

**“Lessons from the Miracles of Christ”:
Healing the Paralytic**

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by W. S. Sadler

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Sources for Healing the Paralytic, in the order in which they first appear

- (1) Wm. Arnold Stevens and Ernest DeWitt Burton, *A Harmony of the Gospels for Historical Study: An Analytical Synopsis of the Four Gospels in the Version of 1881* (Boston: Silver, Burdett and Company, 1893)

- (2) Charles Haddon Spurgeon, “Sitting By” (1887)

Note: Spurgeon delivered this sermon in London on May 29, 1887 and it was published in Vol. 33 of *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit* (1888). I have been unable to access this volume, so have used *The Treasury of Spurgeon on the Life and Work of Our Lord, Vol. IV, The Miracles of Our Lord, 2*, published by Baker Book House in 1979. This source is coded **Spurgeon1.**

- (3) Charles Hadden Spurgeon, “The Gospel’s Healing Power” (1866)

Note: Spurgeon delivered this sermon in London on Nov. 11, 1866 and it was published in Vol. 12 of *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit* (1867). This source is coded **Spurgeon2.**

- (4) William M. **Taylor**, D.D., LL.D., *The Miracles of Our Saviour, Expounded and Illustrated* (New York: A.C. Armstrong & Son, 1891)

- (5) Charles Haddon Spurgeon, “Carried by Four” (1871)

Note: Spurgeon delivered this sermon in London on Mar. 19, 1871 and it was published in Vol. 17 of *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit* (1872). This source is coded **Spurgeon3.**

- (6) Charles Haddon Spurgeon, “The Physician Pardons His Palsied Patient” (1889)

Note: Spurgeon delivered this sermon in London on Oct. 3, 1889 and it was published in Vol. 39 of *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit* (1890). This source is coded **Spurgeon4**.

Key

- (a) **Green** indicates where a source author first appears, or where he/she reappears.
- (b) **Yellow** highlights most parallelisms.
- (c) **Tan** highlights parallelisms not occurring on the same row, or parallelisms separated by yellowed parallelisms.
- (d) An underlined word or words indicates where the source and the Sadlers pointedly differ from one another.
- (e) **Light blue** indicates a passage which anticipates something in the Urantia Book.
- (f) **Red** indicates an obvious mistake.
- (g) **Gold** points out words and themes that will be treated in a later discussion.

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HEALING THE PARALYTIC

INTRODUCTORY

0.1 *Preceding Events*.—It would appear that Christ’s work was temporarily hindered by the misdirected zeal of the leper who was cleansed. The record says he “could no more openly enter into the city, but was without in desert places.” Mark 1:45. After some time spent in thus teaching the people who came to him, it seems that he returned to his own city, Capernaum, by way of boat. Matt. 9:1. Soon after his return to Capernaum this, the seventh miracle, was performed.

[*Note*: Matthew and Mark are used as much as Luke.]

0.2 *Main Reference*.—Luke 5:17-26.

0.3 *Other References*.—Matt. 9:2-8; Mark 2:1-12.

0.4 *The Bible Story of the Miracle*.—

XIII: GROWING HOSTILITY OF THE
 SCRIBES AND PHARISEES. (*A Harmony
 of the Gospels* 49)

§41. THE PARALYTIC BORNE OF FOUR.
 Matt. 9:[1]2-8. Mark 2:1-12. Luke 5:17-26.

Luke 5:17 And it came to pass on one of those days, that he was teaching; and there were Pharisees and doctors of the law sitting by, which [ARV. txt.: who] were come out of every village of Galilee and Judæa and Jerusalem; and the power of the Lord was with him to heal.

Matt. 9:1 And he entered into a bat, and crossed over, and came into his own city.

“And it came to pass on one of those days, that he was teaching; and there were Pharisees and doctors of the law sitting by, who were come out of every village of Galilee and Judea and Jerusalem; and the power of the Lord was with him to heal.

And he entered into a boat, and crossed over, and came into his own city.

SOURCE

Mark 2:1 And when he entered again into Capernaum after some days, it was noised that he was in the house.

2 And many were gathered together, so that there was no longer room *for them*, no, not even about the door: and he spake the word unto them.

[Matt. 9:[3] And behold,]

3 And they come, bringing unto him a man sick of the palsy,

[Matt. 9:[3] lying on a bed,]

borne of four.

Luke 5:[18] and they sought to bring him in, and to lay him before him.

[19] And not finding by what *way* they might bring him in because of the multitude, they went up to the housetop, and

Mark 2:[4] uncovered the roof where he was: and when they had broken it up,

Luke 5:[19] and let him down through the tiles with the couch into the midst before Jesus.

Mark 2:[5] And Jesus seeing their faith saith unto the sick of the palsy, Son,

Matt. 9:[2] Son, be of good cheer;

Luke 5:[20] thy sins are forgiven thee.

Mark 2:[6] But there were certain of the scribes

[Luke 5:[21] and the Pharisees]

sitting there

“LESSONS FROM THE MIRACLES OF CHRIST”

And when he entered again into Capernaum, after some days, it was noised that he was in the house.

And many were gathered together, so that there was no longer room for them, no, not even about the door; and he spake the word unto them.

And behold

they come, bringing unto him a man sick of the palsy,

lying on a bed,

borne of four;

and they sought to bring him in and lay him before him.

And not finding by what way they might bring him in because of the multitude, they went up to the housetop, and

uncovered the roof where he was; and when they had broken it up,

they let him down through the tiles with his couch, into the midst before Jesus.

And Jesus, seeing their faith, said unto the sick of the palsy,

Son, be of good cheer;

thy sins are forgiven thee.

But there were certain of the scribes

and the Pharisees

sitting there

SOURCE	“ LESSONS FROM THE MIRACLES OF CHRIST”
Luke 5:[21] began	who began
Mark 2:[6] reasoning in their hearts,	reasoning in their hearts,
Luke 5:[21] saying	saying
Matt. 9:[3] within themselves,	within themselves,
Luke 5:[21] Who is this that speaketh blasphemies?	Who is this that speaketh blasphemies?
Mark 2:7 Why doth this man thus speak? he blasphemeth: who can forgive sins but one, <i>even</i> God?	Why doth this man thus speak? He blasphemeth; who can forgive sins but one, even God?
[8] And straightway Jesus,	And straightway, Jesus,
Matt. 9:[4] knowing their thoughts,	knowing their thoughts,
Mark 2:[8] and perceiving in his spirit that they so reasoned within themselves, saith unto them,	and perceiving in his spirit that they so reasoned within themselves, saith unto them,
[Matt. 9:[4] Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts?]	Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts?
Why reason ye these things in your hearts;	Why reason ye these things in your hearts;
Matt. 9:[5] For whether is easier, to say	for whether is easier, to say
Mark 2:[9] to the sick of the palsy,	to the sick of the palsy,
Luke 5:[23] Thy sins are forgiven thee;	Thy sins are forgiven thee,
Mark 2:[9] or to say, Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk?	or to say, Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk?
Matt. 9:6 But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power [ARV. txt.: authority] on earth to forgive sins,	But that ye may know that the Son of man hath authority on earth to forgive sins,
(then saith he to the sick of the palsy),	
[Luke 5:[24] I say unto thee,]	I say unto thee,

SOURCE

“LESSONS FROM THE MIRACLES OF CHRIST”

Arise, and take up thy bed, and go unto thy house.

Arise, and take up thy bed, and go unto thy house.

Luke 5:[25] And immediately he rose up before them,

And immediately he rose up before them,

Mark 2:[12] and straightway took up the bed,

and straightway took up the bed

[Luke 5:[25] whereon he lay,]

whereon he lay,

and went forth before them all;

and went forth before them all,

Luke 5:[25] and departed to his house, glorifying God.

and departed to his house, glorifying God.

Matt. 9:[8] But when the multitudes saw it, there were afraid,

But when the multitudes saw it, they were afraid,

Luke 5:[26] And amazement took hold on all, and they glorified God;

and amazement took hold on all, and they glorified God,

Matt. 9[8] which [ARV. txt.: who] had given such power [ARV. txt.: authority] unto men.

who had given such authority unto men,

Mark 2:[26] saying, We never saw it on this fashion.

saying, We never saw it on this fashion.

Luke 5:[26] and they were filled with fear, saying, We have seen strange things to-day.

And they were filled with fear, saying, We have seen strange things to-day.”

(The foregoing is an interwoven story of the miracle, gathered from Luke 5:17-26; Matt. 9:2-8; and Mark 2:1-12, but told in the language of the Bible.)

0.5 *Place*.—Capernaum.

0.6 *Circumstances*.—Christ’s first tour of Galilee was apparently cut short by the leper’s disobedience. He returned by boat to Capernaum. It soon became known that he was in the city, and vast throngs gathered about the house, to listen to his gracious words.

It was during such a meeting that the paralytic, the subject of this miracle, was brought to the Saviour by four friends. When they could not readily bring him to the Master’s notice, owing to the crowd, they ascended to the top of the house, and tearing up the roof, let the afflicted man down into the immediate presence of Jesus. In healing the paralytic, Christ spoke the simple sentence: “Son, thy sins are forgiven.” Afterward he instructed the man to take up his bed and go home.

0.7 *Great Lesson*.—The great lesson taught by this miracle is Christ’s power and right to forgive sin. The readiness with which he took hold of this man’s case shows his willingness to forgive sin. His words addressed to the scribes establish his right to forgive sin. And the miracle itself demonstrates his power to forgive sin. The same power that can heal the physical paralytic can also heal the spiritual paralytic, the one who is even dead in trespasses and sins.

STUDY OF THE MIRACLE

1.1 *Pharisees and Doctors of the Law Sitting By*.—

“SITTING BY” (Spurgeon 233)

I. Let our first head answer the enquiry—WHAT WERE THESE PEOPLE DOING? They were “sitting by” (S1 235).

It was written of the Pharisees and scribes that they were sitting by.

They were curious to know what Jesus was doing; but while they were thus

First, *they were indulging their curiosity* (S1 235).

seeking to satisfy *their curiosity*,

II. Secondly, let us enquire WHAT WAS HAPPENING WHILE THESE PERSONS WERE “SITTING BY”? ...

Well, first, *they were incurring responsibility* (S1 237).

Besides that, *they were gathering hardness of heart* (S1 237).

they were *incurring responsibilities* of the most solemn sort;

and, failing to walk in the light which they could not but see,

they eventually *hardened their hearts*

to the extent that they became the willing murderers of the Son of God.

1.2 The Power of the Lord Was Present to Heal.—

“THE GOSPEL’S HEALING POWER”
(Spurgeon2 221)

II. A second remark arises from the text; THERE ARE SPECIAL PERIODS WHEN THE POWER TO HEAL IS MOST MANIFESTLY DISPLAYED. (S2 226)

Observe .. that the healing power was conspicuously present when *Christ was teaching.*

Note carefully the favoured hour, “when he was *teaching* in a certain place” (S2 227).

It will be observed that this occasion, when the power of the Lord was present to heal the people, was immediately preceded by a time of *teaching;*

for it is written that

“Jesus was in a certain place teaching,” etc.

It was while the waters were stirred, so to speak, that the friends of the sick recognized the opportunity of leading them to Christ.

The power of the Lord is present to heal all the time. Divine power is healing power. Wherever God is, there is a healing, life-giving influence. The power of God is present in man as a healing force. When the sick recover, it is because the power of God has been present to heal them. By the intelligent use of water, air, exercise, and, diet, we may greatly influence and co-operate with this healing power within the body.

III. Passing on to a third thought, we observe, that WHEN THE POWER OF THE LORD IS PRESENT TO HEAL, IT MAY NOT BE SEEN IN ALL, BUT MAY BE SHOWN IN SPECIAL CASES AND NOT IN OTHERS. (S2 228)

[*Compare:* ... I have tried, if I could, to make the text mean that the Pharisees and doctors of the law were present, and that the power of the Lord was present to heal *them*. But the text does not so teach us; the power of the Lord was not present to heal the doctors and Pharisees, for they were not healed (S2 228-29).]

The power of God was present to heal on this occasion, but the Pharisees were not healed.

So the mighty healing power within soul and body will avail us nothing unless we yield prompt and willing obedience to the precepts of spiritual and physical law, and thus intelligently co-operate with the divine power and intelligence according to the light we have received.

W. S. SADLER

HEALING THE PARALYTIC II

2.1 *Behold, Men Brought in a Bed a Man.*—

VIII: THE CURE OF THE PARALYTIC.
(Taylor 122)

[F]irst of all, we may learn that though we cannot become the saviours of our friends,

we may yet be serviceable in bringing them to Jesus, who alone can save them (T 129).

We can not heal disease, either physical or spiritual,

but we can help the afflicted one to come into harmony with Christ, who dwells within the man, and whose presence is a healing power.

As Christian workers and medical missionaries, we can help him over the transgressions, doubts, and despair, which may intervene between the sufferer and the fount of healing. Like the four helpers of the paralytic, we may tear away the roof that separates from Christ, and otherwise assist the sufferer in coming into the presence of the Healer.

2.2 *Could Not Bring Him because of the Multitude.*—This is but another instance of the idle Christian standing in the way of the earnest seeker after Christ. It was the multitude that stood idly by, beholding the wonders of the Saviour, that kept this earnest seeker away from the Master's side. When we stand near the Saviour, let us remember that we are there not for the purpose of keeping others away from him, but that when we see the repentant sinner even a great way off, we should esteem it not only our duty but also our privilege to bring him quickly into the Saviour's presence.

Let him reach Christ by our help, and not in spite of our presence.

2.3 *They Went upon the Housetop, and Let Him Down.*—

“CARRIED BY FOUR” (Spurgeon³ 209)

I. THERE ARE CASES WHICH WILL NEED THE AID OF A LITTLE BAND OF WORKERS BEFORE THEY WILL BE FULLY SAVED. (S3 211)

[contd] This man must needs be borne of four, so the evangelist, Mark tells us;

there must be a bearer at each corner of the couch whereon he lay (S3 211).

It required four willing men to get the sick man into the presence of the Healer,—

one at each corner of his cot.

So, in leading souls to Christ, we find that very often more than one person is needed to accomplish the work. There must be co-operation among Christians in leading men out of physical and spiritual darkness and ignorance into his marvelous light. There must be co-operation between the many societies and agencies within the church if we would meet with the greatest success in the work of saving souls and promulgating truth.

II. We now pass on the second observation, that SOME CASES THUS TAKEN UP WILL NEED MUCH THOUGHT BEFORE THE DESIGN IS ACCOMPLISHED. (S3 213)

In some cases the way to impress the heart may be an out-of-the-way way, an extraordinary way—a way which ordinarily should not be used and would not be successful (S3 213).

2.4 Extraordinary and unusual methods are sometimes justified by the urgency of getting a soul into the presence of the Master,

and so the friends of the paralytic were undoubtedly justified in tearing up the roof in their efforts to bring the sick one to the Master’s notice.

And to-day **Christian workers** may often recognize the necessity for employing unconventional and unusual methods in their efforts to enlighten sinners, reclaim the lost, and uplift the fallen. Is not the emergency of a soul perishing enough to arouse the moral ingenuity of **Christian workers**, and so stir their activities as to lead them to accomplish by extraordinary methods that which they are unable to perform through the usual channels of Christian endeavor?

2.5 *Thy Sins Are Forgiven.*—Before healing the man of his paralysis, Jesus forgave his sins, thus illustrating how, in his healing, he always worked by first removing the cause. It was sin, directly or indirectly, that was responsible for the man’s physical condition. “Be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee,” are the first comforting words the Master speaks to the paralytic who has been so strangely lowered into his presence through a hole in the roof, and this is the message of divine love to every soul suffering from the effects of moral paralysis,—dead in trespasses and sins. “Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest,” the Master says.

2.6 There is a **great lesson** in perseverance in connection with the working of this miracle. The paralytic and his friends were willing to tear up the house and sacrifice anything to reach the feet of Jesus. Living faith is real. You can see it. It produces visible results.

W. S. SADLER.
(*Concluded next week.*)

HEALING THE PARALYTIC III (Concluded)

3.1 *Who Can Forgive Sins!*—

VIII: THE CURE OF THE PARALYTIC.
(Taylor 122)

The Pharisees said, “Why doth this man thus speak blasphemies? who can forgive sins but God only?”

[The Scribes and doctors] started with a right principle,

This is an instance of the kind of reasoning that starts out right,

but they made a wrong application of it, and drew a wrong inference from it.

but ends wrong.

They were correct in thinking that no one can forgive sins but God:

Their first inference—that no one but God could forgive sins—was right.

but, it did not follow from that premise that the Lord Jesus, in announcing that the sins of this man had been forgiven,

But it did not necessarily follow that because Jesus had forgiven sins,

was guilty of blaspheming God ... (T 126).

therefore he was a blasphemer;

For there were two other possibilities in the case of which they failed to take account. It might be that Jesus was a divinely accredited messenger, commissioned by God to make this declaration in his name ...; or again he might be, as indeed he was, Incarnate God himself;

for he was God,—Immanuel; God with us; God dwelling in human flesh.

and in that case, he had the full prerogative which here he claimed to exercise (T 126).

SOURCE

But that ye may know that the Son of Man hath authority on earth to forgive sins, he saith to the sick of the palsy, I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy bed, and go thy way into thine house” (T 127).

If this poor man had waited until he felt Christ’s strength in him as a thing separate from his own, he never would have been cured of his paralysis. But he made the volition to arise, and in the making of that he received strength to carry it through.

If, therefore, there should be any one here to-night who is caught and detained in this eddy whirlpool of “waiting for the Spirit, let him see from the parable of this miracle how foolish he is (T 131-32).

“LESSONS FROM THE MIRACLES OF CHRIST”

“But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power upon earth to forgive sins (he said unto the sick of the palsy), I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy couch, and go into thine house.” Luke 5:24.

The Son of man had power on earth to forgive sins, and so to-day it is the same Jesus that is on earth in every man, who has power to forgive the sinner, and free him from the bondage of his sin.

3.2 *Arise, Take up Thy Couch.*—

The man was commanded to take up his bed and walk. To receive power to do this was the very thing for which he had come to Christ. He received the power in obeying the Master’s command.

In making the attempt to obey, the necessary strength was supplied.

A great object-**lesson** is here of

the disaster of continually **waiting for the gift of the Spirit,**

or for any other blessing that man needs, and God is willing to bestow.

Heaven often asks of us the apparently impossible. It would seem that God sometimes bids us do that which we are unable to perform; and so it was in the healing of the paralytic. He was told to rise up and walk. And yet this was the very thing he was unable to do. It was his willingness to obey the Master's word that empowered him to do the thing commanded; and so with the soul dead in trespasses and sins: the one who is suffering from spiritual paralysis, the one who has sinned against light, the one who has stifled the conscience, may be asked to “arise and shine;” and it is according to the willingness with which he yields obedience that the necessary strength is supplied; for it is written, “If there be first a willing mind, it is accepted.”

3.3 *Go into Thine House. And Immediately He Rose Up.*—

The Saviour did not send the man, after he had been healed, to some great audience to tell of the miracle that had been wrought upon him. He directed the man to go home; and in obedience to the Master's instructions, he went.

“THE PHYSICIAN PARDONS HIS PALSIED PATIENT” (Spurgeon⁴ 187)

IV. After having thus declared his commission, let us note, in the fourth place, that JESUS EXHIBITED HIS CREDENTIALS. (S4 193)

And, last of all, *the best evidence is always seen at home:*

The *greatest evidences* of conversion and a real change of life are to be *found in the home* and the home life of the Christian.

“Take up thy bed, and go unto thine house” (S4 196).

I think, also, that *the detailed obedience that the Saviour required was the best evidence that he had forgiven the man's sin:*

“Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house” (S4 195).

One who is not a Christian at home can not expect to be one away from home.

The great evidence that the paralytic had been forgiven, and that he actually appreciated his forgiveness, is found in his unquestioning and immediate obedience;

for no sooner had the Master said,

“Arise, and take up thy couch, and go into thine house,”

than we find the man on his feet starting toward home.

3.4 An evidence of the spiritual healing of the paralytic is found in his implicit obedience. He carried out the Master's instructions to the letter. He did not wait until the day of miracles and wonders was over before going home; neither did he tarry to occupy much time in thanking the Master, or to tell the multitude of the wonders which had been wrought in his case. He went home at once, carrying his bed, as the Master had directed.

The people said, “We never saw it on this fashion.” Truly the work of Jesus was to bring new ways of doing and thinking, and so conversion marks the time when men and women begin to do things according to the *new fashion*. Thinking, eating, dressing, and acting will then be done according to the fashion of true principle and the glory of God, instead of according to this world's fashion, which results in the defilement of body, soul, and spirit.

W. S. SADLER