RISE AND WALK

*Luke 5:17-22*

**INTRODUCTION**

If you were paralyzed, would you rather be physically healed or spiritually healed? In other words is physical healing or a right relationship with God more important?

Hopefully, most people would want both; to be physically and spiritually whole is most desirable, but if you had to choose between the two, which would it be? Some folks who don’t understand salvation and spiritual well-being might choose physical healing.

I remember quite clearly the words of a friend who said, “The greatest gift a person can have is health.” She went on to say, “If a person isn’t physically healthy, he can’t enjoy life to the fullest. If he is disabled or constantly sick, it is almost impossible to be happy.” There is truth in what she said. Some physical diseases or conditions can be debilitating and make us miserable. If you have ever been sick for a long time or had a disability, you know what I mean. But the fact is, there is something much worse than physical illness... that something is spiritual separation from God.

This message takes a close look at an incident in the Bible where the friends of a paralyzed man brought him to Jesus in hopes that Jesus might heal him. Although he came for physical healing, he received much more. I invite you to turn in your Bible to Luke 5:17-26 as we explore the topic RISE AND WALK. The exploration will specifically include the following areas and related questions:
The **ACTIVITY** - What was Jesus doing when the paralyzed man was brought to Him?
The **AUDIENCE** - Who was there listening to Jesus and observing the incident?
The **ATMOSPHERE** - What was the tone of the meeting?
The **ACT OF FAITH** - What specific act of faith took place?
The **AUTHORITY OF JESUS** - What authority did Jesus reveal?
The **ASTONISHMENT OF THE PEOPLE** - How did the people respond?

In addition to exploring these areas, many important principles will be uncovered along the way.

With all this in mind, listen carefully to Luke 5:17 to discover the **ACTIVITY** that Jesus was involved in when this incident occurred.

> v17  And it came about one day that He was teaching; and there were some Pharisees and teachers of the law sitting there, who had come from every village of Galilee and Judea and from Jerusalem; and the power of the Lord was present for Him to perform healing.

**THE ACTIVITY**
What activity was Jesus involved in as the scene opens? He was involved in teaching. It is discovered latter on in the passage that Jesus was teaching in a building. Up to this point He had ministered in synagogues, homes, and even from a boat. Teaching was an important part of Jesus’ ministry. Earlier, Luke 4:14,15 states,

> v14  And Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit; and news about Him spread through all the surrounding district.  v15  And he began teaching in their synagogues and was praised by all.
Later in the same chapter, Luke 4:31,32 states,

\[v31\] And He came down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee. And He was teaching them on the Sabbath; \[v32\] and they were amazed at His teaching, for His message was with authority.

In addition, Luke 5:3 states,

\[v3\] And He got into one of the boats, which was Simon’s and asked him to put out a little way from the land. And He sat down and began teaching the multitudes from the boat.

Teaching groups was central to Jesus’ ministry. Because of His teaching and healing ministry, news about Him spread throughout Israel. Here again in our story, Jesus is teaching once again.

Let’s now discuss:

THE AUDIENCE

It is important to note who was present as the scene opens. It appears that there were three groups. Listen to verse 17 and 18,

\[v17\] And it came about one day that He was teaching; and there were some Pharisees and teachers of the law sitting there, who had come from every village of Galilee and Judea and from Jerusalem; and the power of the Lord was present for Him to perform healing. \[v18\] And behold, some men were carrying on a bed a man who was paralyzed; and they were trying to bring him in, and to set him down in front of Him.
The first group mentioned is the Pharisees. This group of religious Jewish leaders seems to have started sometime after the Jewish exile. During the time of Christ they may have numbered as many as 6000. They were big on outward appearance and acts of piety. They practiced ceremonial washings, fastings, alms giving and prayer. They believed in good and evil and the resurrection of the dead to judgment of heaven. They believed in life after death as opposed to the Sadducees who did not.

The second group mentioned is the teachers of the law also known as Scribes. Scribes were learned men in the Mosaic law. They were the ones who meticulously transcribed Old Testament writings onto new scrolls when the old ones wore out. They were also interpreters of the law and teachers of it. They often worked on the more subtle and difficult interpretations of the law and were thus part of the Sanhedrin.

These Pharisees and Scribes had come from all over Galilee and Judea and even from Jerusalem. They were trying to find out who Jesus was: a prophet, a good teacher or something else.

The third group mentioned is some men. The gathering where Jesus taught was apparently not closed to the public. Besides religious leaders there were also commoners. Jesus’ fame had spread far and wide and people wanted to see and hear Him first-hand.

Let’s now talk about:

THE ATMOSPHERE
What was the tone of the meeting? Listen again to verse Luke 5:17,
v17 And it came about one day that He was teaching; and there were some Pharisees and teachers of the law sitting there, who had come from every village of Galilee and Judea and from Jerusalem; and the power of the Lord was present for Him to perform healing.

Since Jesus was God in human flesh, wasn’t the power of the Lord always present with Him? Yes, but it must be remembered that God’s power often flows or fails to flow in response to the faith of people. No faith, no power. Little faith, little power. Great faith, great power.

The atmosphere at this current meeting was positive. Some if not many of those who attended believed that Jesus was something special. In a previous incident in Luke 4:16-30 when Jesus was in His hometown of Nazareth, He did few miracles because the people rejected Him. Listen to that account in Matthew 13:55-58 which records the people’s response to Jesus’ teaching,

“v55 Is not this the carpenter’s son? Is not His mother called Mary, and His brothers, James and Joseph and Simon and Judas? v56 And His sisters, are they not all with us? Where then did this man get all these things?” v57 And they took offense at Him. But Jesus said to them, “A prophet is not without honor except in his hometown, and in his own household.” v58 And He did not do many miracles there because of their unbelief.

The stage was set for Jesus to unleash His power in an amazing way. This brings us to:
THE ACT OF FAITH
What specific act of faith took place at this meeting. Listen to Luke 5:18,19,

v18 And behold, some men were carrying on a bed a man who was paralyzed; and they were trying to bring him in, and to set him down in front of Him. v19 And not finding any way to bring him in because of the crowd, they went up on the roof and let him down through the tiles with his stretcher, right in the center, in front of Jesus.

The act of faith was straightforward. A group of men believed that Jesus could heal their friend, so they brought him to Jesus. Since he was paralyzed they had to bring him on a bed or stretcher-device. Upon arriving at the meeting they discovered that there was no way to get him through the crowd and so went up on the roof, cleared off some tiles and lowered their friend right in front of Jesus.

This brings us to:

THE AUTHORITY OF JESUS
What authority did Jesus reveal in His response to the men’s faith? The first was His authority to forgive sins. Listen to Luke 5:20-25,

v20 And seeing their faith, He (Jesus) said, “Friend, your sins are forgiven you.”

When Jesus observed the faith of the men He said, “Friend, your sins are forgiven you.” Is it possible that Jesus forgave the man’s sin because of the faith of his friends? No! Each person’s faith must be personal. Scripture never teaches that the faith of one person can be applied to another regarding salvation. Instead, the Bible teaches over
and over that the forgiveness of a person’s sin is based on His own personal faith. John 3:16 states, “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.” Romans 10:13 states, “...Whoever will call upon the Name of the Lord will be saved.” No one can believe for someone else. Each person’s faith must be his own!

When verse Luke 5:20 states, “And seeing their faith...”, the phrase their faith not only refers to the faith of the men carrying the paralytic, but the faith of the paralytic as well. Jesus was referring to the faith of the entire group, not just the stretcher-bearers!

Notice now the response to Jesus’ authority to forgive sin in Luke 5:21

v21 And the scribes and the Pharisees began to reason, saying, “Who is this man who speaks blasphemies? Who can forgive sins, but God alone?”

The religious leaders were shocked and accused Jesus of blasphemy. They rightly said, “Who can forgive sins, but God alone?” That was the whole point; Jesus was showing them that He was God! Anyone could claim to forgive sin, but only God can really do it. To show that He indeed had the authority to forgive sin, Jesus subsequently healed the paralytic also showing that He also had authority over disease. Listen to Luke 5:22-25,

v22 But Jesus, aware of their reasonings, answered and said to them, “Why are you reasoning in your hearts? v23 Which is easier, to say, ‘Your sins have been forgiven you,’ or to say, ‘Rise and walk?’ v24 But in order that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins,” He said to the paralytic, “I say to you, rise, and take up your
Jesus answered the religious leaders in an unusual way. He said, “Which is easier, to say, ‘Your sins have been forgiven you,’ or, ‘Rise and Walk,’” It is easier to say “Your sins have been forgiven you.” Why? Because no one can see sins being forgiven. Anyone could say, “Your sins are forgiven,” but who could really tell if they had really been forgiven? But to say, “Rise and walk,” is quite a different story. If a person said, “Rise and Walk, “ and the person he said it to didn’t get up and walk, the person making the statement would obviously be a fraud. But if he said to the crippled person, “Rise and walk,” and the person actually got up and walked, the person making the statement would obviously be a miracle worker. By physically healing the man, Jesus showed clearly that He not only had the power and authority to forgive sin, but to heal people as well.

This brings us to:

**THE ASTONISHMENT OF THE PEOPLE**

How did the people respond? With astonishment! Luke 5:26 states,

> v26 And they were all seized with astonishment and began glorifying God; and they were filled with fear, saying, “We have seen remarkable things today.”

In this passage there are a number of important principles. Let’s look at a few of them:
IMPORTANT PRINCIPLES

1. God honors persistent faith and those who draw close to Him
The men had persistent faith. They would not give up their quest to get their friend to Jesus, no matter what the obstacles. Do you have persistent faith? Does your faith show itself through works? What are the things that are keeping you from being close to Christ each day? Could you get to bed a little earlier and get up a little earlier? Could you give up some TV? Could you make a commitment and stick with it? Persistent faith is not a matter of convenience, but of commitment!

2. Knowledge does not make a man right with God, faith does
The Scribes and Pharisees had tons of knowledge but that did not save them. Only faith can save a person.

3. Christians must value spiritual healing over physical healing
Physical healing is important but not nearly as important as having ones sins forgiven. We likely will have our physical bodies on this earth for seventy plus years. The new perfect bodies we receive in heaven will be for eternity.

4. Christians must realize that God is not obligated to heal us physically in this life
The man had come hoping to be physically healed. Instead, Jesus forgave His sin. Perhaps he didn’t understand and was initially disappointed. But in the scheme of things, what he initially received was infinitely more important than physical healing. In his case, Jesus chose to heal him physically as well. Are you struggling with physical healing? Keep praying but leave the results in God’s hands without being bitter if he chooses not to heal you.
5. Jesus calls all who have faith, “Friend”
It is great to know that Jesus is our friend. Some people don’t have many friends, but never forget that Jesus is your friend if you put your trust in Him.

6. We need to be astonished by spiritual healing, not physical healing
You can’t see spiritual healing but it is real and has eternal benefits! Luke 15:10 states, “…I tell you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.” Let’s learn to rejoice over the things that excite the angels!

CONCLUSION
Jesus has the authority not only to forgive sins, but also to heal people from physical disease. He promises to save those who place their faith in Him, but He never promised to heal us of our diseases and maladies this side of heaven. It should be enough for us to know that Jesus is our friend whether or not He chooses to heal us! Someday He will. In the meantime, TRUST HIM!