

The Miracles of Christ - The Palsied Man Healed- Luke 5

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[0 : 00] We are continuing our examination of the miracles of our Lord, and today we're going to undertake the one that was involving a man who was afflicted with a palsy.

And the palsy is described as unconstrained tremors of the body. It's obviously a neurological muscular kind of disease, a complication that unfortunately is endured by a number of people. And it is a neurological muscular disease, of course, that has been around for thousands of years, and that's what this individual is suffering from. But Jesus is going to heal. And as we consider our examination, you will note that all of the synoptics record this particular event.

That is, Matthew, Mark, and Luke. Each of them have a little bit different version, using some of the statements, some of the exact expressions that were given, a little bit different, because they're writing from a little bit different perspective, yet they are all describing the same event. And we are going to follow the one in Luke's Gospel, and it will begin in Luke chapter 5 and verse 16.

[1 : 26] Luke's Gospel chapter 5 and verse 16, I'm sorry, verse 12. It will be 12 through 16. And if you'll follow along in whatever translation you have, we'll just read the whole text first.

I'm sorry, what am I doing here? Wait a minute. Luke 5, 17. I'm sorry.

It is thronged in Capernaum, the paralytic healed through the roof of Peter's house. And this is still continuing, and it is actually in his first excursion through Galilee.

And there will be four like these before he is finished, and then, of course, he will conclude in Jerusalem. But remember now, he's still up north, still up in the land of Galilee. And we read, beginning in Luke 5 and verse 17, that it came to pass on one of those days that he was teaching, and there were Pharisees and doctors of the law sitting by.

Now, you need to understand right at the beginning that these are the so-called, and I use the word so-called because they are often unable to live up to their billing.

[2 : 41] These are the so-called experts of the law. These are the guys who are supposed to have a final word when it comes to interpreting and understanding the meaning of the law.

So they are examining every jot and every tittle that Jesus expresses with a negative kind of attitude in that they are looking for some flaw in what he says or in what he does.

These guys are always on the lookout when Jesus is around for an aha moment. We got you. And that's what they're all about. They are a bunch of nitpickers.

They have little regard for the intent and the real purpose and the spirit of the law. All they're interested in is dotting all the I's and crossing all the T's and a kind of superficial, actually it is superficial, perfectionism on their part.

And it, of course, is all due to their interpretation. So, beginning in verse 17, we read that, Now, they have obviously gotten word by now as to what's going on up north.

[4 : 13] Now, this bed is little more than a cot.

In fact, what they used for beds in those days was nothing more than a layer of garment or cloth, sometimes not even cloth, sometimes leaves or whatever, palm branches, whatever would make some kind of a soft cushion.

They did not have beds with four posts like we use today and a mattress and a box springs and all of that. This was probably a poor resemblance even of a cot.

And it was usually right on the ground, no more than just a couple of inches off the ground. So, for all practical purposes, you were sleeping on the floor of whatever it was. And that was common fare.

That was the way they lived back then. And we, of course, would consider that rather crude and unacceptable. We want the works, you know. That's called progress, if you will.

[5 : 37] And this man is born with a stretcher by four friends, probably four familiar friends, maybe even family members, upon whom this man was dependent for their services to get anywhere.

And any time this man had to go anywhere, which probably wasn't very often, these four or a similar four were called upon to bear him because there was no way that he could walk.

Wheelchairs were uninvented and nobody knew anything about that. So, you're born by four, just like you would see a soldier being carried on a stretcher in a field of combat to get out of harm's way.

And there are four guys grab him up and put him on the stretcher and carry him off. That's much the way this was. And they get to the house where Jesus is. And this is, by the way, in Capernaum.

This is the residence of Peter. This is where Jesus also healed Peter's mother-in-law just earlier. And when they arrived there, the place is packed.

[6 : 48] There are people inside this house, wall to wall. There are people outside at the doorway and the entrance wanting to get in, looking to get in, listening for what's going on inside.

And they just can't get in there because the crowd is overwhelming. And all you have to do is examine the miracles that took place right before this to understand how an enormous crowd would build just out of nowhere because the word gets around quickly.

Small communities like this, everybody knows everybody and they're pretty hard to keep any secrets and everyone is talking about this. So the natural inclination for anybody is, I want to see and hear this for myself.

I'm not sure I can believe what I have been hearing. But I've been hearing it from so many people.

And they insist. They were there. And they saw it with their own eyes.

I've got to check this out. I've got to find out about this. So the crowd is gathered and the house is full and there's a gang of people outside that can't even get in and they're peering in through the doorway, etc.

[8 : 00] And here comes down the road these four guys carrying this man with a palsy. And they look at the crowd surrounding the house and they know, well, there's no way that we can get him in there, get him to Jesus.

Look how much room this thing takes up, us four guys plus carrying him. No way in the world that we can get in there. And somebody said, wait a minute. I've got an idea. All of these houses have an outside stairway, stair steps leading up to the roof.

Somebody gets the bright idea. Let's take him up the steps and drop him down through the roof.

How are we going to do that? Well, if you know the construction of these roofs, all of which, of course, are flat top.

Because the roof, the flat top of the roof in Israel in these days and today is also a gathering place. It's kind of like an outdoor patio.

And many times people would go up there to take advantage of a little breeze that might be blowing, especially when it was really hot. And children would play on the housetop.

[9 : 15] Women would hang out their wash on the housetop, dry their clothes, etc. Sometimes they would have a meal on the housetop. We read in Acts chapter 10 that Peter was staying at the house of Simon the tanner.

And he went up on the housetop about noon to pray. It was also a time of congregation. Small groups would gather on the housetop. Peter was going up on the housetop at noon to pray.

And that's when he saw this vision of this sheet let down from heaven and so on. So the housetop was a very strategic part of just about every house that was built.

And people could even communicate from one housetop to another housetop. They would simply pass the word along and it would go all over the town on the housetop, which gives meaning to what Jesus said about what you have heard in secret.

Proclaim from the housetops. And that's exactly what they did. So this roof was not a permanent kind of structure like the sides of the building were for the simple reason that it often had to be replaced because they did not have the architectural technology to build a roof and they didn't have the material to put large beams across it and fill it in with lesser material because the wood was really scarce and they just didn't have that available.

[10 : 41] So they made so much out of stone which would account for all of the exterior walls, but the roof, that's something else. That's a problem. And by the way, the way these roofs were put together, they often leaped.

But that wasn't too much of a problem because there you didn't have that much rain. But when it rained, it was a problem. And the book Proverbs talks about this. It talks about living, how does the phrase go?

Something about like living with a contentious, griping woman is like dwelling in a roof, dwelling in a house with a leaky roof. It just continues to drip, drip, drip.

It just doesn't seem to stop, which is a male complaint about wives that are always crabbing at them about something.

And there's a little bit of humor in that. So these housetops were not made of the permanent kind of construction material that you would expect. So these guys are desperate.

[11 : 49] And as they carry this guy on the stretcher up these outside stairways, which of course are all made of stone, they get up to the roof, and there they see this material there, and they just start moving it and lifting it up and taking it up.

And people down inside are looking up and they hear something. They see some rustling up there and some material falling down. They wonder, what's going on? And here, these guys are making enough room, enough space in the roof of that to actually let down this man.

I don't know if they were on ropes with a rope on each end, letting it down that way. If you think in terms of four men letting a coffin, a casket down into a grave with four guys, and each one holding a rope and lowering the thing, it must have been a scenario similar to that.

And this guy is laying on this cot, and all he can do is lay there with his tremors, perhaps in different parts of his body, uncontrollable, and they let him down right in the presence of Jesus.

And as he's sitting there teaching, talking to people, healing people, lo and behold, here comes this guy seemingly right out of nowhere being dropped down from the roof.

[13 : 11] It must have been a sight to behold. But you know something? Something needs to be said about these four men. They obviously were good friends of this man who was palsied.

And they saw the desperation of the situation. They had confidence that something could be done for their friend, and they are going to all of the difficulty, extremity of breaking up that housetop, probably in some embarrassment that goes along with it, because they just would not be denied. But most of all, it expresses what had to be their confidence in Jesus to be able to address this case.

Otherwise, it's a study in futility. And they're going to really look stupid, and it's all going to come to naught. So they are actually putting their honor and their reputations on the line just by doing this, but they see there is no other way.

And when you see a real friend in difficulty, a friend in need is a friend in need. And they are coming to the rescue, as it were, because they view Jesus as their only possible hope for this friend.

[14 : 36] So we read that, not finding in verse 19, not finding by what way they might bring him in, because of the multitude, they went up to the housetop and led him down through the tiles with his couch, that's probably not a good translation, it would be more like a cot, it's not a couch, into the midst before Jesus, and seeing their faith.

Immediately, Jesus had to recognize, these guys really have to have confidence in me, in order to be doing this.

And he is going to reward them for their confidence. He said, seeing their faith, he said, Man, thy sins are forgiven thee.

Now you talk about fighting words. And words of dynamite, that's what these words are, because the nitpickers have their ears attuned to everything Jesus says.

And you know, the thing that so mystifies me, more than anything else, about these critics, is, there is no indication that they are denying the reality of what Jesus is doing.

[16 : 06] We never hear anybody say, well, he's not really healing people, he just makes them look that way. He's a trickster.

He's some kind of a magician, a sleight of hand guy. Nobody's making that accusation. Nobody's saying the healings aren't true, and they aren't real. You can't deny it, because when blind people see, and deaf people hear, and lame walk, you can't deny that, even if you want to.

And obviously they wanted to. But they couldn't. And the question is, how is he doing this? And only a demented mind can come to the conclusion that some of them will come to, and that is, I know how he's doing it.

He's doing it by the power of the devil. That's how he's doing it. He's doing it by Beelzebul, the prince of the devils. So, anything but acknowledging the truth.

And that's the cock and bull story that some of them come up with. And Jesus even addresses that, but not here, that's in a later place. When he makes these words, says these words, thy sins be forgiven thee, that struck a responsive chord.

[17:18] Aha! That'll do it. We've got him. Because everybody knows, nobody can forgive sins but God alone. Did you hear what he said?

He is making himself out to be God. That is a crime punishable by death.

The man deserves to be stoned to death. That's what the law of Moses says. Blasphemy.

Blasphemy. You can, by the way, you can only blaspheme deity.

You can swear at your fellow man. You can cuss somebody out. But when it comes to blasphemy, blasphemy is resolved, is resigned for deity.

One man cannot blaspheme another man. But you blaspheme God. And they're calling Jesus guilty of the crime of blasphemy.

[18:24] Because he is saying that he is forgiving sins, which only God can do. Ergo, what's this man saying? He's saying he's God.

That is worthy of death. And that's the position they take. And Jesus says to them, who is it?

They say, who is this that speaks blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God alone? But Jesus, perceiving their reasonings, answered and said unto them, what reason are you in your hearts?

What are you thinking? Whether it's easier to say, thy sins are forgiven thee, or to say, or to say, arise and walk? Did it ever occur to you fellows to put those two things together?

Did it ever occur to you that one who can say, take up your bed and walk, is also one who says, your sins are forgiven?

[19:31] Do you see any connection there at all? Well, there was a connection, but they weren't seeing it. They weren't acknowledging it. And Jesus is simply saying, did it ever occur to you that one who is able to say, take up your bed and walk, is also equally able to say, your sins are forgiven?

Which means, they are one the same. What he is claiming here for himself is the actuality of who he is.

He is not denying his deity, he is affirming it. He is saying, don't you think that one who is able to say, take up your bed and walk, would also be qualified to say, your sins are forgiven?

Do you know anybody else who can do that? Who can forgive sins but God alone? Jesus perceived their reasoning, gave them that answer.

And then in verse 24, but that you may know that the Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins. Wow.

[20:46] That is as major as it gets. This is a tacit admission, a confession, as to who he really is.

And the title, the Son of Man, is a phrase that Jesus uses more often than anything else when speaking of himself. And he always uses it in the third person.

The Son of Man. And if I were speaking to you, and I wanted to speak of myself, I would not say what Jesus is saying, because you use a different expression.

You would say, I, or me, or my, but you don't speak in the third person. And yet, Jesus did that repeatedly. That was his favorite expression regarding himself.

And he said, that you may know that the Son of Man, in other words, that I have the power on earth to forgive sins. He said unto him that was palsy, I say unto thee, arise, take up thy couch, your bed, and go into your house.

[22:05] boy. I can't even imagine this reading.

You can only wonder the looks that were on the faces of people there. They are just absolutely stunned.

This is jaw-dropping stuff. And they've seen miracles before, but somehow, every additional one is like a brand new thing all over again.

It is a new reason for absolute amazement all over again. And these guys are looking at each other, and they're saying, you see that?

How does he do that? What, who is this really? And Jesus is telling them who he is. Take up your couch, go into your house, and immediately, not with a lot of hesitation, no indication that there was some weakness, some inability, he doesn't turn to anyone and say, would you help me up, please? [23 : 28] He just gets up, and he stands up, and everybody is just aghast. Amazement took hold of all.

He departed to his house, glorifying God. And they all glorified God. that means they acknowledge the power of God.

They recognize the power of God. They are thanking God for this deed. And they were filled with fear.

Why were they filled with fear? Simply because they knew they were in the presence of someone more than a mere man.

It scared them to be there in that presence. That's the same expression that Peter had with the filling of the boat with all of those fishes. That Peter was scared to death, and he said, depart from me, O Lord, I am a sinful man.

[24 : 45] And Peter was stunned. He was saying, who is this, really? And it will be Peter later at the Baniyas, up north where the waters provide the beginning for the Sea of Galilee.

It will be up there, Caesarea in the north, where Peter will make that confession that thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.

Dan? Was it Isaiah who was in the presence of God and had that experience? Yes. Woe is me and was actually traumatized.

He was, absolutely. That's in Isaiah, Isaiah chapter 6. And the Lord appeared to Isaiah in a form that absolutely stunned him.

And he knew that he was an unclean man of unclean lips. and there in Isaiah 6 he declares the presence of God was an overwhelming thing.

[25 : 51] And it's a similar kind of experience that Peter, James, and John are going to have when Jesus is transfigured before them, the Mount of Transfiguration 2. They glorified God and they were filled with fear, saying, we have seen strange things today.

And I guess they have. That's quite, putting it mildly, they have seen strange things today. And by the way, all of these miracles, they only point to the same thing over and over again.

And that is the identity of the one who is doing this. I'm going to insert something here that maybe needs to be treated in more detail a little bit later, but I just want to, again, put it in your mind so it can be germinating a little bit and you can be thinking about it.

When Peter makes that confession, Jesus is going to say something very significant that is often just passed right over. When Jesus said, Whom say ye that I am?

Peter said, You are the Christ, the Son of the living God. Well, it was certainly true enough, but what Jesus said in response to that is what I've said almost is just passed over without giving it too much significance, but it's very significant.

[27 : 18] Jesus said, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jonah, or Simon, son of Jonas, for flesh and blood has not revealed that unto you, but my Father who is in heaven.

that's quite a statement to be making. And what he's saying is, Peter, you didn't figure that out on your own. That's what he means when he says flesh and blood. He says, you didn't figure that out on your own, your own IQ and your own brains and your own discernment.

You didn't come to that conclusion on your own. This identity of myself was supernaturally revealed to you by my Father. Now the question is, why should that need to be the case?

And why was it seemingly so special and significant that Peter was making that observation? And it ties in with something that we were talking about last week.

It's all connected with this same issue having to do with the identity of Jesus. And what he is actually saying to Peter in that he didn't figure this out on his own, it took a divine revelation to reveal that identity of Jesus to Peter because it seemed to be completely contrary to the way everybody else was thinking.

[28 : 45] Why would that be? I'll tell you why. Because in the Old Testament with which the Jews were familiar, which was the only thing that existed at this time, there is a clear-cut revelation of two arrivals of the Messiah.

There is a first coming that is described as the babe in Bethlehem found in Micah chapter 5 and verse 1 where even the city Bethlehem was identified as the birthplace.

And Isaiah chapter 6 talks about unto us a son is born, unto us a child is given, and so on. And that too speaks of his first advent, of his coming to this earth as a babe.

But the scriptures also more frequently in the Old Testament refer not to his first coming, but to his second coming. And which of those comings did the Jewish mentality focus on?

Second coming. Second coming only. Why? Why? Set up the kingdom. Yes! Because in the second coming he's coming in power and great glory and he will depose all the enemies of Israel and establish that kingdom and it will be wonderful.

[30 : 10] But where is the glory in the first coming? Isn't there. What do you find? Humbleness. Born.

In a manger. Laid in a manger. Son of God. In a feeding trough for animals. Are you kidding me? That's the first coming. That's the one they ignored. This is why Jesus said on the road to Emmaus to those two friends who were downtrodden and Jesus joined them.

This is in Luke 24. It's one of my favorite passages. They didn't know it was Jesus and they are walking they're just walking along kicking stones and depressed and sad and their hands are down and Jesus came along beside them and said you fellas really look down what's the problem?

You look like you lost your best friend and they said you must be a stranger around here don't you know what's taking place here just recently? and he said what are you talking about?

[31 : 20] and they said well Jesus of Nazareth we trusted that it was he who would deliver Israel but they crucified him and this has been after the third day that he's gone and Jesus said oh foolish ones and slow of heart slow reluctant to believe all that the prophets have written ought not the Messiah to have suffered these things and to enter into his glory the suffering part the Jews ignored the baby Jesus they ignored the coming and power and pomp and great glory that's the one they focused on and Jesus wasn't manifesting any of that he's not saying anything about putting down the Romans he's not saying anything about liberating Israel he's talking about sin he's talking about repentance he's talking we don't want to hear that stuff we want action and that's exactly what most of them had fallen into but there was at least one who was able to look beyond all of that and realize that even though he was not displaying second coming credentials he was the one behind them he is the

Christ the son of the living God not many people were thinking that way particularly in the establishment they were all thinking this can't be the Messiah because the Messiah is going to come with all kinds of glitz and honor and glory and he's going to defeat all of our enemies and he's going to establish the kingdom and this guy isn't doing anything like that he can't be the Messiah and Peter Peter was at least one who was able to look beyond all of that and say oh yes he is and that's why it was a supernatural revelation that was given to Peter and then this is in Matthew 16 and we don't have time to go there but right after that right after Peter makes that confession Jesus says the Son of Man must need to go to Jerusalem and be subjected to many things the chief priests the scribes the Pharisees and be crucified and the third day rise again right after Peter's confession and Peter says no no this shall not be unto thee and Peter Peter is the only one in all of the Bible that is ever said to have rebuked Jesus and he did he just made that confession you are the Christ the Son of the living God and then Jesus commended him for the confession and he also told him what was going to happen and Peter said no no no no that's not going to happen and Jesus said get thee behind me Satan what's that all about he just made this stunning confession as to the identity of Jesus and now Jesus is saying Peter you are thinking and operating under Satan's plan Satan's plan would prevent the cross

Satan's plan would go right for the glory you're bypassing that Peter's confused he doesn't know what to make of this and this is why when they come later to arrest Jesus Peter's vacillating he's going back and forth this man he's a mental case he doesn't know what's going on and these soldiers come to arrest Jesus and Peter's thinking okay this is the beginning of the big showdown Jesus is going to do his thing now and Peter takes his sword and this guy's coming and he swings his sword and this servant servant of Malchus sees this sword coming at him and this guy I think Peter intended to sever his head that's my humble opinion and this guy sees his sword coming and he goes like this the ducat and a sword slices his ear off and Peter is ready to take on the whole bunch and it starts with this sword thrust that sliced this guy's ear off and Jesus stopped him said Peter put away your sword and he picks up the fallen ear laying there on the ground and this man is standing there whimpering with his ear bleeding profusely and Jesus reattaches the ear you've got to remember it was still dark hard to see anything they had the lanterns and the torches and now

Peter's ready to take on the whole bunch and Jesus pulls back and replaces the man's ear and says those who live by the sword will perish by the sword and he's ready he says whom seek you Jesus of now I'm he let these others go now those who are with him and it's all of them all of them are there including Judas now they don't know what to make of this and the thinking is Jesus said if you seek me let these go their way and the twelve start backing off from the scene and the next thing you know they're heading for the tall grass including Peter and he's so confused and so upset he doesn't know what's going on and he was ready to fight and for Jesus to join him and he pulls back and now he doesn't know what to make of this and he's running away and so are all the others what Joe

[37 : 50] God had given Peter a revelation of who Jesus was but he didn't give him the rest of the revelation of the suffering and the cross that he was going to have to go through he just gave him part of that experience and Peter was acting on what he knew what he had he didn't get the whole thing and by the way guys this ought to be a kind of lesson for all of us no matter what kind of difficulty or situation you were facing you never ever see or appreciate the full story you only see a part and if it is a part that hurts really really hurts there is confusion there is doubt there is uncertainty you're looking for some sense of meaning and you can't find any and it's simply because of the same thing that

Peter was suffering from an incomplete story we all face incomplete stories every day of our life including the big question Phil Yancey wrote a book about it titled the book the question that won't go away why why why me why this why now what's the purpose what good end can be served out of this confusion reigns because we don't have a divine perspective we have a very limited perspective that's part of our humanity that's okay that's all you're supposed to have that's all any of us can have we never see the whole story you remember years ago what was his name Paul Harvey Paul Harvey famous broadcaster would would along with some of his broadcasts would give a part of an account or a part of a story that everybody was familiar with the one part but nobody knew the rest of it and he would tell the rest of it and when he tells the rest of the story it leaves you saying oh so that's how so that's why so that's and he called it so now you know the rest of the story fellas every one of us needs to keep in mind that on a daily basis we are only dealing with partial information partial truths we just don't know what a day may bring forth and there are all kinds of morals to be derived from this incident of the healing of the man who was palsy but the word of God knows no bounds and it just continues on and on and on and it's just a beautiful thing so hey guys thanks for being here