

Faithful Servants & Sermon Critics

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Preacher: Rich Chasse

[0 : 00] Everybody take a look outside. It's raining.

So, yeah, it's not snowing. That's good.! But I do this on purpose because I want to start off by talking about distractions during the sermon. But, because distractions during the sermon are a part of, it's just natural.

Someone who is trained in public speaking knows how to deal with it. A lot of times they don't even really talk to you about it.

Like, for instance, I've never had a class in what they call homiletics, which is how to preach. I've had a lot of Bible training, but none in preaching, which is interesting because preaching is a big part of what I do.

But along the years, I've read a number of books and gathered enough experience to know that when there is a distraction during the sermon, when the preacher has to decide, is the distraction big enough that he has to stop and recognize it?

[1 : 15] Or is it small enough that he can just kind of barrel through it? And then, just like, for instance, kids will sometimes, little babies will sometimes cry out or they get acting up and stuff like that.

And so you have to decide. And by the way, it is awesome when that happens. I consider it a wonderful thing when babies do that because that's a sign of life in the church, right?

What would you rather have? No babies crying at all? Or being active and stuff like that? Or a perfectly, you know, pristine, nobody says anything, nobody does, right?

Another one is someone that falls asleep during the sermon. It happens. Let me say, and I view this stuff differently than some others do, I suppose.

But I figure if someone is falling asleep during the sermon, it means they needed it. They need it. And if they're falling asleep during the sermon, that means I'm not doing my part to make it interesting enough for them to want to stay awake.

[2 : 30] So it could be a combination of they really need it or I'm just really boring. I remember I had a professor in seminary, Howard Hendricks, one of my favorites, who talked to, I mean, he basically was a pastor's pastor, pastor for pastors.

And he talked about how, basically, how dare you make the Bible boring? Because the last thing the Bible is, is boring. As we're going to see that today. It is not boring at all.

So don't you do that. Another thing that can happen, do you remember, I'm trying to figure out how many years ago you have to go back, 15, 20 years, where churches and almost any kind of public event, there would be a screen or there would be an announcement of, please silence your cell phone or some kind of device.

I'm guessing that was a pager of some sort, whatever, back when we had pagers. I think the pager business is bummed because it's like nobody carries a pager anymore. But anyway, that and watches and cameras and our phones do all of that stuff now.

But I remember we used to have a slide built in to all of our announcement slides. Please silence your device. Please silence your phone. You notice how we don't do that anymore? When did that go away?

[3 : 51] When did that stop becoming an issue? And I've been thinking about that this week in preparation for this. And I'm like, when did we have to stop saying, please? And don't you notice that it pretty much has gone away?

When's the last time we had someone's phone go off during the service? It's been a while, hasn't it? And it's like we didn't even think of it.

It just kind of silently went away. So we had, for me, I have to share my biggest distraction moment had to do with a phone.

We had a gentleman who visited here for a couple of weeks before he moved to Florida. And it's been enough years ago that probably most of you, I don't know if any of you remember, some of you may if you were here that long ago, kind of wore a sailor hat.

Older gentleman, getting ready to retire, moved to Florida. And for the couple of weeks that he came, sat right here, right in front of Doug. Probably before Doug came.

[4 : 57] Pre-Doug and Connie, okay. So he came and he sat right here. And it was just about the time where people were carrying cell phones and, you know, having to be reminded, right, to silence your phone before the service.

And I'm up here and I'm just doing my thing and I'm going away. And I've had a couple conversations with him previously about how he's getting ready to move to Florida. And then his phone rang.

And he had one of those classic phone rings. You know, somebody, I remember somebody's phone, they were sitting right on the back row, right up against the wall.

Tom, where's Tom? Tom Notewer, yeah. Is he still in the, he's hiding. He's in the cookies.

He knows better. Okay. Somebody, it was a teenager and his phone went off and it was like, hey, this is your phone and it's ringing right now.

[6 : 03] And it was, it was all, and it was right at a key point during the sermon. And it was like, wow. But this guy, his phone went off and, and it was so loud that, and he, you know, and it took him a while to get to it.

And so, since it's right up here, you know, if it's in the back, you can kind of ignore it for a little bit, you know, and kind of if the distraction is over here, they, you know, move over this way.

That's kind of, and then if someone is sleeping, they say move toward them. So, Dan, I'm coming to you. Someone, I'm kidding, Dan. Good to see you guys.

And, and so that's, that's how you do it. Kind of, kind of waking them up a little bit. Who over here was saying they don't want the camera to follow the preacher? Oh, I'm coming over here, Sue. So, you've got to be strategic.

So, the guy, the guy's phone goes off and it's right there and it's taking him a while. So, I'm, I'm just looking at him, you know, like, all right, what am I doing here? What am I going to do? What am I going to do?

[7 : 12] And then he answered it. And he's an older gentleman, so he's going to kind of talk a little bit louder than the average person.

You know, normally if someone's going to at least answer it, oh, I'm kind of, this was like, hello? Hello? Yeah, I'm coming to Florida. I mean, it was, it was a phone call about him moving to Florida.

And he's just going on with the conversation. And I, and I'm like, all right, they don't teach you how to deal with this in school. I don't remember a book having to deal with this.

What, what are you supposed to do? So, I just stood here like this and was like, oh, wouldn't have done me any good to go on with my sermon.

Anyway, he looked at me and then he realized, oh, he said, I got to go. And he hung up and you see, I'm still so old school, hanging up the gesture is this, right?

[8 : 13] You don't do that with a cell phone anymore. It's like the landline. So, you finally hung up and I'm, okay, I'm going to go on now. So, today's passage deals with what I would call the ultimate sermon distraction.

And, and the way that Jesus handles this is, is quite remarkable. And, and it's, it is a wonderful story. And so, we're going to dig right in.

Hopefully, you've got your notes and start right off with the text. This is Luke chapter 5, beginning in verse 17. This is the story of the healing of the paralytic man.

One of those days that Jesus was teaching in Galilee. Remember, this is well into his second year now of public ministry. He's very well known throughout the region.

He's got people traveling to come and hear him and for healing and all of this. And so, one of those days, Luke is, is making mention as he was, what's the word?

[9 : 22] All right. Three of you are listening to what I'm saying. As he was. That's a little better. Got up to like 50%, maybe 60% there. As he was.

Oh, I know. I'm going to drive you guys crazy today. That's what I'm here for. As he was teaching. This is the reason Jesus came.

This is what he was doing in his public ministry was to teach. So, the main goal of Jesus was to? Teach. All right. So, I've got about five or six of you got.

All right. The main goal of Jesus was to? Teach. Okay. At the end of his ministry, he's going to the cross. Okay. That's ultimately the reason he came, is to go to the cross, to pay the penalty for our sin, to rise again from the dead.

But during his public ministry, his main goal is to teach the word of God. And you see this throughout the gospels. Here in the study of Luke that we're doing, he taught in their synagogues.

[10 : 29] This is a statement that's happened multiple times throughout. I must preach. And sometimes you'll see the words preach and teach used in a synonymous way.

That's what's happening in this particular story. Mark, the gospel of Mark, uses the word preach. The gospel of Luke uses the word teach in our story today.

I must preach the good news of the kingdom of God to the other towns as well, for I was sent for this purpose. It was to teach. It was to preach, to proclaim the good news.

And even at the end of his ministry, this is just before he is going to be betrayed and crucified, every day he was what in the temple? What was he doing? Teaching in the temple.

But at night he went out and lodged at the mount called Olivet. So this is what he's doing.

[11 : 27] His main goal, the main goal of Jesus was to teach. Now, if you follow a God whose main goal is to teach, this is another thing they teach you when you're learning how to preach or teach, is emphasis, repeat, repeat, repeat.

So that's why you're going to write the word teach down twice. If you follow a God whose main goal is to teach, then our main goal should be to what? Oh, you guys are quick learners.

I like that. That's good. Okay. So keep that in mind as you read this story. Okay? Because for many of us, and what betrays us is our prayer life.

For many of us, what we think is the main goal of Jesus during the Gospels is the healing part, the miraculous part.

Okay? But remember, his main goal is to teach. Very good. Very good. All right. So one of those days as he was, oh, man, I'm losing you.

[12 : 33] I'm getting you back. I'm losing you. Okay. On one of those days as he was, you guys know that if you don't play along, we don't get very far in the sermon. That's good.

Now, notice who's coming to listen now. Now, Pharisees and teachers of the law, Luke's also going to later on mention scribes. These are, the Pharisees are religious slash political leaders among Israel.

And these would have been the ones that theologically would have been very much so aligned with Jesus. But in terms of living out their faith, they were pretty much into themselves.

They were hypocrites because they preached one thing and then lived another thing. They looked good. They sounded good on the outside. They looked religious.

They looked holy. But they lived. And underneath was, as Jesus would call, a whitewashed tomb. It was empty. It was dead. Then the teachers of the law, of the Pharisees and of the different religious sects among the Jews, some of them would be teachers.

[13 : 50] Scribes would be the people who were the note takers. They were the ones who were either taking the scriptures because they didn't have copiers and printing presses and all that stuff.

So they would take a copy of the scriptures. For them, it was the Old Testament, what we call the Old Testament. But they would take copies of the scriptures and they would make an identical handwritten copy of that.

And then when that one was done, they would take an original and then they would do it again. So it became very precious to have these copies, these scrolls, when they were finished, of the word of God.

But scribes were also like the chief note takers. So when they traveled, like in this instance, scribes would come along with the teachers and with the Pharisees and they would be the note takers because they were trying to catch Jesus in some sort of a contradiction as he taught.

Okay, so scribes, you're writing the notes down to see everything that Jesus is saying. Can we catch him in something that's contradictory to what Moses said or something along those lines?

[14 : 59] So the Pharisees and the teachers of the law were sitting there who had come from every village of Galilee and also from the south in Judea and even from Jerusalem.

So now this is getting to be a pretty big deal. So you've got these Pharisees, these teachers, they're in the... Jesus is in a house, someone's house.

And Jesus is sitting there, not standing. He's sitting there. The teachers would sit when they taught.

And don't you know that the leaders of the synagogues and the Pharisees and the scribes and these guys, they also would be seated as well.

And probably in the house, they probably had the best seats in the house. So you can imagine like the guy who owns the house, right? Let's call him Frank.

[16 : 00] We don't know his name. Luke doesn't... I mean, the Bible is already pretty long, right? Have you guys noticed that? It's a pretty long book.

But in this particular story, I'm like, Luke, come on, give me some more information here. He gives us what we need. But I want us to kind of put on a little bit of holy imagination here.

And just to try to relive what's going on here. So some of this is just like from the book of Rich, which don't take any notes on that. Don't, you know, it's not scripture.

But it's just an idea to kind of liven the story a little bit to make it that much more imprintable in our minds. So Frank's the homeowner. He's got a nice seat too.

And he's just there. And there's a crowd that has gathered there. And actually here before we get to that, the power of the Lord. This is an interesting statement that Luke makes back end of verse 17.

[17 : 03] The power of the Lord was with him to heal. So Luke lets us know two things. As he was teaching, the power for him to heal was with him.

Just so we all know what everybody's expectation was. Everybody's expectation is Jesus is going to heal. That's what he does. But then Luke is also saying, wait a minute.

As he was teaching. And as he's teaching. And even as he is going to perform this incredible miracle. When we get to that, it is an incredible miracle.

But even as he's performing the miracle, what he's doing is he's teaching. The miracle, the healing is secondary. What he's teaching through it is the primary point.

And Luke is reminding us of this. So the Lord understands why he's there. The crowd understands. The Pharisees, the teachers of the law, the scribes.

[18 : 07] And behold, some men were bringing on a bed. This is the English standard translation of the word. There's not a good English translation for this word.

You could use mat. You could use bed. Bed, as we'll see in a little bit here, might be a little bit much. When we think of the word bed, some have said something like pallet.

That seems a little rough. But anyway, they were bringing a man on a bed, a man who was paralyzed. And we don't know really anything about this guy's condition.

Paralyzed from birth? Recently paralyzed? We don't know, but he's paralyzed. And they were seeking to bring him in and lay him before Jesus. This is all we've got as far as information about the four guys and the paralytic, the man who's paralyzed.

But finding no way to bring him in because of the crowd. Now we realize, okay, so we got Jesus in the house. And he's seated and he's teaching. And you got the big shots there from Jerusalem and the surrounding town synagogues.

[19 : 18] Listen, right? So nerves are probably a little bit high. Not for Jesus, but for like the homeowner. I mean, he's never had important people, important people, right?

In his house before like this before. There's so many people because Jesus is in town. I'm losing, losing, losing my stuff.

Some of you might think I'm losing my mind. Jesus is in town. This is huge news. So we're going to where Jesus is. And the crowds are piling into this guy's house.

Now, we don't know if he's there sitting in his chair, right? And he's probably got as many chairs out as he could get, right? He's got all the dining room chairs out and he's pulling them out.

And he's probably going into the garage, right? And getting out the folding chairs. They don't match. It's okay. We just got to, you know, however many. And we don't, we're left to our own imagination to try to figure out what this looks like.

[20 : 21] But the crowd is so big, Mark lets us know that they're standing several deep in the doorway, in the windows.

Because it's too full. It's too packed inside the house. So get this. You got Jesus sitting down doing his teaching. You got the big shots. They're all sitting down.

The homeowner probably. We don't know if he's sitting down or if he's running around trying to get everybody. A cup of water. I don't know. We don't know. But it's just packed.

People are standing room only. They're trying to get in. They're pressing in from the doorway. They're leaning into the windows. They're trying to hear anything, to see anything.

You probably have people that are like in the in-between that are like passing on information as they hear it to the people that are just outside the doorway. It's just this packed house.

[21 : 23] And because of the crowd, they couldn't find a way in. So they went up on the roof and let him down with his bed through the tiles into the midst before Jesus.

Luke, can we have a little bit more? I mean, whose idea was this? Because I don't think it was the paralytic's idea to do this.

I don't think so. I think he's reluctant here, as we'll see here in a little bit. I think he's more reluctant to want to be there in front of the crowd, to want to be there in front of the latest guy who's in town who's going to do healings or whatever it is.

For whatever reason, the text seems to indicate that it's not his idea, that the idea is it's the four guys who are carrying this guy on his bed, on his mat.

And I'm wanting to know, what does that look like? I mean, whose idea is this? I mean, I can kind of imagine.

[22 : 35] The news comes. Jesus is in town. He's over at Frank's house, and he's teaching, and there's a crowd that's gathering. Everybody's packing up all their goods and all their stuff that they're trying to sell in the market.

They're trying to get off of work. They're trying to do whatever it is to get to Frank's house so they could be there when Jesus was teaching.

And who knows what they'll get to see. I mean, it's amazing. And so the first guy, let's call him Fred. I don't know. We're just handing out names today. Fred's on his way, and he's trying to get there, and he remembers Pete.

Because if you're paralyzed, your name has to start with a P. So paralyzed Pete. And he's like, man, this would be perfect for Pete.

I mean, Jesus, the reputation that he has. We've got to get Pete to Jesus. But he's by himself, so what can he do by himself? And he sees his friend Bob across the market, and he goes, Bob, Jesus.

[23 : 40] Yeah, I'm trying to pack it up to get there. Well, what about Pete? Pete who? You know Pete. Pete that lives two. I mean, he lives two blocks down and over here, and he's got a trailer. Pete. Paralyzed Pete.

Oh, yeah. What about Pete? He can't go. He's paralyzed. That's what I mean. We've got to get Pete to Jesus. All right. Well, there's two of us. Who else are we going to get?

And among the throngs of people that are trying to get there, he reaches out, stops someone, and it happens to be Bill. Good thing it was Bill.

Bill, hey, we're trying to get to Jesus. What are you doing? What about Pete? Pete who? You remember Pete across the, you know, in the trailer.

Yeah, okay. What about it? We're going to take Pete to Jesus. Oh, good idea. And so somewhere along the way, they pick up the player to be named later, the fourth guy, and boom, they go to Pete's trailer to get him.

[24 : 42] And they get, they not break in the door, but they open the door, and there's Pete on the floor on his mat. Now, bed, mat, I want you to think of like, this is kind of, this is kind of an indication of the culture, the society that we live in today.

Some of your dogs have a better bed than probably this guy did. But that's kind of what I want you to think of. Like, my son and his wife, they have a Great Dane.

So the size bed you have to have for a Great Dane, and they have one, they've slept on it before. Right? It's that big. And so I'm guessing that this size dog bed is probably similar to what this guy had.

It was just a cushioned mat of some sort. Just, that would be on the floor. He could get in and out of it. He could, basically, his life would exist on this mat.

But my wonder is, what does it smell like? Okay? This is, you don't get that in the story here. But, so they're each going in, and these four guys pile into wherever he's living.

[26 : 05] It's not a trailer, but you get what I mean. It's wherever he's at. And you've got to know that the medical system, the hospital system, whatever, nothing like today.

We complain about it today, but back then, there would have been nothing as far as handouts, as far as help from the government, those kinds of things.

He would be living off of the mercy, off of the pity of the people around him, his family, his friends, whatever network he might have had that would provide for him, that would help him, that would help clean him up, whatever it is that he would need from day to day.

And so he's there. And again, I'm imagining he is protesting. Like, guys, come on. I'm paralyzed. Get over it. This is just my life now. And they're like, no way, buddy.

We're going to get you to Jesus, because we've heard some incredible things about this Jesus. And so they each get on a corner of this bed or this mat, and they pick it up.

[27 : 06] And can you imagine now that he kind of gets sacked down into it, almost like a sack, and he's there.

And at this point, however much he may be protesting, he's just along for the ride, right? He's just going along because they're taking him to Jesus no matter what. And then when they get to Frank's house, it's like, all right, what do we got to do?

I mean, it's already packed. Look at how many people are standing even on the outside of the house trying to just look in or get a glimpse or whatever it is. So one of them, Bob, let's say, has an idea. What if we lift him up and try to crowd surf him into the windows?

You know, no, that's not going to work. Finally, Fred looks up at the roof. Hey, there's nobody on the roof.

What do you think? Well, yeah, because nobody's on the roof. What are you getting at? Well, maybe we can get them in that. I was just at Home Depot the other day.

[28 : 10] They were doing this skylight thing demonstration. Figure it out. We can do this. So every house back then, they would use the roof as kind of like an evening and morning place where you'd go take your coffee kind of a thing, where you'd just go up on the roof and it would be quiet and you could pray.

You could have your morning coffee or whatever it is, or your evening just relax under the stars. That's what they would do. And they would have an outdoor stairway along the side of the house to get up to the roof.

So here they are. They've got Pete and their form of them getting up on the roof. They stop by the shed and pick up a shovel because they have to dig their way in through the roof.

That's what Mark tells us, that they dug. So the roofs of their houses back then were a combination of mud and thatch, thatch tiles they would make.

And they would do these in several layers. The tile would be laid out with some support structure and then they'd put a layer of mud down and another tile scatter or catacorner kind of a thing, you know, so that for strength to build it up.

[29 : 24] And so there'd be three or four layers of thatch mixed in with this mud. And over time, that would make a sturdy roof.

So these guys, they get up on the roof. Meanwhile, back down below, Jesus is teaching. And as he's teaching, you can see a little dust start to fall.

This is where the distraction comes in. A little dust starts to fall. Next thing you know, there's little chunks that start to fall.

And there's some pounding and there's some voices up there. And it's, man, Frank, what kind of rodents you got up there? What is going on? And then, boom, tip of a shovel breaks through.

Right? And then the hand comes in and pulls that piece of thatch back in and then the sun streams right there in front of where Jesus is at.

[30 : 30] And in that sun, just imagine this, the dirt and the clumps and the dust just kind of in the sunlight, just falling ever so gently down below.

And people are looking up. And maybe if you're like right underneath of it, you're getting a little dirt shower on your head. And then finally a face breaks through the hole.

Hey, guys, we're coming in. So at this point, I'm figuring Jesus stops the whole teaching because we're at the point which you just can't ignore it anymore.

Right? So, all right, we're going to take a break here, guys, and see what's going on here. So eventually they get the hole big enough where they can once again gather Pete up in the four corners of this large dog bed, this bed that he's on.

And maybe a couple of guys are standing up because, all right, we're going to let him down. And I'm guessing Pete's like, guys, knock this off one last time. Come on. I'm not asking for this.

[31 : 41] If this guy does heal me, I'm going to kick your butt. You know, I'm going to. And finally they let him down.

They get him down on the floor. And don't you know, he's probably facing the wrong way. Jesus is over here and he's probably facing over here. Hello.

Now, I have some pictures here of some stuff I found on the Internet that the way that people have kind of pictured this down through the years.

And let me say that some of these are quite outlandish. Quite outlandish. Here's the first one. They got a whole pulley system rigged up to this guy's roof.

I'm thinking, I mean, and he's got a whole. Seriously? They got the crowd part right. They got a big crowd in there. So that part is pretty good.

[32 : 47] But I don't think they had a whole four-poster pulley system. That's not how it happened. Here's another one where this guy is carrying his brass bed.

You know, he's healed and he's carrying his brass four-poster bed or I don't know how they call that. I don't think that's it either. And then we talked a couple weeks ago about the halo thing.

Jesus wouldn't have been walking around with a halo. I hope you understand that part. Or with the blonde hair, blue eyes thing. Hey, these four guys with the guy on the stretcher, we got to get them to Jesus.

The point of the story is you got to find the way. How about missing the point of the story? Now, I get it. This is a kid's thing. And sometimes kids, you know, they get out of hand.

Right, Connie? Hey, so, you know, sometimes as a Sunday school teacher at children's church, you're just desperate for whatever. Connie's like, can I get a picture of that?

[33 : 51] Yeah. Here's another one. It didn't go down like this. Because the majority of the people in the room are women. It wouldn't have happened like that. There probably wouldn't be any women in the room.

Because only the men would be sitting there listening to Jesus. You might have had a woman or two that was serving in some fashion. But basically, and again, and I know some of you women are like, well, wait a minute.

What about us? And it's like, well, this is the culture that was in existence. And they didn't look all prettified like that. Okay? Little kids.

Little kids. This is supposed to be someone's living room, not barn. I don't think this is what it looked like.

And it's not very crowded in that space either. Here's one. I think we're getting a little closer now where, you know, he's kind of getting laid down.

[34 : 50] But my favorite one of all, and I think the one that's the closest in terms of the guy is like, whee, here I am. And you got Jesus sitting down with the teachers of the law and the Pharisees, you know, waiting for him to arrive.

And the hole in the roof thing, I think, is off. But it's tough when you're trying to find stuff on the Internet or movies or TV shows that have to do with Jesus where you seem like, oh, they got that pretty good.

You don't see yourself saying that very often. They did that pretty well. It doesn't happen very often. But this is the story. All right. So, again, set the scene. Jesus is there.

He's sitting. He's teaching. You got the teachers of the law, the scribes. They're taking their notes. They're trying to corner Jesus. You got the crowd and the sun breaking through now.

And then Pete's there on the floor. All the commotion has died down. And when Jesus saw their faith, this is, to me, this is the faith of the four.

[36 : 15] Not so much the faith of the man. Because if he was included, I think it would have been the faith of him, his faith. Here's the man on the floor.

Here's the four guys trying to strain their way to peek in when Jesus sees their faith. And Jesus says something that's like, what?

That's not why we're here. Man. This is just the Greek word anthropos. It just means man. Sometimes it's translated friend.

It can be a friendly term. Your sins are forgiven you. It's someone he doesn't know. But your sins are forgiven.

You're forgiven. And you can almost hear a pin drop in the room. If we had regular floors, you could hear a pin drop.

[37 : 26] And I imagine in that room, it was the same. What? I imagine the guys on the roof are like, that's not why we brought him?

Jesus, you know, thanks. Thanks, but the whole thing about him coming through the roof and he's on the floor and the mat.

He can't walk. I don't know if you need to be told that, but he's paralyzed, Jesus. And thanks, I guess, for forgiving his sins, but that's not why we brought him.

That's not why he's here. That's not why we went through all this trouble and got in trouble with Frank, the homeowner, and all of this stuff, right? What are you saying?

Now, imagine, pause for a moment. The reason why Jesus came, the main goal of Jesus was to teach.

[38 : 43] So even in this moment, does anyone have any doubts, if you don't know the story, that Jesus is going to heal this guy?

Okay? No. Nobody has any doubts at this point that Jesus is going to heal this guy. At this point, Jesus is kind of, from their perspective, you know, think, maybe he's just a little off course right now.

I don't know, but this is just a sidestep to what he's really going to do. What's the important thing here? He's got to be healed. No, no, no, no. Jesus is going to teach them that what really matters is what he just said.

Your sins are forgiven you. Now, the scribes, and I think he points out the scribes in particular because they're the note takers.

They're the ones who are the copiers of Scripture. They would know the Scriptures better than anyone else because they spend all day writing Scripture. Wait a minute.

[39 : 45] Wait a minute. The Pharisees, because they think they're smarter than everyone else, and they know the law backwards and forwards as well, and they're like, okay, wait a minute.

What's going on? And they're not doing any of this out loud. Right? This is all in their head. They're like, what's he doing? Who is this that speaks blasphemies?

We don't use the word blasphemy a lot, usually around the context of religion, right? Blasphemy, we think of that as kind of a religious word.

Who can forgive sins but God alone? That's a great question. It's a legitimate question. It answers the question.

Who can forgive sins but God alone? Ding, ding, ding, ding, ding. You got it right. Wait, you're on target here. I think you're missing the point still to be that close to the target and yet still miss.

[40 : 53] But they didn't get it. This next part should have given them a clue. When Jesus perceived their thoughts, he answered the question in your hearts.

what you can read my mind no all right that ought to be a clue clue number one right they can read my mind he can he can read my mind he knows what i'm thinking and they must be thinking it too why do you question in your hearts and then jesus asks them a question which one is easier guys which which one is is easier is it easier to say your sins are forgiven you or is it easier to say rise and walk all right so let's let's try to answer the the question here in the room today 2 000 years later which one is easier is it easier to say your sins are forgiven you who's with me or is it easier to say rise up and walk okay i'm with the your sins are forgiven you crowd i'm that's easier to say right let me demonstrate your sins are forgiven you your sins are forgiven you your sins are forgiven you dave i don't know about you um your sins are forgiven you sins are forgiven i'm joking right i can say that all day long how can anybody prove it wrong or right nobody nobody nobody can say whether i mean i would think you could look at me and say no i don't think rich has the authority to do that i mean if you had any kind of head on your shoulders you'd figure that out pretty quick rich is crazy okay jesus on the other hand so which one is easier it's easier just to say willy-nilly your sins are forgiven you but if i say rise up and walk well now something's got to happen right because if i say brian rise up and walk and then brian just sits there i'll get you your 20 bucks later so which one is easier this is the point that jesus is making but that you may know that the son of man has authority on earth to forgive forgive sins just so you know that when i say his sins are forgiven that that's genuine that that's genuine that it's real that yes i am god i can never it flabbergasts me to hear some of these liberal teachers or preachers or professors out there who said well jesus never declared that he was god are you nuts can you not read can you not see he very clearly is declaring himself to be god so that you may know that the son of man the son of man is a declaration of deity has the authority who's the only one who has the authority to forgive sins god alone you got that right pharisees scribes the son of man has authority on earth to forgive sins and then he turns and he says to the paralyzed man i say to you what would have been like to be there in the moment just just one of the crowd you can just see a part of of where pete is at right on the floor he's he's he's been kind of like the middle chest piece of all of this right everybody's looking at him the thing that he perhaps wanted to avoid being the center of attention i say to you rise

pick up your brass bed pick up your mat and go home you imagine don't you have to at that moment put two and two together and realize well if he has the authority to do that that means that my sins really are forgiven cool and his goal is to teach so what is he teaching immediately this is my our paralyzed man pete immediately he rose up before them i don't know people were applauding and he's like i don't know picked up what he had been lying on okay you were calling it a bed before now it's picked up what he had been lying on what what is this and went home glorifying god wow to have been there to have seen that oh now i got to fill in some blanks on your notes because we've just gotten started and some of you are like are we going to be here till three o'clock what's going on yes number two under keeping the main thing the main thing the teaching jesus didn't come to save us from the difficulties of this life and and this is where i said earlier our prayer lives betray us my prayer life what do we spend our time praying for to to be released from to be restored from to be fixed our lives everything that's going on in this life to be fixed to be healed to be restored to be financially uh restored to to what all these things that we pray for that have to do with the here and now that's not why jesus came why he came was to save us from death that's the real issue that's the big deal that's the main thing and all of the healings that he did all the miracles that he was performing was to get us back to this main thing to verify well this guy really is who he says he is this really is god because the big deal that day in that room was not that the guy was paralyzed and now he can walk so now he's forgiven he might have i don't know how old this guy is is he 20 is he 30 is he 40 i mean he didn't live that long back in the day so even if he made it to 70 or 80 that's all he's got left if all he got was physical healing because he was forgiven of his sins he's got an eternity in heaven talk about restored fully restored that's what matters because 30 40 years versus eternity which one's longer this isn't the new math normally you kind of put points of application toward the end of the sermon

we're doing it right now for you and i a godly community carries mats we see jesus i mean these four guys these are four healthy guys because it takes pretty four pretty strong healthy guys to carry somebody on a mat like that right they could have run on ahead they could have gotten in the room they could have been there by themselves gotten there by themselves and been there to enjoy the teaching right but no they stopped along the way and they remembered a friend and they said we're going to get peed it's going to be harder they had to work up a sweat they had to get creative they had to maybe get on bad terms with the homeowner at least temporarily but they did whatever it took to bring their friend to jesus and that's what a godly community does that's what we do that's what we're supposed to do so in in your mind who do you need to bring to jesus a godly community seeks to serve the greatest need that anyone can have and the greatest need that anyone can have has nothing to do with your physical body it has to do with jesus so someone who doesn't know jesus that's number one that's priority that's above everything else teach them jesus bring them to jesus emphasize jesus that's their need we seek to bring people to jesus so these four mat carriers these four paralyzed man carriers they're the heroes of this story from a human perspective they're the ones who went out of their way to bring their friend what are we doing to go out of our way to bring people to jesus now on your notes i have some questions and answers some of these questions may be not so obvious a first glance at the story but i want to spend a little bit of time answering these questions i'm not just going to answer or ask the questions and leave you hanging we're going to give you the answers here too so here's the first not so obvious questions to ask how could jesus offer the man forgiveness of sins when what it seems he really wanted was physical healing i know some of you like to fill in the blanks beforehand and you wrote the word healing there and all of a sudden i got wholeness coming up you're like that jerk you could have picked the obvious one and he said wholeness yeah i gotcha that's all that was what it seemed like everyone else was expecting everyone was expecting a healing for him to be made physically whole how could jesus offer the man forgiveness when everyone including jesus knew that the reason why he was there was because he was paralyzed everyone understood that it wasn't because jesus was like dumbfounded oh that's what you were after no he knew more than anybody so the answer to this question comes down to this by his actions jesus was all right half of you were awake there by his actions jesus was very that's the best one yet and hopefully it's aha

because that's the point that we should be taking from this he was teaching that the forgiveness of sins is more valuable it's more important than goes on and something that we are in need of much more than any mere physical healing now i get that to some people the word mere m-e-r-e might be offensive you know because my father has cancer or i've got this you know my cousin just lost his job and he can't pay his it's not to say that your troubles aren't terrible or aren't difficult that's not what i'm saying here it's not what jesus would say but in comparison to eternity!

[54 : 08] in comparison to what happens to your eternal soul to who you are heaven or hell your physical body your problems that you have in this life are nothing compared to that would it be nice would it be wonderful if you prayed for someone and they were healed yes and that does happen god still heals but it's not as important as your eternal destiny second question how can jesus forgive this paralytic's sins based on the faith of the four if you're like me and you kind of believe that it was the four men carrying the paralytic it was their faith that was kind of driving the boat not so much the paralytic's based on the way jesus responded how do you explain this how can jesus forgive this paralytic sins based on the faith of the four let's even make it more basic how can jesus forgive this paralytic sins when no one was looking for that no one was asking for it no one had that even on their radar how how is that possible because from the story luke is not telling us that the paralyzed was there he was there on the floor jesus will you forgive me for my sins he didn't do that just out of the blue completely unexpected jesus says man your friend your sins are forgiven you and here's the answer to this and this one's a little difficult for our human minds to to grasp but we're still going to put it out there like this because i think this is what matters that the forgiveness of sins is based more on the character and the work of christ than it is on any individual's repentance and faith now ask me a follow-up question here is repentance and faith necessary yeah that's what's going to happen in my heart okay and i believe that's what happened in this man's heart probably a number of people in that room today including the four guys and the guy got up picked up his bed and went home glorifying god but the thing that matters my repentance and faith doesn't mean anything without the character and work of christ first and foremost and priority without that my faith is might as well be in a lump on a log or a cloud passing by or a tree it is jesus who makes the offer of salvation real genuine authentic it is his character he is sinless without sin completely and utterly his work on the cross it has nothing to do with me before my repentance and faith then and i think it's the lord who gives me that as well and my eyes are opened

your eyes are opened and we say lord i need you i have no hope without you what you've done for me third question this goes back to the pharisees and the scribes how could jesus dare to forgive a man's sins when only god can do so that's a valid question for those of us believers this is like the first you know it's no brainer we get this right jesus is god but for those of us who don't know for those people who don't know christ if we hadn't said it before let's say it right now jesus is able to forgive a man's sins simply because he is god that is why he is able to say to the man paralyzed on the floor son friend man your sins are forgiven you the story ends this way this one verse kind of contains a lot of luke isms things that are familiar to luke's gospel and amazement sees them all i bet it did everything that you see at this point is like whoa and they glorified god and they were filled with awe or fear because they went from oh who is this jesus we come to it was pretty significant thing i mean incredible this guy's amazing let's see what he's got this is god in our midst that moment that take your breath away moment when you realize you're in the very room with god himself we have seen extraordinary extraordinary things today this um i'll come back to it two quick things and then we're going to sing a song um only helpless sinners can understand their true need to be forgiven by god they're only only they're only only ones who do helpless sinners i can't do anything to earn it to keep it to to be good enough i nothing i am completely and utterly helpless they're the only ones who understand their true need to be forgiven by god and secondly only forgiven sinners understand the true joy of what it means to sing praise to god the man walked away glorifying god and the crowd there in that house that day were glorifying god the word glorify there is the word doxa some of you might be familiar with that from a song that a decent number of churches would sing sometimes every sunday or every so often a song called the doxology how many of you are familiar with the doxology some of you are able to sing that like you don't even have to think about it it's just right there boom we've got it locked in the doxology it's just a word ology of praise of glory given to god that's what the doxology means we're going to sing a version of that band come on come on up we're going to sing a version of this that adds

a couple of verses to the original line praise god from whom all blessings flow i don't believe you can sing that to god and mean it if you don't understand forgiveness of your own sins if you're a self righteous i believe i believe in god but i also believe that i'm good enough and i've earned it you you have no idea what this means praise him all creatures here below you recognize that you're just one of what he has created praise him above ye heavenly host praise father son and holy ghost he's not a ghost but that's an old-fashioned way of saying holy spirit praise god with morning's light breaking light praise him through darkness of the night praise him with every breath of life praise him my soul with all your might you can't do this if you're not a child of god you can't you can't sing this with gusto you can't sing it with meaning praise god when face to face we see imagine that day the one who died to set us free praise god the one who rose in victory praise now forever christ our king so i want to invite you all and this will be our closing prayer let's all stand and we're going to sing i'm i'm i'm asking you but i can only ask this of you if it is genuine on your part sing this with gusto sing it like you mean it because you understand what he has done to make it so that you can be forgiven of your sins let's sing this with power with prayer to god to