The Man Borne of Four

And behold, they were bringing to Him a paralytic, lying on a bed; and Jesus seeing their faith said to the paralytic, “Take courage, My son, your sins are forgiven.” And behold, some of the scribes said to themselves, “This fellow blasphemers.” And Jesus knowing their thoughts said, “Why are you thinking evil in your hearts? For which is easier, to say, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Rise and walk?’ But in order that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins”—then He said to the paralytic, “Rise, take up your bed, and go home.” And he rose, and went to his home. But when the multitudes saw this, they were filled with awe, and glorified God, who had given such authority to men (Matthew 9:2-8; cf. Mark 2:2-12; Luke 5:18-26).

C

APERNAUM was literally the “office” of Jesus. This is where He selected many apostles and did much of His teaching. Some scholars suggest this house belonged to Peter. People had heard about Jesus. They “flooded the house.” Four men were determined to get their lame friend to Jesus. Quite an interesting story.

I. THE FOUR FRIENDS

The “palsied man” was carried upon his bed. The bed had four corners. Each man carried his comer. These were exceptional men. They saw the crowd; they had an excuse. “We tried but failed.” They could not enter via the doors or windows. Humanly speaking it was an impossible task.

It took more than one. One man cannot carry another. Two perhaps could not. Three with difficulty. Four could do it. Each man did his part. Imagine what the church could do if each carried his load!

Notice the wording—Jesus saw “their faith.” Not the faith of the lame man! Notice again—“He saw their faith”—not their works. It was not the works of the four that cured the lame man.

Their works simply were to expedite their faith. They believed Jesus could cure the lame man. It was still Jesus who healed him. Usually it takes more than one member to save another. We all simply need to do our part. They “tore the roof” off. They were determined to get this man to Jesus. Quite a radical approach, but sometimes necessary.

II. THE LAME MAN

The lame man had paralysis. Venereal disease was known then. It was the result of a decadent life. This adds another dimension to the story. Some sins have a built-in jeopardy. This means the four friends even believed Jesus was interested in “real sinners.”

What about the palsied man? Do you suppose that he was skeptical? Hesitant? The crippled man may have been the only doubter!

Jesus was tender and referred to the man as “son.” Jesus worked with unlikely people. The man received more than he asked. He not only was healed, but he was saved and forgiven. The core issue was resolved. Jesus never used the word “grace.” He simply practiced forgiveness. This is, at heart, what all men need—forgiveness. Men find it hard to accept this. “God may forgive you but not me.”

III. THE CRITICS

Familiar Scripture needs to be read more closely. Jesus had no dialogue with the cured or the friends. His dialogue is with the critics. Their logic was right but their hearts were wrong. Only God can remit sin. But Jesus was God.

“William S. Taegel, in his book People Lovers, described God’s kind of love. He said there were three kinds of love. First, there is ‘if love’ which is a conditional kind of love. Second, he said there is a ‘because love’ which results as a responsibility. Third, he said there is an ‘anyhow love’ which is a love that loves irrespective of the person or the deed. God’s love is an ‘anyhow love.’”
Christianity is more than logic. Logic cannot solve church problems. The weightier matters of the law are not the conclusion to a three-line syllogism. Logic can keep people from Christ.

The critics “could know.” They did not know because they refused to know. They were willfully blind. They accused Jesus of blasphemy. The penalty for blasphemy was death. Beware of men claiming sincerity (Matthew 9:4). These men thought evil in their hearts. They were neither good, honest, nor sincere.

This is not taught in preacher schools—good works will be fought by the leading members! The big test is the “brotherhood test.” Jesus, as per usual, failed! They could not see the good, the Christ! Many will never get to Jesus because of the church! This is frightening and sad, but true. The power of the Lord was there to heal them. They went home without a cure.

**CONCLUSION**

The common member is usually ahead of the leaders. The leaders were prepared to stone Jesus. The common were amazed and glorified God! Here is another frightening thought. God will do more than we imagine. Wake up, sign up, preach up, pray up, stay up, and pay up, but never let up or back up until the cause of Christ is built up.

—Charles B. Hodge, Jr.