

Harmony Newsletter

Web Site: www.harmoniypbchurch.org

HARMONY PRIMITIVE BAPTIST CHURCH

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“Come thou with us, and we will do thee good...”-Numbers 10:29

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BY THE FAITH OF OTHERS

“And when he saw their faith, he said unto him, Man, thy sins are forgiven thee.”- Luke 5:20

The miracles of Christ teach us *many* spiritual lessons. The one I have before you is found in three of the gospel narratives: Matthew 9, Mark 2, and Luke 5. It must be of three-fold importance. You may read all three to gain a complete picture of the miracle.

Here we find four men who have taken the sad case of another upon themselves. They have a friend, or a loved one, who is stricken with the palsy, a crippling disease in that day. The victim could not walk, nor carry himself to the Master Physician for a cure. So they take the time, and make the effort to carry him on a cot to Jesus.

When they arrive at the house, the crowd is so large they cannot obtain a hearing. Rather than giving up in discouragement, they seek a way to pull the man upon the roof. This posed another problem as the roof was made of tile. Determined, they begin to break the tile away, and finally make a hole large enough to let the man down by ropes to the feet of Jesus.

Jesus, seeing their faith (of the four men), tells the victim to be of good cheer, forgives him, heals him, and sends him home packing his cot on his shoulders. Imagine the joy that filled the victims heart as he walked from the place he was carried only a few moments before.

From this miracle we learn that there are some cases that will need the aid of *several others* before deliverance will ever be attained. We can find ourselves praying for someone we love very much... with no results. It is then we seek the aid of others to shoulder the burden with us, and get our loved one to the feet of Jesus. Whoever will take a rope, and bear a part of the burden, is a partner in prayer.

It seems to me that some cases are designed for this very purpose. We are given the opportunity to walk away from the world for a little while and carry another to the feet of Jesus. We have probably been laid there ourselves by loving family members in the past. Therefore, we should never look upon one who has fallen into one of Satan's pits with disdain or arrogance. As John Newton, who wrote the classic Christian hymn, *Amazing Grace*, said when he saw a drunk in the gutter: “Except for God's grace, there go I.” Pharisees look upon sinners with Contempt. Jesus looks upon them with a tear and says, “Come unto me, I will forgive, I will heal your disease.”

The diseases that Jesus heals are always a figure of *sin*. Every sin comes with its on set of difficulties, pain

and problems. This disease has rendered its victim unable to get to Jesus on his own. It is a picture of a person who has lost all hope of obtaining a cure. Though he believes in Jesus, his sin has paralyzed him.

Many of God's children have been locked in *hopeless castle*. Some have sinned a sin so great that they are sure that the Lord will never forgive them. Some of them are living under bridges, and in cardboard boxes. Some are so ashamed that they will not show their face in church where they could obtain a cure. They cannot believe they did what they did. They assume the Lord must hate them, and will always hate them for it. They cannot find forgiveness. They are paralyzed on their cot. Others must help.

Yes, sin is *debilitating*. It cripples our abilities. It twists our thought process, and leads us down some dead-end roads. We can find ourselves upon a cot, unable to get up, unless others come to our aid.

When people come to Jesus for a cure, we are to observe it as *prayer*. That's right, whether it is one person, or several they are making a request to the only intercessor between God and man, the man Christ Jesus. If we are struggling with sin, if we have loved ones involved in sin, He is the One we need to be talking to. He can, and will deliver. If the knock of one person can be heard at heaven's door, imagine the noise that four can make!

Notice the *effort* these four made to get their loved one to Jesus. They got together; they devised a plan; they carried the man for some distance on a cot; they lifted him to the roof; they broke up the roof; they let him down. This took time, effort, patience, and faith. They just knew that Jesus could, would, heal their friend if they could just get him at His feet. This is a picture of fervent, effectual prayer. It is more than a thought, it is more than a few words uttered under our breath at bedtime... it is a laborious task. Jesus saw their faith, and answered. So this man was healed through the faith of *others*.

You may say, “I have given up all hope for my son, my daughter, my wife, my husband, my friend.” Why? Our God is a God of hope! “*Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost.*” We are not to just have some hope, we are to abound in it. We are to pray...believing. If nothing happens, get some rope, and some friends and devise a way to get your loved one to the feet of Jesus. If you need a friend, I will be happy to take one of your ropes.

Let us never forget that the healing power of Christ is just as effective and available today, as it was then. If we are as faithful, and determined as these four, we will see miracles in our own lives. -NMP

A SPECIAL GIFT...POSSIBLY UNNOTICED

“For I would that all men were even as I myself. But every man hath his proper gift of God, one after this manner, and another after that.”
-1 Corinthians 7:7

There are many spiritual gifts found among God’s people, all given by His grace. Some of the most common are the speaking gifts, vested within the ministers of the gospel. During the early days of the church, there were special gifts of healing, and tongues. Most of these you will find listed in the 12th chapter of Romans, and the same chapter in 1st Corinthians. As I have said in the past, every one of God’s people has at least one spiritual gift.

But there is a special gift that God has given to some of his people that I believe, has gone virtually unnoticed in our day. I am talking about a special gift that Paul had, the one he refers to in our verse above- the gift of *celibacy*.

In this verse, Paul is answering a question posed to him by the church at Corinth. It concerns marriage-whether a person could be a Christian, and be married. I know that sounds strange, but it was common in that day for people to devote their entire lives to Christ. The question went something like this: “Can a man be married, and touch a woman (an intimate relationship within the bonds of marriage), and be spiritual?” In our day, this kind of devotion to the Lord is hardly considered. But in that day, some of the false doctrines presented anything physical to be sinful- even marriage.

Paul answers them by telling them that it is *good* (o.k.) if a man never touches a woman, and devotes his entire life to the Lord. For then he can do so without the distraction of a husband, a wife, or a family (See Chapter 7). But he also warns them. If they do not have this gift, they will burn in lust towards the opposite sex, and their efforts to serve the Lord without distraction will be a miserable existence, and possibly end in disaster.

So, what is this gift, and what does it entail? It is simply a gift that the Lord gives to some people in that they have no carnal, or sexual desire for members of the opposite sex. They do not have lustful thoughts about them. They do not want to have an intimate relationship with them. Though they will enjoy their friendship, they have no desire to marry them, or raise a family with them. They will find their pleasure in devoting their love, their lives, and their time to their family and friends. It is a very rare, and special gift.

The interesting thing about this gift is that it is not limited to the ministry. A person may have this gift and not be called into the ministry. That was the essence of the question in the first place.

Nor is it limited to the male species. In Acts 21:9, we read of the four daughters of Philip that possibly had this gift. These were not preachers. They did prophesy, or speak of the things of the Lord. But they never walked into a pulpit, or pastored a church. They were *virgins*.

Paul’s answer sheds light upon many things. This is where the Roman Catholic Church created its own *tragedy*. To be a priest, or a nun, a person is required to lead a celibate life. Through the years, many tragedies, debaucheries, and sad stories stain their pages for placing people under this yoke of bondage who never had the gift. Today, they are eying this mistake with a little more grace.

Jesus commented on this gift in Matthew 19:10-12. It started in much the same way the question was posed to Paul by the Corinthians. The apostles, realizing the constraints of marriage, said this: “If the case of the man be so with his wife, it is not good to marry. **But he said unto them**, All men cannot receive this saying, save they to whom it is given. (a gift). For there are some eunuchs, which were so born from their mother's womb: and there are some eunuchs, which were made eunuchs of men: and there be eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He that is able to receive it, let him receive it.”

A eunuch is a person that has been *castrated*. Though this sounds somewhat crude, it is nevertheless true. Daniel was made a eunuch. We read of the Ethiopian eunuch. The keepers of the king’s concubines were made eunuchs so they would not desire his maidens. But the essence of the eunuch was the fact that they had no sexual desires. I could give you the medical explanation, but trust me their castration removed this desire.

Therefore, Jesus said that some were born this way from their mother’s womb. This means they were given the spiritual gift without castration. And He is giving them a solemn warning- if you don’t have the gift don’t try it!

I am sure that there are many of God’s people who have been very confused about this gift. They have tried to pray it away not knowing the gift they have, wanting to be like everyone else. Like the “Ugly Duckling”, they think that there is something wrong with them when they are the most beautiful bird in the flock...and possibly the freest. This was a very coveted gift in the infant church.

Let us remember this gift when we see people unmarried. They may possibly be the most spiritual people among us. -NMP

PRAYER REQUESTS

- Sister Dianne Boyce recovering from surgery
- Sister Bubbles Brandon and her family