

Service for Week 10th -16th Feb 2025

By Chaplain Andy



Our Opening Prayer.

Lord Jesus Christ, touch our hearts with your healing forgiveness, and put a new heart and spirit within us so that we may truly love you and faithfully serve you. **Amen**

Say to yourself The Lord's Prayer

Our Father who art in heaven,
hallowed be Thy name.....

Amen

Bible Reading Lk 5:17-26

One day as he was teaching, Pharisees and teachers of the law, who had come from every village of Galilee and from Judea and Jerusalem, were sitting there. And the power of the Lord was present for him to heal the sick.

Some men came carrying a paralytic on a mat and tried to take him into the house to lay him before Jesus. When they could not find a way to do this because of the crowd, they went up on the roof and lowered him on his mat through the tiles into the middle of the crowd, right in front of Jesus. When Jesus saw their faith, he said, "Friend, your sins are forgiven."

The Pharisees and the teachers of the law began thinking to themselves, "Who is this fellow who speaks

blasphemy? Who can forgive sins but God alone?" Jesus knew what they were thinking and asked, "Why are you thinking these things in your hearts? Which is easier: to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up and walk'? But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins. . . ." He said to the paralyzed man, "I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home."

Immediately he stood up in front of them, took what he had been lying on and went home praising God. Everyone was amazed and gave praise to God. They were filled with awe and said, "We have seen remarkable things today."

Holy words, Holy wisdom,
Thanks be to God.

Reflection

Our reading today is a dramatic account of something that happened as Jesus went from village to village preaching and teaching. A great number of people had heard by word of mouth about Jesus. They had heard that he was not only a great teacher but also a healer of the sick. It is not only in the gospels that we read about Jesus because the Jewish historian Josephus (writing around AD 93–94) while not mentioning specific miracles, wrote that Jesus performed "surprising deeds".

Jesus' reputation meant that wherever he went a great crowd of people turned out to see him, often bringing their sick friends or relatives with them.

On this occasion in our reading the family of a man who was paralysed were so determined to get near to Jesus they made a hole in the roof, to let the man down on his bed, in the hope that Jesus would heal him. Anyone of us who has a relative or friend who is sick or disabled in any way can understand the emotions that those relatives must have felt at the time. But what was their motivation for the dramatic and potentially dangerous action that they took to get the man near to Jesus, because a large amount of debris must have fallen on the crowd below when they removed the roof.

Jesus recognises what prompted them to take such drastic action and make a hole in the roof – it was the faith of that person and his friends. Jesus said to the man lying on the bed let down from the roof. "Friend, your sins are forgiven." and in healing him tells him to take up his mat and go home. There was at the time, in that culture the mistaken belief that physical sickness or disability was a punishment by God because of the sin previously committed by the person or their ancestors. This idea is totally wrong and I believe what Jesus is saying is not implying this. Instead, what Jesus was clearly demonstrating was that he had the power and authority of God to forgive sins, and demonstrates this power to the people there through his healing.

The message that this account which is recorded not only in Luke but also in Mathew's and Mark's gospels is that

through faith God offers each one of us forgiveness for our sins and wrongdoing. Often our mistakes in life can stay on our minds and affect our wellbeing, especially when there is no opportunity to put right the things we have done wrong in the past. Sometimes those things can seriously affect our mental health and even in some cases affect our physical health.

God, through our faith, offers us total forgiveness for our sins and past mistakes. His love and forgiveness for each one of us is freely given – what is sometimes called his 'grace'. We don't have to say any special words or prayer to receive God's forgiveness we only have to recognise our wrongdoing and to truly acknowledge the fact to ourselves that we have made mistakes. We should also put right the wrong we have done, but only if that is possible to achieve, and to be determined not to repeat our wrong actions ever again.

I know from my own experience that if you do that and are totally sincere about it then you will feel the power and love of God's forgiveness. It is like a breath of fresh air blowing through, lifting our minds and our spirit. It is metaphorically if not physically 'taking up our mat and walking' **Amen.**

Closing Prayer

Loving God, when I do wrong give me the courage to acknowledge it before you and others, so that I may know your forgiveness and open a way to the healing of the wounds my mistakes have caused.

Amen

Prayers inspired by Prayerfully Yours by Nick Fawcett