

Tuesday Evening Bible Study Group Notes

The Man With Palsy

Scripture Readings: Luke 5.17-26, Matthew 9.2-8, Mark 2.1-12

Palsy is a term used today to indicate a condition of incomplete paralysis, as in Bell's palsy or cerebral palsy. In this sense the more modern translations 'paralytic or paralysis' better express Luke's description than does the older Authorised Version's 'palsy'. He used the word *para-luo* meaning 'a loosening of one side' indicating that the sufferer had lost control of one side of his body. Doctors today use 'paralysis' to describe the condition of a patient suffering from an interruption in the motor pathway somewhere between the cerebral cortex and the contractive muscle fibres. It can have many causes, but is often caused by a stroke.

In these studies to date we have noted Luke's emphasis on the clash of authority style of Jesus with that of the scribes, and how his miracles ought to be seen by us as a demonstration of the truths that he taught. Sending the healed leper to the Scribes for ritual cleansing (Luke 5.14) was correct according to their law, but it brought Jesus under their suspicion. He was seen as a threat, and now they gather in force, even the leaders from Jerusalem, to make an assessment themselves (Luke 5.17). All went well until a paralysed man was lowered down through a hole made in the roof cover to the place where Jesus was teaching.

The sad record of the patient.

Dr Luke uses a more informative form of the word than Matthew and Mark, and tells us that the disease had in the past overtaken him but does not tell us why he was so crippled on one side of his body that he could no longer walk. He was a burden to himself and a real lifelong problem to his friends who no doubt had to care for him.

They were desperate. A desperate situation called for desperate measures. The trafficable roof would have been constructed flat with a low wall at the perimeter, made by laying brushwood on the joists and then overlaid with hard baked earth. There was also a courtyard overflowing with curious people and a gallery covered by tiles where probably Jesus stood to teach. It would be a simple matter to remove these tiles to reach Him.

Jesus interpreted their action as a demonstration of their faith, so determined were they to obtain His

healing for their friend v20.

The unexpected treatment of the Lord.

Jesus pointed to the cause of this man's condition as being sin in his life v20. There is no indication as to what that sin may have been. The patient was probably young (In Mark Jesus called him 'son' meaning a young male - Mark 2.5) and the condition may have been the result of some foolhardiness gone wrong, rather than a stroke, or even maybe he had been a young hot-blooded Zealot on some terrorist action.

The concept of suffering being necessarily a result of someone's sin did not stress the Pharisees as the idea was deeply entrenched in their teaching and was widely held in that day (see John 9.1-4). They not only taught that sickness arose from sin, but also suffering cleansed that sin. (Edersheim 3.16) Jesus did not subscribe to that view. However sin will and does cause suffering of all

kinds, physical mental and spiritual, depending on the nature of the act. But because a person is suffering does not mean that the condition is necessarily the direct result of sin.

In this instance however he attributed the suffering as the result of sin. His response was kindly and appropriate. First he saw the fear in the eyes of the patient and sought to put him at ease "Son, be of good cheer." Matthew 9.2

Second he gave him the reason, "your sins are forgiven you." Note that this is passive, spoken in the perfect tense. It was a completed act done for him. Forgiven means 'to leave'. His sins had already been removed from him.

The quiet resentment of the Scribes.

The scribes and Pharisees began reasoning this out. This word 'reason' means to 'calculate through' the implication of what they had seen and heard. It went something like;

'This man is making a declaration about remitting the patient's sin. He is speaking as if he has an authority which belongs to God alone. No mere man has the right to assume the authority of God and to speak on His behalf. Alternatively, he is taking the place of God, acting as if he were God. He is by these words claiming an equality with God. Whichever it is, it is blasphemy'.

Jesus did not give them the opportunity to voice the contempt. He answered their thoughts, but He did not remove the resentment festering in their hearts.

The extraordinary ability of the Saviour.

Consider what Jesus said and did. He: Knew the case history of the young man before him. John 2.25 Acted for the patient based on the faith of the group v20. James 5.14 Told him that his sins had already been forgiven v20. Knew what the scribes were thinking v22.

He did not correct their assumption of his claim to equality with God. He commanded the patient to do what was formerly impossible v24. He was healing because God's power had come on Him for healing v17.

How could Jesus do these things? He could do them, because He was God's perfect man. He was man as God intended that man should be. Note what John 14.10 says:

Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own authority; but the Father who dwells in me does his works.

Here Jesus tells us that it was God in Him doing these things just as it was God in Him instructing as He taught: So Jesus answered them, "My teaching is not mine, but his who sent me; John 7.16

Jesus also taught that this is the principle by which those who would follow Him must also live. John 17.18 Just as Jesus lived in dependence on the One who was in Him, so we must live in dependence on Jesus who is in us. See John 15.4 & 20.21.

You shall know that I am in my Father and ye in me, and I in you. John 14.20

Welcome

Glen Park Gospel Church

Lower Road, Eltham North

Sundays 10.30 am

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