

The Power to Forgive and Heal

Key Verse: *“I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy bed, and go thy way into thine house.”*

—*Mark 2:11*

Selected Scripture:
Mark 2:1-12

THE EVENTS RECORDED

in today’s lesson took place in the early part of Jesus’ ministry, during which it is said that he visited towns “throughout all Galilee,” and even “in desert places.” (Mark 1:39-45) In these places he preached the message of God’s long-promised coming kingdom, which he proclaimed to be nigh at hand. (vs. 15) He

also healed the sick and infirmed, which resulted in great crowds following him wherever he went.

On the occasion of our lesson, Jesus had entered Capernaum, and while dwelling in a house there, a large crowd of people gathered, and he preached to them. (Mark 2:1,2) Among the multitude was a man, “sick of the palsy,” who was carried to Jesus on his bed by four people, in the hope that he might be healed.—vss. 3,4

Upon seeing the situation unfold before him, “Jesus saw their faith, he said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, thy sins be forgiven thee.” (vs. 5) A few scribes who were in the crowd, “reasoning in their hearts,” thought that Jesus had spoken blasphemy, believing that only God had the power to forgive sins. Jesus read their thoughts and responded to them by pointing out that to say, “Thy sins be forgiven thee,” was easier than saying,

“Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk,” because the latter would require visual confirmation that it had occurred. Thus, if he had the power to heal, he also had the power to forgive sins. (vss. 6-10) Jesus then immediately commanded the man to arise, take up his bed, and walk. “He arose, took up the bed, and went forth before them all.”—vss. 11,12

Our Lord healed the sick to foreshadow the great work of his Millennial reign, to establish his authority as Israel’s Messiah, and to manifest his love and sympathy toward all. For the followers of Jesus, both then and now, there is additionally the lesson of faith. The stricken man, and those who brought him to Jesus, had faith that he would be healed to such a degree that they carefully lowered him on his bed from the roof into the house to be near Jesus. (vs. 4) Paul states the vital importance of faith very succinctly, saying, “without faith it is impossible” to please God.—Heb. 11:6

On another occasion Jesus gave an example of the importance of having a strong faith when he healed a woman who had been stricken with disease for twelve years. (Matt. 9:20-22; Luke 8:43-48) In simple faith, she came to him. She was so assured of his power that even as the multitudes thronged around Jesus, she said, “If I may but touch his garment, I shall be whole.” Doing so, she was immediately cured, and Jesus knew that healing power had gone out from him. His words to her, “thy faith hath made thee whole,” show the close relationship between faith and healing.

Although the healing work of Jesus brought many blessings to those who, in faith, believed in his power and authority, these were only temporary blessings, benefitting but a few. The great work of the coming Messianic kingdom, however, will bring permanent healing of all diseases—physical, mental and moral—to all of mankind who, in faith, believe and obey from the heart God’s righteous laws.—Ps. 103:2-5 ■