

e-concepts

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Healing the Paralytic and the Nature of Faith

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*And they came, bringing to Him a paralytic, carried by four men. Being unable to get to Him because of the crowd, they removed the roof above Him; and when they had dug an opening, they let down the pallet on which the paralytic was lying. And Jesus **seeing their faith** said to the paralytic, "Son, your sins are forgiven" (Mark 2:3-5).*

First, Jesus' statement defined His person and His ministry and it set in motion the conflict that led to His crucifixion. *And Jesus seeing their faith* is probably referring to the faith of all five of them. So Jesus *said to the paralytic, son, your sins are forgiven*. Notice the word *sins* is plural. Jesus is not saying there is some sin that made the man sick. Jesus is saying that all of his sins are forgiven because of his faith. Of course Jesus would have to die to pay for those sins but they were forgiven in the since of any Old Testament saint that believed in the revelation of God at the time (like Abraham who was saved believing Sarah would have a child – Genesis 15:6).

The four men and the paralytic were basically making a prayer request for healing. Whether they were seeking forgiveness is unknown. But seeing their faith Jesus forgave and healed the paralytic. Their faith that Jesus could heal was based on the evidence that He had been healing others in the area for days. **Faith should trust evidence**. True faith is based upon evidence and leaves a trail of evidence. In Jesus' case it was miraculous healing and exorcism.



Second, when Jesus said, *your sins are forgiven*, the point being made was *the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins*. The scribes understood this very well. Scribes and Rabbis were usually members of the Pharisees; the Rabbis were teachers; the scribes were religious lawyers. Notice they were sitting. How did they get seats when so many were standing? They probably got there early. They did not come to learn they came to evaluate. They thought, *He is blaspheming; who can forgive sins but God alone?* Of course they would have been right except there is one way that this is not blasphemy, if indeed Jesus was God.

So Jesus asked the question, *which is easier* and is a bad translation. The word for *easier* (eukopos) is literally good-hard-work. It has the idea of a better way to work. For example, if I am digging a ditch with a hoe and you say, "It would word better if you use a shovel", that would be this word, "a better work." So Jesus is saying, what would be a better work, *to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven'; or to say, 'Get up, and pick up your pallet and walk'?* The point of this question had nothing to do with which is easier, or easier to say. **The point was forgiving sin is a better work than physical healing**. Jesus said He healed the paralytic *so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins*. They should have believed He was the Messiah of Israel because of the evidence [miraculous healing and exorcism] He provided.

APPLICATION:

Faith is trusting reasonable evidence. The four men bringing the paralytic and most likely the paralytic himself, had faith based on evidence that Jesus could heal him, or else they wouldn't have come. Jesus had been healing in the area for some time now so they had reasonable evidence for their faith. When Jesus forgave the man of his sins, He gave the Pharisees an opportunity to believe based on evidence that He was the Son of God because only God could forgive sin and only God had the authority to heal the paralytic. They should have trusted the evidence provided by the healing and believed in Jesus. **Biblical faith is never a blind leap**. It's a trust placed in real evidence.

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