

MEDITATION 17

Mark 2: 5-12

⁵ When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, “Child, your sins are forgiven.” ⁶ Now some of the scribes were sitting there questioning in their hearts, ⁷ “Why does this fellow speak in this way? It is blasphemy! Who can forgive sins but God alone?” ⁸ At once Jesus perceived in his spirit that they were discussing these questions among themselves, and he said to them, “Why do you raise such questions in your hearts? ⁹ Which is easier: to say to the paralytic, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Stand up and take your mat and walk?’ ¹⁰ But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins”—he said to the paralytic— ¹¹ “I say to you, stand up, take your mat, and go to your home.” ¹² And he stood up and immediately took the mat and went out before all of them, so that they were all amazed and glorified God, saying, “We have never seen anything like this!”

“When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, “Child, your sins are forgiven.”

We encountered this verse in last week’s meditation. We meditated on how faith in what’s possible is about the spirit as much as the body. We also meditated on how our inner feelings of guilt, shame, failure or inadequacy are as deep an ailment as anything physical no matter how invisible they may be. On the opposite end are also those inner feelings of ego, superiority, being better or right all the time, which hide deeper, more vulnerable feelings of inadequacy, shame or self-doubt...

Prayer: Meet me where I am, O God... the physical, the mental, but also the spiritual... those parts of me I am aware of and maybe too aware of, and those parts of me I’m afraid of or don’t even realize are there... You know me far better than I know myself... Help me trust in your love like the man healed in the story... Help me believe that I am beloved and that new healing, empowerment, courage and truth are possible in my life in ways I have yet to know... Amen.

“Now some of the scribes were sitting there questioning in their hearts, ⁷ “Why does this fellow speak in this way? It is blasphemy! Who can forgive sins but God alone?”

Who can forgive sins but God alone... Does Jesus speak for God?... Does God speak to us directly or through other people even?... What is it we need to hear?... Is it forgiveness? Is it something else? What is it we need to internalize coming from a source we consider an authority?...

Prayer: Speak to me, O God... Speak to me a word I can hear, a word that carries the weight of authority... Speak to me a word that rings true, a truth I need to hear but even a truth I may be afraid to hear because it challenges me in some way... Amen.

“And Jesus said to them, “Why do you raise such questions in your hearts? ⁹ Which is easier: to say to the paralytic, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Stand up and take your mat and walk?’”

Forgiveness is not easy. Just saying the word means little. To live it... now that's a lifetime project. Forgiveness is just as hard as healing a man who cannot walk. But do we believe forgiveness is possible that way, especially if what needs forgiveness is unforgiveable for us?

On the other hand, some of us may not feel we need forgiveness in any serious way... Others yes, but us... no. We may be sinners, but there are sinners and there are sinners...

Prayer: Help me, O God... Help me see... Help me see even where it may hurt... Help me see what is true even when I prefer to hide truth for my own comfort... I am a 'sinner'... I may not carry the guilt of having harmed many people and seriously so, but how far could I be pushed and how much would it take to push me over the edge?... I am vulnerable, fragile in many ways for all my strength... I stand before you in all my humility recognizing my need... Amen.

“But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins.” Jesus has authority to forgive sins... You are forgiven... do you believe that?... Do you believe you need forgiveness?... Pray for it and pray for it daily...

Prayer: Thank you for forgiving me, O God... for sins I am aware of and for sins I am not... Thank you for forgiving me... Amen.

“Jesus said to the paralytic— ¹¹“I say to you, stand up, take your mat, and go to your home.” ¹² And he stood up and immediately took the mat and went out before all of them, so that they were all amazed and glorified God, saying, “We have never seen anything like this!”

What is it that they have never seen?... Is it the healing of the man itself, or is it also what has happened to the man in his whole person?... To stand up and walk when you have not been able to walk for a long time, takes a lot of faith and a lot of confidence. What can empower you and me to stand up and walk that way? Where may we be paralyzed or stuck in some way? In what part of our lives or a relationship may we need to hear the authoritative word of God in Jesus: "Stand up, dear child, take up your mat which you no longer need as a crutch, and walk, with your own two feet, home."

PRAYER: We need to learn how to stand up and walk, O God, like toddlers, or like those who have experienced crippling paralysis in our lives at some point and maybe even now... We need to learn how to stand up and walk...

But we also need your healing hand upon us for that to happen... We need your forgiveness to liberate our spirits - the forgiveness we know we need and the forgiveness we don't know we need too...

We need to believe in your healing power... We need to recognize your authority to resurrect us even through and beyond death. Fill us with that kind of assurance and faith, O God, and grant us the hope that victory may yet come in ways we have not known it before... Victory and peace... In Jesus' name... Amen.