with stones. So the children of Israel did as the Lord commanded Moses.*

They knew that passage. They knew what should be done to a blasphemer, and so they were ready to do it.

Jesus is either a blasphemer or He is God.

He either can forgive sin as God, or He has blasphemed God by saying He can.

In the blindness, of course, of their wickedness, in the blindness of their self-righteousness, they were unable to make the right decision about who Jesus was. They rejected Him as God, concluded that He was nothing but a blasphemer who was energized by the devil himself.

V 22, *But when Jesus perceived their thoughts, He answered and said to them, "Why are you reasoning in your hearts?"*

Jesus knew everything they were thinking.

Mark 2:8, "Jesus knowing, or aware in His spirit that they were reasoning that way within themselves."

Why are you reasoning like that in your hearts?

Why are you having those kinds of thoughts?

Why are you questioning My authority to forgive sin?

1 Samuel 16:7, *"The Lord looks on the heart."*

1 Kings 8:39, *"For You know the hearts of all men."*

1 Chronicles 28:9, *"For the Lord searches all hearts and understands every intent of the thoughts."*

Jeremiah 17:10, *"I the Lord search the heart."*

Ezekiel 11:5, *"I know the things that come into your mind, every one of them."*

Jesus knew this because He was God.

John 2:25, *and had no need that anyone should testify of man, for He knew what was in man.*

John 6:61, *When Jesus knew in Himself that His disciples complained about this, He said to them, “Does this offend you?”*

Jesus knew what they were thinking, and He knew they were thinking He was a blasphemer. He knew they wanted Him dead.

V 23, *Which is easier, to say, ‘Your sins are forgiven you,’ or to say, ‘Rise up and walk’?*

Jesus asks them a question.
A good and provocative question.

For any man both are impossible.

The man is paralyzed for a long time and his muscles are all shrunken. His bones are brittle. His brain has forgotten how to move his limbs.

Who has the power to say that?

No man does.

No man can immediately eliminate his paralysis and the cause of that paralysis, give him all brand-new muscles, brand new bones and put in his brain a new memory about how to walk.

No human can do that!

Neither can any man forgive his sins.

The two are connected.

For a man, both are impossible, but for God, both are possible! God alone can forgive sins. The Jews would agree to that.

God alone is the creator and if He needs to create new limbs, new bones, new muscles, and a new memory, He can do that.

So, these two things are only possible to God and not to man.

Sin and sickness are inseparable because they are both in the plan of salvation.

Matthew 8:16-17, *When evening had come, they brought to Him many who were demon-possessed. And He cast out the spirits with a word, and healed all who were sick,¹⁷ that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying: "He Himself took our infirmities And bore our sicknesses."*

Bible tells us that in the sacrifice of Christ, in the atonement, is not only the salvation of our souls, but the healing of our bodies ultimately. When you put your faith in Jesus Christ your soul is saved.

Romans 8:23, *Not only that, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body.*

We are waiting for the redemption of our body.

But in the end, we will have new souls, new spirits, and new glorified bodies. So ultimately God must deal with the sin that is in our soul and the infirmity as a result of that sin that's in our body. God alone can do that.

God alone can deal with sin, the root cause, and sickness and death, the effect of that cause.

If this is the Messiah God, the Son of God, God incarnate who brings the eternal kingdom of heaven, where there is no sin and no sickness and no death, then He must be able not only to forgive sin, but to remove all its consequences in the physical realm. When Jesus came into the world and healed people, He was making a very important statement.

He came, forgiving sin that is dealing with the cause.

He came, healing sickness, to show He could also deal with the symptoms.

Our final story of all believers demands that the Lord be able to overpower both!

When we go to heaven, there is no sin and there is no sickness and there is no death.

God in His salvation plan will deal with sin, and ultimately all its symptoms in the physical realm. We get new spirits, new souls free from sin, new bodies free from disease and death. That is our future.

Jesus as God could deal with both.

The two are inseparable. Healing and forgiveness go together. They are works of God and God alone. Removing sickness and removing sin, sin being the cause, sickness being one of the symptoms. Jesus said He came to take care of both. So, they go together.

Which is easier to say, your sins have been forgiven you, or to say rise and walk?

The answer:

It is easier to say your sins are forgiven.

Is it not easier to do both?

Impossible to man and possible to God.

It is easier to say your sins are forgiven. It is easy to say that because you cannot see if it happened.

V24, *But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins”—He said to the man who was paralyzed, “I say to you, arise, take up your bed, and go to your house.”*

They do not believe He's God and they believe that saying to that man, "Your sins are forgiven" is blasphemous because He's not God and saying it does not prove it happened.

But if Jesus can heal the man, which only God can do, they will know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins.

If Jesus is not able to heal that man, then immediately it reveals that He is fake. That will show Jesus is just a human.

But when Jesus heals that man then that will prove that Jesus is indeed the Son of Man.

So, to prove that “the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins.”

To prove that this Son of Man Jesus Heals this paralytic person.

Where does Jesus got that title?

Daniel 7. Vision of Heaven

V 9 &10, Son of Man there with God and His throne.

V 13 &14, is the Son of Man.

That is a pre-incarnate prophecy of the Messiah who would become a man.

Daniel 7:13-14, *“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. ¹⁴Then 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.*

Jesus calls Himself as Son of Man over eighty times in the gospels. Only once is Son of Man used of Him by somebody else. It is His own title for Himself.

It is an expression of His humanity.

It is true that Son of Man does speak of Jesus as human, but more than that, it is an expression of the promise of God through Daniel of the Messiah, the One who would have a kingdom and who would reign and who was there on the throne with God Himself.

So, Jesus says you need to know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins. To prove that He is going to do what only God can do.

Jesus said to the man *He said to the man who was paralyzed, "I say to you, arise, take up your bed, and go to your house."*

Three commands:

- Rise,
- Take up, and
- Go.

Here is this man who has been paralyzed forgotten how to walk. To say you are healed and now you must go immediately into two years of rehabilitation might have been a more reasonable approach.

But to say to the man, "Get up, take your stuff, put it under your arm and go home," do not take two steps with a walker, go home.

A creative miracle here.

V 25, *Immediately he rose up before them, took up what he had been lying on, and departed to his own house, glorifying God.*

Did exactly what Jesus told him to do!

All his bones hardened perfectly, all his muscles were created right there on the spot by the Lord. All the hinges in his joints worked perfectly. All that dried up and atrophied sinews, all the elements of the physiology of that man were immediately recreated, brand new. His brain went into full function. His arms went into full function so that he could carry what he was prior lying on and he just went home.

The healing of Jesus is that they were instant and total healings, no rehab. The Creator is creating. He creates new human parts.

He just said go home, and he did exactly what Jesus said. The last part of verse 25 says he went home glorifying God.

We could go on for paragraphs describing this guy who was probably jumping, leaping, dancing, praising, singing hallelujah and could hardly stand it until he could get to the house and walk in the door.

He was filled with praise. Honouring God with thanks and joy. He may not have had a full defined Christology before this event, but he had one now. He knew that he had just met God. His sins had been forgiven and he had been created new.

You could just imagine him kind of feeling around his body and just being in shock over what had happened in the creative miracle that he had just experienced.

The Pharisees and the scribes the other way, full of anger, resentment, further down the satanic path of rejection, deeper and deeper into their own darkness, seeking to kill God, as it were.

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

This is the crowd.

One side the paralytic man, who has just been regenerated both physically and spiritually.

Another side the Pharisees, who have just plunged deeper into their resentment.

We have got the group called the crowd in the middle.

All the way through the story of Jesus we will see the believers who are transformed.

We will see the angry, hostile religious leaders whose hate is escalated by everything they experience.

We will also see the crowd of people in the middle divided between sort of onlookers, half-hearted disciples, and those who are becoming true disciples.

They were literally just shaken with astonishment.

They were stunned. They were shocked by what they had just experienced.

There was no human explanation for it. They too began glorifying God.

They had seen salvation.

They had seen forgiveness.

In **John 6**, there were many disciples who followed Jesus and when He said hard things, they left. They walked with Him no more.

Jesus said to Peter, "Are you going to go away?" Peter said, "To whom shall we go? You and You alone have the words of eternal life."

There were in that multitude the mixture of people who were at different places in terms of their understanding and commitment to Christ.

But for the moment, they always are through the gospels, the crowds are literally shocked by His power. They began glorifying God.

Conclusion:

Matthew 18:21-35

Jesus said the kingdom of heaven is like a king who called in his servants to give an account for how they had managed his money.

One servant was confronted, and it was discovered that this particular servant owed the king ten thousand talents. Ten thousand talents is really a massive amount. Ten thousand talents at the time of the New Testament would be equal to seventeen years' wages for ten thousand men.

The first century indicate that the total annual revenue collected by the Roman government from Israel averaged about 900 talents.

Ten thousand talents were a massive debt, unpayable.

The Old Testament, 1 Chronicles 29, the building of Solomon's amazing temple which was overlaid with gold which amounted to 8,000 talents.

So, ten thousand was a massive amount. It may not be just an exact amount because the word "ten thousand," *murion* in the Greek, is the largest number expressible in the Greek language.

So, the point is the man owed a countless debt. He owed a debt that was so vast it could not be counted, and he had no way to pay it!

So, he pled with the king and the king was merciful and compassionate. The King forgave him the whole debt. It is an amazing story.

That is what God does.

God is that king and you are that servant and so am I.

When we fall on our face and tell the Lord we do not really have any capability of paying, in His compassion He forgives us.

That is the most important element of God's nature to us as sinners because we need forgiveness more than we need anything else.

This is the heart of the Christian message.

This is the heart of the gospel.