

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 own 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