

Mount Zion A.M.E. Church of New Brunswick, NJ
03/10/2024

By Paul T. Bennett Church School Superintendent

Examining Our Faith

The Measure of Faith

Faith of Four Friends

Luke 5:17 – 26

04/07/2024

Background

- Mark is the earliest Gospel and one of the earliest books of the New Testament (A.D. 55-59)
- The Gospels of Luke and Matthew mirror Mark in many accounts identical to it. This is why Mark, Luke and Matthew are called '**The Synoptic Gospels**'

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Background

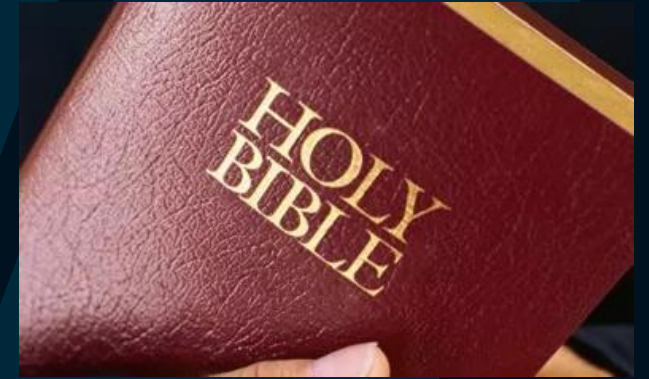
- Today's lessons is also recorded in **Matthew 9:2-8** and **Mark 2:1-12**

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Lesson Text

LUKE 5:17 (NKJV)

¹⁷ Now it happened on a certain day, as He was teaching, that there were Pharisees and teachers of the law sitting by, who had come out of every town of Galilee, Judea, and Jerusalem. And the power of the Lord was present [a]to heal them.

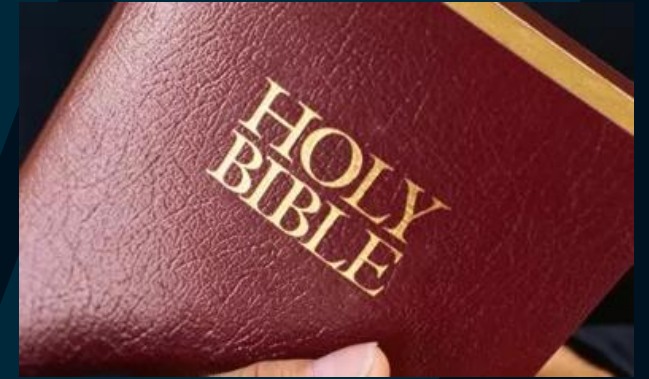


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Lesson Text

LUKE 5:18 (NKJV)

18 Then behold, men brought on a bed a man who was paralyzed, whom they sought to bring in and lay before Him.

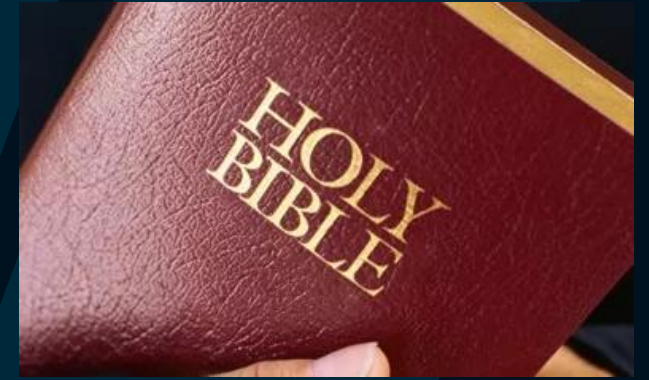


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Lesson Text

LUKE 5:19 (NKJV)

¹⁹ And when they could not find how they might bring him in, because of the crowd, they went up on the housetop and let him down with his bed through the tiling into the midst before Jesus.



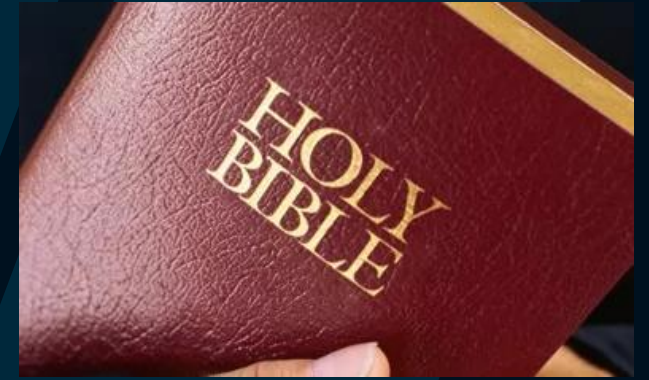
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Lesson Text

LUKE 5:20 – 21 (NKJV)

²⁰ When He saw **their** faith, He said to him, **“Man, your sins are forgiven you.”**

²¹ And the scribes and the Pharisees began to reason, saying, “Who is this who speaks blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God alone?”



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Commentary: Faith of Others

- One's personal faith is an essential part of one's spiritual growth. It should not be neglected
- There are times however when one's faith can stand in the gap for another's. It is still not the weaker one's faith to use, but the stronger one's faith to exercise

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Commentary: Faith Overcomes

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- The overwhelming crowd
- The friends could have easily consoled their friend and say they tried to get to Jesus, but it was too much for them

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Commentary: Faith Overcomes

- True faith however is PERSISTENT (**Hebrews 11:6**) and can overcome obstacles.
- Faith seeks solutions
- Faith finds alternatives
- Faith asks questions
- Faith is not easily defeated

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Commentary: Unexpected Gift

- The four men came to Jesus in hopes of receiving healing for their friend (as well as the one who had leprosy)
- While we may ask, God knows what is best for us and may give us something unexpected.

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Commentary: Unexpected Gift

- The Apostle Paul asked for his 'thorn' to be removed, but God had a greater purpose (**2 Corinthians 12**)
- While physical healing is a great gift, the greater gift is the healing of the spirit, because flesh and blood may perish, but the soul lives on (**Ps. 23:6; Ecclesiastes 12:7; Matthew 25:46**)

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Commentary: Unexpected Gift

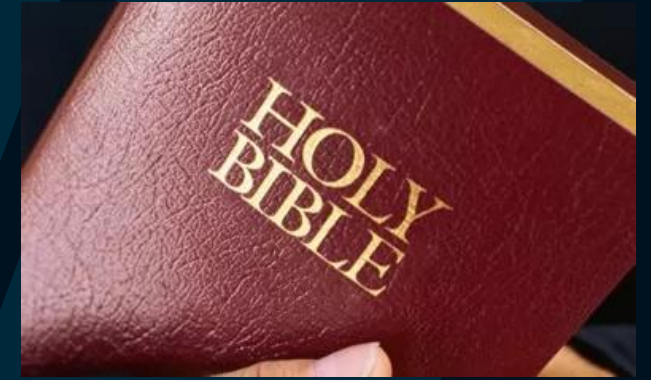
- Can we be content with what God decides to give us?
 - James 4:14 – 15

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Lesson Text

LUKE 5:22 – 23 (NKJV)

²² But when Jesus perceived their thoughts, He answered and said to them, “Why are you reasoning in your hearts? ²³ Which is easier, to say, ‘Your sins are forgiven you,’ or to say, ‘Rise up and walk’?”

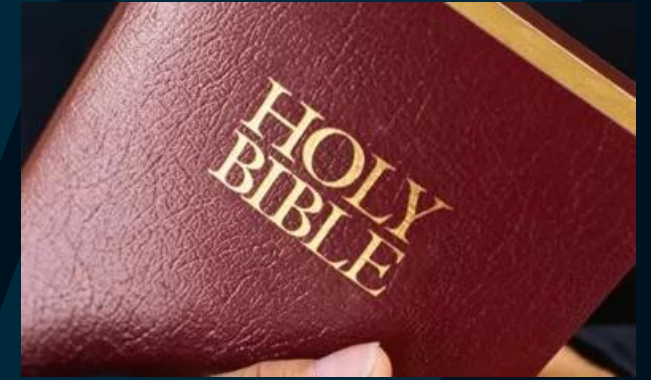


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Lesson Text

LUKE 5:24 (NKJV)

24 But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins" —He said to the man who was paralyzed, "I say to you, arise, take up your bed, and go to your house."

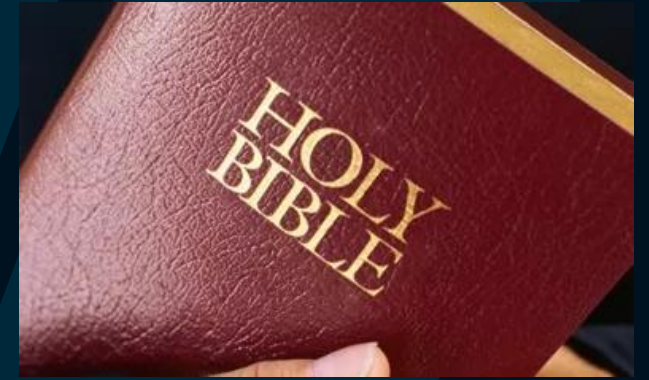


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Lesson Text

LUKE 5:25 (NKJV)

25 Immediately he rose up before them, took up what he had been lying on, and departed to his own house, glorifying God.

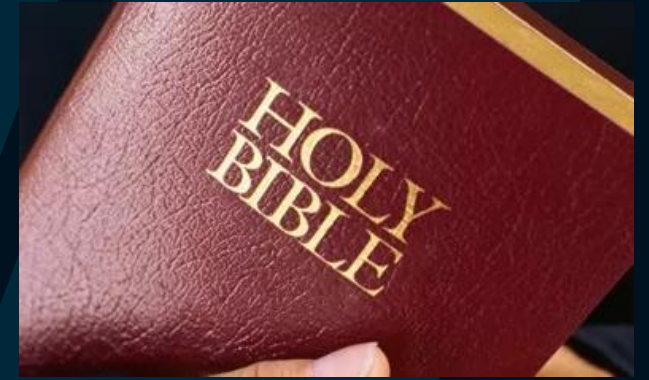


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Lesson Text

LUKE 5:26 (NKJV)

²⁶ And they were all amazed, and they glorified God and were filled with fear, saying, "We have seen strange things today!"



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Commentary: An Exercise of Authority

- The question of 'Which is easier' is difficult for humans to answer:
- For the Pharisees, saying your sins are forgiven may be easier to say, because it cannot be proven. A priest may say it, but do they have authority?

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Commentary: An Exercise of Authority

- Knowing the hearts of the Pharisees, Jesus used a miracle that they could see and could not do, to confirm His authority to do what they could not see – which was to forgive sins.
- Jesus understood that for some, they needed signs and wonders to believe (John 4:46 – 48)

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Commentary: An Exercise of Authority

- Similar authority was practiced by the Apostles (**2 Corinthians 12:12**)
- But for the wicked and those of dishonest intent, signs and wonders will never suffice (**Matthew 12:38-39**)

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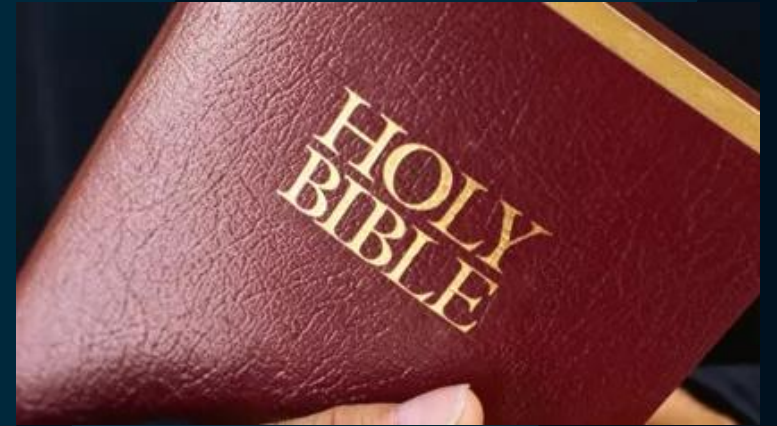
Commentary: Epilogue

- In the end, everyone received what they needed:
 - The four friend's faith rewarded
 - The paralyzed man received his TRUE healing
 - The Pharisees received the testimony of Jesus' authority

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Scripture References



Matthew 7:7-12
Ask, Seek, Knock

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Church School Creed

Our Church School must grow & grow
And we must help to make it so
Every member a Christian
Every Christian a worker
Every worker trained
A worker that will not be ashamed
This we ask in Jesus' name

-AMEN

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Church School Benediction

We have come

We have studied

We have learned

So until our next coming together

To study God's word

May His rich blessings reside with you

And may His Grace be eternally yours

-AMEN