

**Title: Only God Can Forgive**

Text: Luke 5:17-26

Date: August 31, 2025

Proverbs 2:20 tells us that if we receive and treasure up with us God's word, *"we walk in the way of the good and we keep to the paths of the righteous by his grace."* And so, if you can get God's word off the cloud onto your tablet this morning or if you have your copy of God's word with you today and I hope you do, please turn to Luke 5. We're going to be looking at verses 17-26 of Luke 5 this morning, which is found on page 1,023 of your pew Bible if you'd like to look on there.

So, Luke 5:17-26, which contains for us a passage that is all about Jesus's power to forgive. Forgiveness is a beautiful word. It means to release someone from the penalty and the consequences of their wrongdoing. It's a virtue that's nearly lost in our culture today. We see it in what sociologists have labeled a cancel culture where people believe that it's entirely appropriate to permanently condemn and shun an individual to lifelong ostracism based simply upon one disliked word or action. We see it in over litigation when even the smallest of offenses like spilling hot coffee on yourself causes people to almost immediately default into filing lawsuits in order to get even or as we always hear in the commercials in order to get what's owed you. We even see it in our entertainment choices with the rise of popular anti-hero franchises who confuse vengeance for justice and who glorify revenge, who glorify holding grudges and who glorify executing pain tenfold upon their enemies. Gone are the days of the count of Monte Cristo who learned the value of forgiveness in the end.

Now it is virtuous to show no mercy and to give others their just desserts. That's why I say forgiveness is a virtue that's nearly lost in our culture today, but it is a virtue that beats within the very heart of God. In fact, forgiveness is the very message of Christianity and it's why we're all here. It's at the very heart of the gospel. The gospel is the good news that God forgives. All of us are sinners. Every single one of us have rebelled against God, our creator, and we've rebelled against his just and righteous decrees. If we were to get what we deserved this morning, we would be headed to an eternity of death and judgment beneath God's wrath because of our sins. And God, who alone is the righteous judge of all the earth, is the only one in the universe who can forgive you of your sins, who can release you from the penalty and consequences of your apathy towards God and your rebellion against him. He is the only one who can give that to you because he is the only one who has provided a perfect substitute for your sins by sending Jesus Christ to live a perfect life beneath God's law and to die a perfect death beneath God's wrath in your place. And so, the message of the gospel is the message of forgiveness, a forgiveness that can only be offered to sinful men by the hand of God himself. He is the one who's been offended. His is the law that has been broken, and therefore his forgiveness is the one that must be acquired. Only God can truly, fully, finally forgive. Only God can forgive. And that is the important truth that all of us need to remember as we go into this morning's passage today.

See, over the last few weeks, Luke has been communicating over and over again the truth of Jesus' authority. Jesus demonstrated authority over the spiritual realm with his victory over Satan and his demons. Jesus demonstrated authority over the physical realm with his removal of the fever, his healing of Capernaum, the catching of fish and the cleansing of the leper. But in today's account, we're going to observe an important transition in Luke's gospel as we see the authority of Jesus transfer into the moral realm. In other words, yes, Jesus has the authority over physical and spiritual creatures, but does he have authority over moral issues? Like sin, like righteousness, like salvation, and yes, even forgiveness. Does Jesus have the authority to save a sinful soul and make it righteous? Does Jesus have the authority to release a person from the penalty and consequences of their sins? Does Jesus have the authority to forgive? Because only God can forgive.

Well, that's what we're going to explore this morning in Luke 5:17-26. This is a passage that has one very simple point, and so we're just going to simply unpack it slowly by walking through the five simple movements that are contained in this account. In verse 17, we're going to observe the tense prologue that introduces this account at all of the characters. Then in verses 18-19, we're going to observe the tenacious partners whose faith sparks the event that's recorded here. Then in verses 20-21, we're going to examine the terrific pardon that Jesus declares over one of the individuals that day in response to that faith. Then in verses 22-25, we're going to see the tremendous proof that Jesus delivers following up his pronouncement with. And then finally, in verse 26, we're going to consider the total praise that erupts for beholding the almighty work of Jesus here. And we are going to be guided step by step into that same path of praise today. So, five very simple points, the prologue, partners, pardon, proof, and praise that all draw attention to one simple truth that we must consider when it comes to the man of Nazareth named Jesus. And that is this, only God can forgive.

So, with that in mind, if you're able, please stand with me out of reverence and readiness for the word of God today, as I read our passage that is before us, from Luke 5:17-26. Luke, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, writes these words for us today:

*"On one of those days, as he was teaching, Pharisees and teachers of the law were sitting there, who had come from every village of Galilee and Judea and from Jerusalem. And the power of the Lord was with him to heal. And behold, some people were bringing on a bed a man who was paralyzed, and they were seeking to bring him in and lay him before Jesus, but finding no way to bring him in, because of the crowd, they went up on the roof and let him down with his bed through the tiles into the midst before Jesus. And when he saw their faith, he said, 'Man, your sins are forgiven you.' And the scribes and the Pharisees began to question, saying, 'Who is this who speaks blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God alone?' When Jesus perceived their thoughts, he answered them, 'Why do you question in your hearts? Which is easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven you,' or to say, 'Rise and walk?' But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins.' - He said to the man who was paralyzed - 'I say to you, rise, pick up your bed and go home.' And immediately he rose up before them and picked up what he had been lying on and went home, glorifying God. And amazement seized them all, and they glorified God and were filled with awe, saying, 'We have seen extraordinary things today.'"*

That is the word of God who gives us understanding through learning his commandments.

Let's pray.

Dear Heavenly Father, we thank you so much for this passage. We thank you for how it is clear, and it is precise. It is like a scalpel that drives to one single step point. Father, I pray for one thing, that you would convict every heart this morning and encourage every heart concerning the truth of who Jesus truly is. May your spirit be at work among us today.

For your glory we ask this in Jesus' name, amen.

You may be seated.

So, Luke begins this account that reveals to us the divine glory of Jesus Christ by starting off with a tense prologue. Nothing is better than a little bit of tension and Luke knows this. He says in verse 17, *"On one of those days, as he was teaching, Pharisees and teachers of the law were sitting there, who had come from every village of Galilee and Judea and from Jerusalem. And the power of the Lord was with him to heal."* So, notice, Luke tells us here that this account happened on one of those days as Jesus was teaching. Remember, we learned already back in chapter 4 that Jesus' focus and his priority of ministry was always on teaching, on preaching the good news and the gospel of forgiveness. As he is already declared to Nazareth back in chapter 4:18-19, he has come to declare that the spiritually poor can be made rich, that the spiritually captive can be set free, that the spiritually blinded can be given sight, and that the spiritually oppressed can be delivered in him. That is why Jesus has come to preach this good news concerning himself. And so, as Jesus is delivering that message of forgiveness, yet again, Luke tells us that *"Pharisees and teachers of the law were sitting there who had come,"* notice, *"from every village of Galilee and Judea and even from Jerusalem."* Now that is no small region or small distance.

In fact, to travel from Jerusalem to Capernaum back then was about a week's journey over about 90 miles through very hilly and rugged terrain. So, these religious leaders have come in mass from all over Israel to sit before Jesus. And we know why they've come. We saw last week in verse 15 that the news about Jesus Christ was spreading like wildfire. And because of this, Jesus began to draw the attention of Jewish leaders from all over Israel, especially when they saw a healed leper come to them for inspection proclaiming exuberantly that he had just been healed by a man named Jesus. It's an astonishing miracle.

And the proof that Jesus wanted to deliver to them, according to verse 14, that the Messiah had come, those Jewish leaders received that message loud and clear. And so, they had come out to see Jesus in droves. But I want you to notice they did not come out in humility as students. They came out in pride as critics. And we see that in a detail here where Luke tells us that the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, what were they doing? They were sitting there. Notice they were sitting. That's in the position that we saw Jesus in earlier in chapter 4 when he sat down to teach the crowds. When you were a teacher back then, you would sit and teach the crowds as they would stand and listen.

And so, what this is indicating is that they were not there, these Pharisees and these teachers of the law, were not there to learn from Christ they were there to critique him. And indeed, we know this from the other gospels that they were constantly trying to find a fault with him. They didn't like the power shift that was happening away from them and towards Jesus and they wanted to hold on to their positions of power and influence. And both of these groups, by the way that I mentioned here, did possess a great amount of power in Israel back then.

The Pharisees, just to give you a quick background, the Pharisees were basically what you might call hyper fundamentalists of their day. They were the people who devoted themselves beyond the clear teaching of scripture and instead taught as doctrines their own manmade traditions. As Jesus said in Matthew 15:1-6, they had replaced the word of God with the traditions of men. And as such though outwardly they looked very moral and religious and righteous inwardly, they were devoid, Jesus says, of all grace, repentance and salvation. The teachers of the law were Pharisees also, but they were like the hyperactive hyper fundamentalists of their day if you want to use that expression. They were the professional interpreters and the defenders of all pharisaical manmade traditions. If you as a Jew wanted to know how to live for God, they would say simply going to scripture is not good enough. No, you need to go to the right interpreter of scripture. You need to go to a scribe, to a teacher of the law who will tell you what everybody's professional opinion is on that. Because the Bible is good, but you really need to follow all of these external standards and agree with all these extra biblical applications if you're truly going to live a life that glorifies God. These were the people who had gathered together in mass before Jesus that day.

And then here comes Jesus, this young upstart from nowhere who's creating quite a stir by his biblical preaching and his astonishing miracles, who had practically sent them a personal message directly through a healed leper that he was the Messiah. Well, these religious leaders took that, not as a message of hope, but as a direct threat to their own influence and authority in Israel that day. And so, they were out in force dressed up, I'm sure, in all of their best religious trappings. As Jesus says in Matthew 23:5-7, *"They do all their deeds to be seen by others. For they make their phylacteries broad and their fringes long, and they love the place of honor at feasts and the best seat in the synagogues and greetings in the marketplaces and being called rabbi by others."* And as always, I'm sure they wanted to be seen this day as imposing and very important in the eyes of those around them.

Well, Jesus is ready. He has spent focused time in prayer as we saw last week. He is filled with the spirit as he was throughout his ministry, and he is teaching with authority. And beyond that, the end of verse 17 says, *"And the power of the Lord was with him to heal."* In other words, Jesus in submission to his father's will was allowed at this moment by the Holy Spirit's power to demonstrate publicly his Messiahship through miraculous healings as he taught the word of God. And you can just get the feeling, reading this account, that something big is about to happen. And I know all of us have been in a certain situation where we felt that in the air. Maybe it's an important sporting event or an intense debate or before a close election, the air itself feels charged with electricity and expectation and you just know something big is about to happen. You can feel it. That's what's happening here.

The place is packed out beyond the doors of the house as the Gospel of Mark tells us and there is energy. There's tension. Among the large crowds sits the stern Jewish leaders. Across from these leaders sits Jesus teaching the crowd with authority. Something's going to happen. Well, we find out exactly what that is in verses 18-19. For after a tense prologue, Luke introduces us to the tenacious partners that are going to be the catalyst for the action in verses 18-19. It says, *"And behold, some men were bringing on a bed a man who was paralyzed."* Here we see the introduction of a new character on to the scene, a man who was paralyzed and unable to use his limbs. We don't know why. He could have had some genetic birth disorder. He could have had muscular dystrophy. He could have been the victim of a spinal cord injury in the past. It's also possible he had syphilis, which was a common way back then that people would gain paralysis in their bodies in ancient times. We don't know why, but here is a man who cannot move, who has been rendered completely helpless. Fortunately, he's got four good friends to help him out, which actually makes him better off than most paralyzed individuals back then.

You see, people with paralysis were somewhat shunned in that society. In fact, pseudo pious people like the Pharisees who would have been sitting there that day often tended to think that these diseases had something to do with some unconfessed sin. For example, in John 9:1-2, *"the disciples asked Jesus concerning a man who had been born blind, 'Who sinned this man or his parents?' And Jesus says, 'No one sinned. This illness occurred so that God would be glorified by working through him.'"* They had it totally wrong. Nevertheless, lots of self-righteous people back then would have thought that the reason others had diseases and the reason why others were injured is because others were bearing the consequences for their own sin and so they would avoid them.

Well, this man had at least four friends who recognized that was completely nonsense and didn't ostracize him. And Luke records that these four friends at the end of verse 18 were seeking for a way, *"were seeking for a way to bring him in and lay him before Jesus, to be healed, but finding no way to bring him in because of the crowd, they went up on the roof."* So being unable to find any way into that, because of the congestion of the crowd, they finally find some exterior steps up onto the flat roof and once on that flat roof, having hoisted and pulled their friend up with them, they begin to dig through the roof. They had to see Jesus and so they started to dig.

You need to know that the roofs in Galilee at this time are not like our roofs. Good luck digging through asphalt, right? No, they were flat. They were about three to four feet thick. Every three or four feet, there would be heavy main beams running parallel at each other, spanning one wall to the other and then across those beams, they would have smaller pieces of wood as cross rafters and then on top of that they would pile twigs and reeds and other things and then to finish it off, they would put a solid foot of clay and dirt on there, all padded down and then if you were living in a bigger or nicer home, you would lay down a top layer flat clay tiles to make it look nice. So, this is the type of house that Jesus was probably teaching in that day.

So, you have to consider that when those four friends began to dig, it was a mini excavation going through that roof. It was a big endeavor close to two feet down. And as they kept digging, I want you to imagine that those inside start hearing noises in the roof. They're trying to pay attention to Jesus, but what

in the world is going on up there? They hear muffled voices that are starting to, that are becoming more distinct as those above are pulling away dirt and planks of wood until all of a sudden with gasps and falling debris, they're suddenly light and a hole opens up as big as a man's body. And then at the end of verse 19 says, the four friends *"let him down with his bed through the tiles into the midst before Jesus."* And that is a beautiful picture when you think about it of love and faith, of compassion and conviction.

I want you to think about this. First, think about their love. These four friends loved their friend so much, they vandalized a house to get to Jesus. They weren't turned away by the immovable crowd. They found a way to get their friend before Jesus because they loved him. That's the way it is when you love someone. You could put it this way, love rips the roof off. Love goes to great lengths for the welfare of others. And Jesus is going to teach us later in this gospel that this is the type of love that is to be shown in our concern for the unsaved. Just wait till we get to Luke 6. Oh, my word.

If we love someone, we will pray intensely for them. If we love someone, we will go to great lengths to show and speak Christ to them, even if that means ripping the roof off in our life and in theirs as well. And these friends went to that extreme, not only because they loved their friend, but also because they believed, as Jesus is going to point out next, they believed so completely, so thoroughly that there was no hope for their friend outside of coming to Jesus. If we don't get our friend to Jesus, he has no hope. But if we can get him to Jesus, there is nothing that Jesus can't do. And so, they ripped through two feet of roof. They believed with all of their heart that Jesus was their friend's only hope.

And if we have that same conviction, I want you to know that we will go to great lengths also to ensure our family members and friends have the opportunity to come to Jesus to be healed as well. As Acts 4:12 says, *"there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."* Do you believe that? If you do, you will do something about it. In our relationships, do we lack this compassion and conviction? To rip the roof off in hope, knowing that Jesus is able and willing to do the impossible for those that we love. If we start to lose compassion and conviction, then may we see it afresh again this morning with these four individuals as they are determined to get their friend before Jesus Christ.

And as they lower him into the room, and I just want you to picture it. A dust filled room, there's loose shingles hanging down from the ceiling. There's a beam of sunlight coming down from above. The Pharisees are sitting there dusting their robes off in disgust. The four friends are weary, but they're looking down in satisfaction. We did it! The paralyzed man who's bathed in sunlight is at last looking up expectantly. And who does he see? He sees the face of Jesus and the eyes of everyone are fixed on what's going to happen next. And in response to the compassion and conviction of these tenacious partners, Jesus delivers next the heart of the passage, which is a terrific pardon. Look at verse 20, he says, *"And when he saw their faith, he said, 'Man, your sins are forgiving you.'"* Jesus knew exactly what was in that man's heart. That paralytic desired more than just physical healing. He wanted a deeper healing. He wanted to be more than just delivered from paralysis to borrow the words of 4:18-19. He knew he was poor, captive, blind and oppressed. And he came to Jesus just as his friends came. He came in faith

longing for a deeper healing than just physical. He wanted forgiveness. He wanted to be saved. And Jesus gives him exactly what he desired by God's grace and exactly what he needed.

As Jesus saw all of their faith, including the paralytics, Jesus says, *"Man, your sins are forgiven."* And I wish, I want you to recognize that that's the real miracle of this passage. In that one moment, a miracle that is completely unseen nevertheless occurred. That man who was dead in his trespasses and sins was suddenly by God's grace made alive. That man who had been living in the domain of darkness his whole life was suddenly by God's grace transferred into the kingdom of light and of God. That man who had been a slave to sin his whole life was suddenly by God's grace made a slave to God obedient from the heart. That man who had been on his way to hell was suddenly by God's grace on the way to heaven. And Jesus simply declares it to be so.

At the power of Christ's word, Satan fled. At the power of Christ's word, the demons left. At the power of Christ's word, the fever ceased. At the power of Christ's word, his disciples followed. And at the power of Christ's word, this man's sins are forgiven. And I want you to see this morning the glories of Christ's forgiveness. That it was not just extended to this man but is offered to every single person here this morning. For you see, Jesus declares to this man in the passive and perfect tense in the Greek that apart from anything this man has ever done, he has just entered into not a momentary state of forgiveness, but an ongoing, eternal state of forgiveness. That is the type of forgiveness that Jesus brings. As Colossians 2:13 states, *"God in Christ forgives us of all our trespasses."* And again, 1 John 1:7, *"the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from,"* what, *"all sin."* All sin, all of them, past, present, future. We are not given a momentary forgiveness in Christ Jesus when we come to Him, one that we can lose or one that we can walk out of. We are given an eternal forgiveness.

We are set free as Hebrews 10:12-18 teaches us, *"after Christ offered up a single sacrifice for sins for all time, he sat down at the right hand of God."* And where there is no longer any sacrifice for sins, there is forgiveness. In other words, since there is no other sacrifice needed after Christ for all time, that means there is forgiveness in Christ for all time. That is the forgiveness that Jesus Christ gives, that many of us enjoy and that you can enjoy this morning if you trust in Him. Think about your sins against God just over this last week, now consider how many weeks you have lived. Though one sin would condemn you before God for all of eternity, Jesus can extend to you such grace that this morning all your sins, past, present, future are completely forgiven. That is wonderful and terrific. And Jesus can do that.

Jesus could declare that all of that man's sins were permanently and eternally forgiven that day. You know why? Because Jesus knew he was going to be the one that paid the price for that man's sins. He knew he was going to pay the price for that forgiveness. As Hebrews 9:22 reminds us, *"without the shedding of blood, without a pleasing sacrifice, there's no forgiveness of sins."* And Jesus knew he would pay that price, that he would shed his blood, that he would be that sacrifice. And on the basis of his future death on the cross, in that man's place, Jesus declares, *"son, your sins are forgiven."* Oh, brothers and sisters, I hope that this is your joy in life, and it is your hope in death that Jesus Christ has paid the price for all of your sins. *"Son, your sins are forgiving you."* This is the forgiveness that Jesus gives.

My sin, oh, the bliss of this glorious thought. My sin, not in part, but the whole, is nailed to the cross and I bear it no more. Praise the Lord, praise the Lord. Oh, my soul, Jesus paid it all. And I want you to know that even though that man is laid out still on a mat that day, he finds himself to be in the most blessed position imaginable, even if he'd never gotten off that mat. As Psalms 32:1 says, *"Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man against whom the Lord counts no iniquity."* And Jesus declares this new reality to be true over this man's life unilaterally, meaning by the way that Jesus' ministry has just taken on a whole new significance. By claiming to forgive sins, Jesus is showing he's not operating at the same level as the prophets of old. He is operating on the same level as God. If you doubt that, look at exactly what the Pharisees say next in verse 21. It says, *"And the scribes and the Pharisees began to question, saying, 'Who is this that speaks blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God alone?'"*

Ladies and gentlemen, that is excellent theology, excellent theology. Scripture clearly teaches that the only one who can actually ultimately forgive and absolve anyone of their sins against God is only God alone. As Moses learned while he was hidden in a cleft in the rock on Mount Sinai in Exodus 34:7, *"it is the Lord, the Lord who forgives iniquity and transgression and sin."* That is part of his unique divine glory that he showed to Moses that day. And as he says in Isaiah 42:8, *"my glory I give to no other."* And yet here Jesus is unilaterally claiming to be able to forgive iniquity and transgression and sin. So, what in the world is going on? If Jesus is a man, an only a man, then guess what, those Pharisees are exactly right. That this is blasphemy of the worst kind. To act as if you're God when you're not. According to Leviticus 24:16 under Jewish law, you should be stoned. And to say to a man, your sins are forgiven, you're now righteous before your creator because I said so is the equivalent of saying, I'm the creator God, I'm the judge of all the earth, I'm the Holy One of Israel. Who can forgive sins but God alone? And they are right.

See to borrow C.S. Lewis's words, you cannot come to Christ with any of this patronizing nonsense about him only being a good teacher. Because if that's the case, you're not even listening to what Jesus taught. And you can't say, well, Jesus was just a good person because then you're not actually looking at what Jesus Christ did. He said, *"your sins are forgiven you."* So, either Jesus has the authority, and he is God, or he doesn't have that authority and he's one of the greatest blasphemers who has ever lived. There are no other options. Well, as the Jewish leaders are thinking that he's lying, Jesus shows them and us that he's not lying. He does have the divine authority to forgive sins. We see that in verses 22-25. And this goes quickly as Jesus follows up that's terrific pardon with the proof. When Jesus perceived their thoughts, look at that, Jesus knew exactly what they were thinking. When Jesus perceived their thoughts with a deep knowledge, he answered them, *"Why then do you question in your hearts?"* Listen, only God knows what people are thinking.

Some of you have spent your entire life practically with your spouse. I'm guessing you still look over at them and say what in the world is going on in their minds? But Jesus knows the exact thoughts of these Pharisees whom he's never met before. Scripture is clear, only God has that type of knowledge. Psalm 16:7, *"the Lord looks at the heart."* 1 Kings 8:39, *"you only know the hearts of all the children of mankind."* 1 Chronicles 28:9, *"the Lord searches all hearts and understands every plan and thought."* Jeremiah 17:10, *"I the Lord search the heart and test the mind."* Ezekiel 11:5, *"I know the things that come into your mind."* And

then as the David said in Psalms 139:4, *"before a word is even on my tongue, behold, O Lord, you know it all together."* And here, Jesus exhibits the exact same omniscience as God himself. He demonstrates the same divine knowledge, why? Because he's God. John 2:25 says, *"he knew what is in the heart of man."* Throughout the gospels, Jesus knew what men were thinking.

And here, he knew that they were thinking in their hearts that he was a blasphemer. He knew they wanted to kill him. And so, Jesus, knowing their thoughts, asked them a simple question in verse 23. And he's going to do this a lot in this gospel. Ask simple questions that expose their hearts. He says this, *"Which is easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Rise and walk?'"* Now the answer is it's easier to say your sins are forgiven, even though it's not easier to do. In fact, both actions are impossible for a man to do. Only God can forgive sins, and only God can cause a man to rise up from total paralysis and walk. To actually be able to do either of those actions requires divine power and authority. But it is easier to say your sins are forgiven, why? Because that authority is not visibly verifiable. You can say it and be like, just kidding, maybe it happened, maybe it didn't, who knows? But if you were to say rise and walk, well then, you've got to put feet to the truth and you've got to visibly display your authority for everyone to see.

Jesus knew that's exactly what those Pharisees were thinking. And so, with that, Jesus springs the trap by verifying the moral miracle of the forgiveness of sins by the physical miracle of healing. He says in verse 24, *"But that you may know"*, just as the Lord, by the way, repeatedly said to unbelieving Egypt in Exodus 7, 8, 9, and 10, *"that you may know that the Son of man has authority on earth to forgive sins. - he said to the man who was paralyzed - 'I say to you, rise, pick up your bed and go home.'"* You think I've overstepped the boundary of what a man can say? Well, then let me overstep the boundary of what a man can do. And he says, *"rise, pick up your bed and go home. And immediately he rose up before them."* Imagine the gasp of that crowd that day. I do not think they were expecting that. At the word of Jesus, this paralyzed atrophied man suddenly stands up at the command of Christ. He's completely healed. No rehabilitation needed. His bones instantly hardened, his leg muscles instantly revitalized, his nerves instantly joined together, his joints instantly strengthened, his brain instantly equipped for balance, and an instant at the command of Christ.

I remember having a surgery and being in the hospital for one week and it was hard to get out of that bed. This man, after probably years, springs up in perfect health. Unbelievable. Immediately he rose up before them and it says, picked up what he had been lying on and went home glorifying God. He rises up immediately and he's doing it, glorifying God. He picks up his bed and he's doing it, glorifying God. He goes out the door and every movement of his once paralyzed body, he is glorifying God with every step. You get the picture here; this man's life is completely transformed. Not just because he's physically moving, but because he has been spiritually healed. I can see him, can you? Walking and leaping and praising God. Glorifying God. This is undeniable evidence that that crowd could not ignore. This forgiven and healed man knows that Jesus is no mere human. Jesus is God in human flesh. He is the Lord who has authority to heal the body and who has the authority to save the soul. And so, this man goes home glorifying God.

Just as the Psalmist encourages us to do on Psalms 103:2-3 when he writes, *"Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all of his benefits, who forgives all your iniquity, who heals all your diseases."* That man had experienced that directly from the hands of Christ that day. It's what we'll all experience some day from the hand of Christ. And so, he goes home glorifying God, which leads us finally to the total praise in verse 26. It says, *"And amazement seized them, gripped them all, and they glorified God and were filled with awe, saying, 'We have seen extraordinary things today.'"* Imagine the amazement that rippled through that audience that day. The Pharisees' mouths just drop open. They have no word. And as the man leaps out the door with shouts of joy, there stands Jesus still in their midst, in proven power and authority, authority to heal and authority to forgive. And they're filled with absolute awe.

Just as Psalms 130:3-4 states, *"If you, O Lord, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand? But with you there is forgiveness, that you may be feared."* They stand in awe at the healing and forgiving power of Jesus. Oh yes, they had seen extraordinary things that day. They had seen salvation. They had seen forgiveness. They had seen a new creation. They had seen God among them. Only God can forgive sins. Only God can command a paralytic to walk. Jesus does both. Jesus is no blasphemer. Jesus is God, and he wields divine authority over the physical universe, he wields divine authority over the spiritual universe, and he wields divine authority over the moral universe as well. And that's the truth of this passage. That is the central truth. The truth that Luke has been building up to over the last few weeks.

There's no reason to listen to anything else that Jesus says in the rest of this gospel if you don't believe that. But if you believe it, there is every reason to listen to every single word. Jesus has divine power and authority. Jesus has divine power over the spiritual, the physical, and the moral universe. He can claim victory over Satan and his demons, he can heal entire towns of their diseases, and he can turn to a sinful soul that comes to him in humble faith and say, as the righteous judge, you are acquitted, and your sins are forgiven you this day. You say, how can you do that? How can you do that?

First, because he has divine power, he is God, the divine judge. 2 Timothy 4:1 says that *"Jesus is judge, both of the living and the dead."* And if Jesus, the judge, declares you forgiven, who can condemn you? And second, Jesus can say to all those who come to him in faith, your sins are forgiven because he paid the price for your forgiveness. He gave his very own life to pay for sins. You are a sinner. You have broken every law in the eyes of God. The price to be paid for one of your transgressions is eternal death beneath the wrath of holy God. Like this paralytic, you are in a hopeless state. Like this paralytic, everyone you've ever met who has not trusted in Jesus Christ is in a hopeless state. So then, what is required? What is required is to rip the roof off and come to Jesus today. Jesus is your only hope. Only Jesus has paid the penalty for sins on behalf of sinners who trust in him. And only Jesus has the authority to forgive you of all of your sins this very moment. If you come to him, he will forgive you if you ask him. He's willing and he's able.

And by the way, this room is evidence of this fact. What is Grace Chapel, a testimony of all, if not this savior? This church is not a testimony of people who made themselves righteous before the eyes of God. This church is a testimony of sinners who found forgiveness at the hands of Jesus. And I'm guessing for many of us, it's because someone cared enough and someone believed enough to not worry about a

relationship as their idol, but they ripped the roof off, and they shared the gospel with us come what may. May we have that same type of compassion and conviction in our own lives and sharing the gospel as well. This room is evidence that Jesus is still doing extraordinary things today. He is forgiving iniquity and transgressions and sins. He is causing those who are paralyzed by sin to go out walking and leaping and praising God. That's why we're here today. That is why we exist and let's not forget it.

We are here to worship because Christ has done extraordinary things today. And I pray that every single one of us would go home today just as the paralytic did, knowing the miracle that God has done in our hearts, glorifying God with amazement in all because our sins at the hand of Jesus, the saving sovereign of all, our sins have been forgiven. He has the power. He paid the price. He can forgive.

And this is the word of God from Luke 5:17-26 which I considered a great privilege to be able to share with you today and which I now commit to your further study and your faithful obedience until Jesus, our God and King, returns.

Let's pray.

Father, this morning, we thank you so much for this passage. We thank you for how it makes it clear who Jesus is. That our trust in Jesus Christ as the only savior rests not in a collection of doctrines that we have chosen to believe. It rests in a person who has the power to forgive and demonstrated it. The divine power to forgive sinners of their sins. Father, I thank you for laying out such a firm foundation for our faith. Father, I pray that if there's someone here who has not trusted in Christ this morning, they would see that firm foundation. They would see the reality of who Jesus is, his power to save and they would run to him that they would consider all things but loss but for the sake of obtaining Christ's salvation and forgiveness. I pray that they would repent of their sins and trust in him today. And no matter what holds them back, they would rip the roof off and come to Christ.

I pray for the rest of us, Father, help us to first go out walking and leaping and praising you for the forgiveness we found in Jesus and then help us, Father, not to keep that to ourselves but help us to be like those faithful friends who believe the gospel so much. They did what was ever necessary to bring their friend to Christ. Father, we know that we're called to do this because Jesus is no mere man. He's the God who forgives men of sin. May we share that good news and may we praise you for it this week.

For your honor and for your glory we ask this in Jesus' name, amen.

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