

03132022 **Jesus is in the business of doing new things...for all of us who know the Lord he is doing new things in our lives...**

**From the time we are born again into the family of God...until the time we enter into heaven...we under go a series of new beginnings...**

*1 Cor 2:9* *That is what the Scriptures mean when they say, “No eye has seen, no ear has heard, and no mind has imagined what God has prepared for those who love him. **Our eyes have not seen it before, our ears have not heard it before, and our mind has not the ability to mentally image what God prepares for his beloved children who love him.***

- **What he has prepared is absolutely beyond our capability to grasp.. therefore completely new to us as it is unveiled .. it is generally scary ...but it is not to God...so we must learn to trust and obey...**

**All that God has prepared for us is revealed a bit at a time ...**

*PSA 139: 16* *You saw me before I was born. Every day of my life was recorded in your book. Every moment was laid out before a single day had passed.*

- **All the days of my life were recorded before one came to pass...but each day is new to us...and every moment is plotted by God yet every new moment is the future to us..so we must learn to trust God...Who is absolutely in charge! Same for those in Scripture**

Let's see what new things we can learn in Luke chapter 5... Back story...Jesus has left Capernaum with Peter, Andrew, James and John and travelled to a nearby village, as they are walking in obedience following Him ....this is a new journey for the boys...they are disciples...did not know they would be Apostles shortly...

And their first experience seeing the type of people Jesus was going to teach them to fish for...

*NLT LK 5:12* *In one of the villages, Jesus met a man with an **advanced** case of leprosy. When the man saw Jesus, he bowed with his face to the ground, begging to be healed..... **This is new for the developing team!***

Lets take a look at this man's situation... **Leprosy** was a dreaded disease. It attacked the nerve endings in the victim eliminating their sense of feeling... he could feel no pain. If he was not very careful, he might cut off a finger or a toe and not even notice. Suffer burns burn without sensing it... suffer infection and not feel sick... infection would lead to gangrene eventually sets in destroying the flesh ultimately poisoning the whole body...waiting only the final release of death.

It was also a disease which was considered to be highly contagious. Those who had contracted it were driven away from their homes and their families. They were untouchables they lived outside the cities especially if they were walled.

Mosaic law mandated lepers keep a certain distance from people by announcing their presence by shouting unclean, they were not allowed in the city and if they were Jewish were not allowed in the synagogue...

So They were shunned socially, relationally and religiously, **forbidden any physical contact with another non-leprous human being...** survived by begging...

They were not people any more...but labeled by one word...Leper  
The Label Leper ... dehumanized these people.. shrinking their entire being down to a single word. This is apparent in name calling, ..racism, fits of rage..

- **And In Jesus day there was no worse label to bear than Leper...**

**So the leper breaks every leper law...comes to the feet of Jesus**

*Luke 5:12..... "Lord," he said, "if you are willing, you can heal me and make me clean."* <sup>13</sup> *Jesus reached out and touched him. "I am willing," he said. "Be healed!" And instantly the leprosy disappeared.*

**Jesus did not see a label...he saw a human being suffering..** What did Jesus choose? he chose to be caring; **reaching out to touch means to**

**hug... he reached down and hugged an untouchable ... he responds with love and healing power...**

- **He exhibited faith.** His faith was demonstrated by the fact that he believed Jesus could if he chose to help him... notice he had nothing to offer Jesus in exchange and nothing to of himself to present as worthy to be healed.
- **But what if Jesus was unwilling? Would that make him any less Lord?**  
**Real faith...knows Jesus could say no or could say yes...Faith trust Jesus either way!**
- **If we follow Jesus only because He helps us with our problems, or when he heals us...that is not following Jesus, that is directing Jesus...**
- **And if we follow Him for this reason only, what happens when I turn to Jesus and the problem doesn't handled the way I want it too...the healing does not take place...the answer to my prayers is no?**
- **Is Jesus still Lord whether he answers our prayer the way we want or not... No to prayer will show you your true belief...but in this case the answer is yes...there is much more going on than one man's healing**

*Luke 5: 14 Then Jesus instructed him not to tell anyone what had happened. He said, "Go to the priest and let him examine you. Take along the offering required in the law of Moses for those who have been healed of leprosy. This will be a public testimony that you have been cleansed."*

**Jesus commands him to not tell anyone and go show himself to the Priest in Jerusalem who will verify the healing...**

**One of the duties of the priest was to act as the local health official. The priest was authorized to examine a person and to declare him either clean or unclean. then offer the Sacrifices prescribed by Moses (thank and sin offerings)... then the Priests would reinstate you into the community socially and religiously.**

**Why? these types of healing could only be done by God as there was no medical remedy... **so confirmation that God had healed you.****

- **Leviticus 14:1-32 gives some very explicit instructions as to the sacrifices and rituals that were to be invoked in the case of a leper that had been healed. But this was a very rare occurrence.**
- **Can you imagine the reaction of the priests at the temple ? They have to go back to the Scriptures and look up Leviticus 14 to check and see what are the sacrifices and rituals to be used for a healed leper. This would not be a passage that they utilized ever.**

*LEV 14:1 And the LORD said to Moses, <sup>2</sup> “The following instructions are for those seeking ceremonial purification from a skin disease. Those who have been healed must be brought to the priest, <sup>3</sup> who will examine them at a place outside the camp. If the priest finds that someone has been healed of a serious skin disease, <sup>4</sup> he will perform a purification ceremony, using two live birds that are ceremonially clean, a stick of cedar,<sup>[b]</sup> some scarlet yarn, and a hyssop branch. <sup>5</sup> The priest will order that one bird be slaughtered over a clay pot filled with fresh water. <sup>6</sup> He will take the live bird, the cedar stick, the scarlet yarn, and the hyssop branch, and dip them into the blood of the bird that was slaughtered over the fresh water. <sup>7</sup> The priest will then sprinkle the blood of the dead bird seven times on the person being purified of the skin disease. When the priest has purified the person, he will release the live bird in the open field to fly away*

**Each of the birds represented the leper. . . . The death-like state of the leper during his exclusion from the camp was expressed by killing one of the birds.**

- **The living bird was identified with the slain one by being dipped in his blood mixed with the spring water that figured the process of purification, while the cured leper was identified with the rite by having the same water and blood sprinkled over him.**
- **The bird then liberated was a sign that the leper left behind him all the symbols of the death disease and of the remedies associated with it, and was free to enjoy health and social freedom with his kind.**
- **The cedar wood, scarlet, and hyssop were commonly used in purification rites. The resin, or turpentine, of the cedar was a preservative against decay, and it was also used in medicines to treat skin diseases. The color of the twice-dyed scarlet band of wool—with which the living bird, the hyssop, and cedar wood were tied**

together—reflected the rosy complexion associated with health and energy. Hyssop, too, was thought to have cleansing virtues.

- The ceremony of the two birds pictures the change in a healed leper's life: death to the old way that leads to death, and life and freedom to live a new way. Dying to the old self combined with living life anew in Christ is a concept repeated throughout the New Testament

<sup>8</sup> *“The persons being purified must then wash their clothes, shave off all their hair, and bathe themselves in water. Then they will be ceremonially clean and may return to the camp. However, they must remain outside their tents for seven days.*

### *After seven days*

<sup>10</sup> *“On the eighth day each person being purified must bring two male lambs and a one-year-old female lamb, all with no defects, along with a grain offering of six quarts of choice flour moistened with olive oil, and a cup of olive oil. <sup>11</sup> Then the officiating priest will present that person for purification, along with the offerings, before the LORD at the entrance of the Tabernacle.*

- **Purification consisted of a sin/guilt offering ,a burnt offering and a fellowship offering...**

<sup>14</sup> *The priest will then take some of the blood of the guilt offering and apply it to the lobe of the right ear, the thumb of the right hand, and the big toe of the right foot of the person being purified.*

- **Some of the blood of the guilt offering was to be placed on the tips of the right ear, right thumb, and right big toe. These body parts represent areas of a person's life, and they are all meant to work together so that he may function effectively. **The blood cleanses his hearing (the ear), his works (the thumb), and his walk or way of life (the big toe).** Interestingly, a similar procedure was done only when priests were consecrated (Leviticus 8).**

*Lev 14:15 “Then the priest will pour some of the olive oil into the palm of his own left hand. <sup>16</sup> He will dip his right finger into the oil in his palm and sprinkle some of it with his finger seven times before the LORD. <sup>17</sup> The priest*

*will then apply some of the oil in his palm over the blood from the guilt offering that is on the lobe of the right ear, the thumb of the right hand, and the big toe of the right foot of the person being purified. <sup>18</sup> The priest will apply the oil remaining in his hand to the head of the person being purified. Through this process, the priest will purify<sup>[f]</sup> the person before the LORD.*

- **Then oil was to be placed on the tips of the right ear, right thumb, and right big toe over the cleansing blood..** The blood, used in cleansing almost all things ([Hebrews 9:22](#)), ultimately represents the blood of Christ shed for our sins.
- **The oil symbolizes God's Holy Spirit, so when we are cleansed from all unrighteousness through the blood of Christ, we are able to live a new life in Christ by His Spirit.**
- **These body parts represent areas of a person's life, and they are all meant to work together so that he may function effectively. The blood and oil, then, cleanse and anoint his hearing (the ear), his works (the thumb), and his walk or way of life (the big toe).**
- After the ritual of the blood and oil, and the offering of a sin offering, burnt and grain offerings were given, signifying the former leper's restoration to God and his fellow man.
- As a leper, the man had been cut off from society and thus unable to serve God or his neighbor, and incapable of walking in godly love. leprosy, like the effect of sin, prevented a true keeping of God's commandments
- This is why the Jews believed only God could cure Leprosy

**No longer would he have to live on the outside. He could live again within the city walls. Return to relationships, synagogue, get a job...all which would again be familiar... but new...**

And the fact that they have to do so now is a screaming testimony to Jesus as the Messiah. **And the healing of the leper is a sign of what the mission of Jesus is about. Jesus admits the outsider. The fringe dwellers...the marginalized people**

**One Problem... he was told to not share anything with anybody and go directly to the temple in Jerusalem...traveling numerous miles and going past a number of villages on the way to Jerusalem...silently..**

**That did not happen ...He told everyone on the way to Jerusalem..**

*Luke 5:15 But despite Jesus' instructions, the report of his power spread even faster, and vast crowds came to hear him preach and to be healed of their diseases. <sup>16</sup> But Jesus often withdrew to the wilderness for prayer.*

- **Jesus had told him not to tell anyone about it but go straight to the priest and make his offering. But the man started telling his story everywhere and now Jesus could not enter a town openly.**
- **Jesus healed him even though he knows what the leper will do ...he knows the leper can't be bothered with complete obedience, because he's just gotten his life back.**
- **Which will Make Jesus life more difficult... How? Jesus has been touring the villages of Galilee, preaching in their synagogues. But the ease of Jesus' mission was brought to an end by the leper's behavior.**
- **Jesus now had to stay outside the towns and villages, in places where nobody lived... by helping the leper he traded places with him... the Leper moved inside Jesus beginning moving to the outside of the camp, He will be considered unclean by the Religious And moves to the places inhabited by the unfortunates the leper, the misfits, the undesirables he will be welcomed**
- 1. **So Jesus had to find a place and time to pray ...and those of us who pray know this.. prayer is work...and the strength gained thru prayer will be needed**
- 2. **Because there is now a big target is now Jesus back for helping him...**  
 Luke picks up the situation days later...because of the Leper he is drawing the attention of the Religious leaders...

*LK 5:17 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.*

**Because of this miracle and the reports of it everywhere and in Jerusalem...all the religious leaders are checking him out...this is new...I wonder what Peter, Andrew James and John are thinking...**

Lets look at one more thing

leprosy, progress slowly...Just like The effects of sin, as. Leprosy is undetectable at first, but becomes over time deeply rooted, leading to a diseased body, physical dismemberment and ultimately death...

Sin is similar...leading to spiritual dismemberment, a diseased mind, and death. The only possible redemption from both leprosy and sin, and their consequence, is through [Jesus Christ](#), the Eternal-Who-Heals. He cleanses us through the washing of water by the word, since He paid the price for our healing. We cannot heal ourselves, nor change our nature without His intervention

So bring to Jesus everything wrong with you...then follow him

- may you and I be as brave as the leper... may we be of the same mind....
- New experience for the disciples, New life to the Leper, New dangers to Jesus

end



- **We are a one of a kind human....**

*Eph 2: <sup>10</sup> For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago.*

- **Being anew in Christ will be new to us...the good things he planned for us to do...each good thing will initially be new to us...**
- **You know you demonstrate love for God by obeying and trusting his knowledge of each new thing.....when you obey fear you don't trust God...you trust fear... and then you obey the fear....**

*Lev 13:45 “Those who suffer from a serious skin disease must tear their clothing and leave their hair uncombed. They must cover their mouth and call out, ‘Unclean! Unclean!’ <sup>46</sup> As long as the serious disease lasts, they will be ceremonially unclean. They must live in isolation in their place outside the camp.*

These body parts represent areas of a person's life, and they are all meant to work together so that he may function effectively. The blood and oil, then, cleanse and anoint his hearing (the ear), his works (the thumb), and his walk or way of life (the big toe). His hearing affects his ability to work, and his works affect the way that he lives. Without hearing, a person cannot discern truth, and the ear is also the organ of balance. The hands, symbolic of works, are almost useless without a thumb (for a possible connection to Christ, see [John 15:5](#)). Without a big toe, a person walks clumsily and haltingly; it is hard for him to remain upright. To the leper, restored to wholeness, were returned the tools to hear and apply knowledge that could lead to an abundant life.

What a person hears affects what he does, what a person does affects how he lives, and how a person lives greatly affects both his health and his relationship with God and fellow man. The blood, used in cleansing almost all things ([Hebrews 9:22](#)), ultimately represents the blood of Christ shed for our sins. The oil symbolizes God's Holy Spirit, so when we are cleansed from all unrighteousness through the blood of Christ, we are able to live a new life in Christ by His Spirit.

Finally, on the eighth day, the former leper and the priest offered the regime of offerings ordained in [Leviticus 14:10-32](#). These offerings consisted of a [wave offering](#) and a trespass offering with a log of oil, a [sin offering](#), and a burnt offering with its [grain offering](#). An unusual thing was done with the blood of the trespass offering and the log of oil. [Leviticus 14:14-17](#) records that blood from the trespass offering and then oil were to be placed on the tips of the right ear, right thumb, and right big toe. Interestingly, a similar procedure was done only when priests were consecrated (Leviticus 8).

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After the ritual of the blood and oil, and the offering of a sin offering, burnt and grain offerings were given, signifying the former leper's restoration to God and his fellow man. As a leper, the man had been cut off from society and thus unable to serve God or his neighbor, and incapable of walking in godly love. In the type, then, leprosy, the effect of sin, prevented a true keeping of God's commandments.

**To be healed was to have the possibility of being, reintegrated into one's own community, no longer a person to be feared but a true neighbor.**

- **The leper in Luke reminds us why this is so difficult.**
- **The people we help don't always behave the way we want them to afterwards. They aren't always well-mannered or well-behaved.**
- **If we choose to make them clean, our own lives can get a lot more messy...now he has to get a job...relationships will change...**

**But don't just consider the effect of this healing on the leper.**

**Consider its effect on Jesus' mission. Jesus has been touring the villages of Galilee, preaching in their synagogues. But the ease of Jesus' mission was brought to an end by the leper's behavior.**

*LK 5:15 Yet the news about him spread all the more, so that crowds of people came to hear him and to be healed of their sicknesses. <sup>16</sup> But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed.*

**Jesus had told him not to tell anyone about it but go straight to the priest and make his offering. But the man started telling his story everywhere and now Jesus could not enter a town openly.**

**3. Jesus now had to stay outside the towns and villages, in places where nobody lived... by helping the leper he traded places with him... he had to move outside while the Leper moved inside**

**4. Jesus had to find places to pray...which tells us something...Prayer is work!!**

**5. finding a place and time to pray is work...and those of us who pray know this.. prayer is work...**

**He prays because his life just got more complicated...he switches places with the leper...Jesus then has come to be on the outside, to be living outside the camp, in the places inhabited by no one but such unfortunates as the leper. That is our call also...**

- **He disobeys the command...stays in the Galilee area...spreading the news about what happened to him..**

**You See....**

**There are **Five things** that I want you to see about this man.**

- **First, notice that he had a right recognition. He recognized Jesus as more than a mere man. He called Him...- Lord....Master, using a title which is usually used by disciples.**

- There was both an urgency and an accuracy to his call. He saw Him as One who had the power to deliver them.
- **Secondly**, notice that his need drove him to Jesus. That is one of the reasons that the Lord allows bad things to come into our lives. It is to draw us closer to Himself.
- **Third**, it was **ONLY** his need that drove him to Jesus. I believe that we do Jesus a disservice when we see Him only as "the answer" to our problems.
- If we follow Jesus only because He helps us with our problems, or when he heals us...that is not following Jesus, that is directing Jesus...
- And if we follow Him for this reason only, what happens when I turn to Jesus and the problem doesn't handled the way I want it too...the healing does not take place...the answer to my prayers is no?
- **Fourth**...**He exhibited faith.** His faith was demonstrated by the fact that he believed Jesus could if he chose to help him... notice he had nothing to offer Jesus in exchange and nothing to of himself to present as worthy to be healed.
- **Faith is always a risk taking venture...Faith must risk to be real faith...knowing Jesus could say no or could say yes...Faith trust Jesus either way!**
- **Is Jesus still Lord whether he answers our prayer the way we want or not...**
- **All based on faith...that if he did go something would happen ...and he hoped the response would be positive...**
- **Fifth**... **He went after it...being decisive is the key..so many people find out where the answers are...where hope lies, but won't pull the trigger to go and do it..... But without initiative you are left with theoretical answers...only head knowledge**

**So he makes a decision....**He's already a social outcast; worse that can happen is he stays that way...but now there is an opportunity to change that

- So he fights through the crowd...and humbly asks for Jesus to help him...

**He takes by the hand those who are on the edge of God's people and leads them into God's city, rejoicing. The leper, now cleansed from his affliction, can go to the priest and be declared clean. He can go into Jerusalem, to the temple of the Lord, and offer sacrifice to God.**

- Noe he comes under the beginning of intense scrutiny which leads to his being number one on their hit list... his enemies now get to really zero in on him...
- The point of the Pharisees showing up is that word of Jesus' ministry had spread to the point where the Pharisees are curious and are showing up to check Him out.
- "The Pharisees were a non-priestly or lay separatist movement whose goal was to keep the nation faithful to Mosaic faith. In order to do this, they had a very developed tradition that gave rulings on how the law applied to a variety of possible situations not addressed directly by Scripture." They had rules for every possible situation and Jesus kept violating those rules. That is why there was so much conflict between Jesus and the Pharisees.
- **He went outside to bring the outsiders in....may we be of the same mind....**
- *LK 5:17 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.*

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*LK 5:17 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. <sup>18</sup> Some men came carrying a paralytic on a mat and tried to take him into the house to lay him before Jesus. <sup>19</sup> 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.*

*LK 5:20 When Jesus saw **their faith**, he said, "Friend, your sins are forgiven."*

## **Right now I want us to stop and look at a few important facts... Faith is work**

- **This is one of a very few physical healings where Jesus addresses the man's spiritual condition...sin...granting forgiveness before healing.**

**As Jesus is teaching within the house, there comes down the street four men. They are carrying a sturdy pallet on which they have secured a friend.**

**Sometimes God acts in a person's life because of another's faith. It might be the faith of a grandmother or a neighbor who prays that causes God to work in a person to bring them to Christ.**

- **These friends brought this man to Jesus even tearing up someone else's roof to do it...**
- **They took risk...they were desperate..**

### ***Luke5:17-19***

#### ***a. The persistence of the men***

**"When Jesus saw their faith" Their faith is demonstrated by their creativity, boldness and persistence to open the roof. They allowed nothing to stop them.**

**They had faith...bringing someone to Jesus is an act of prayer based on faith...**

**He could not even go to Jesus without help. And so, his friends had placed him upon this pallet and had bound him securely in place so that he would not fall off and hurt himself.**

**Their excitement mounts as they move through the city streets and approach the house where Jesus is. But their anticipation is dampened somewhat as they reach the house and find people already packed at the doorway, straining to hear the words of the Master within.**

1. **These men dared to do the difficult.**

It was not easy to bring this man to the Lord. They had to carry him. And when they found the doorway blocked, they had to carry him up an outside stairway to the roof. I know what it is like to maneuver a litter up narrow stairs. It is a difficult task. Yet these men did not quit.

It isn't easy to bring someone to Jesus. In fact, it is often difficult. But the rewards are worth the effort.

2. **They dared to do the unorthodox.**

It was not customary in that day to do what they did any more than it would be an acceptable action today. The acceptable thing would have been for them to wait outside until the crowd dispersed. The action they took was completely out of the ordinary.

The remarkable thing is that Jesus never rebuked them, either for their interruption of His teaching or for the damage to the roof. He seems to have approved of their unorthodox methods.

How about you? Are you so tied into the status quo that you are bound to doing things "because we've always done it that way"? Nothing is more deadly in a church than such an attitude.

3. **They dared to do the costly.**

Somebody was going to have to pay for roof repairs (I doubt that his homeowner's policy covered it). And that somebody was going to be those four men. When you do something for Christ, it will COST.

Imagine the surprise of those within the house. They are sitting and standing wall-to-wall to hear Jesus. He has been speaking to them of sin and repentance and the kingdom of God.

Suddenly, there is a noise above their heads and a portion of the ceiling is removed. They look up to see several faces staring back down. The hole in the ceiling widens and then, a pallet is lowered to the floor. On it lies a man. He may not even have been able to speak. We are not told that he made any request. He has only been placed at the feet of Jesus.

if you think about it... paralysis is a telling metaphor for sin.

What better symbol for a sinner than one who is paralyzed? Is not sin a freezing of the will that keeps us from doing the good that we know God wants?



We are like that man. We have been paralyzed with sin. It affects everything that we do and everything that we say. We are helpless in its grip.

Maybe this man was paralyzed in the same way that I am usually paralyzed. I become paralyzed by my ruts, my patterns, my bad habits, and I become paralyzed from doing what I know needs to be done in my life. In certain ways, I am paralyzed.

Maybe you are a person paralyzed by guilt and you are walking around with a whole load of guilt on your back, imaginary guilt, real guilt, for what you did or didn't do. Maybe your life has been paralyzed by guilt and you are not free to be the person God wants you to be.

Maybe you are paralyzed by perfectionism. You have to do things perfect and if you can't, you aren't free to do them.

Maybe you are like me and are paralyzed by bad habits, ruts, by routines which have become ruts. I can't get out of my ruts. I am keenly aware that I am bound by my bad habits.

I need Jesus to come and free me, forgive me, and to heal my paralysis of spirit, my paralysis of inaction. I need Jesus to free me up, so I can stand and walk forward again.

In this story, maybe you identify with the paralyzed man.

**The only way that we can even come to Jesus is in a state of complete helplessness. Some come themselves, some must be brought.**

**But all come through the ministry of the Holy Spirit.** And we have also been brought through the ministry of the bearers of the bed.

**If you have come to Christ and have received** spiritual healing in the forgiveness of your sins, then you have been given this commission.

You have been called to be a bearer of the bed. You have been commissioned to bring other helpless people to Jesus.

**You may not have to dig through someone else's ceiling to do it. But it will take effort. And it will require you to do the unorthodox. And it will cost.**

### **Faith is Work**

- **Faith works** - The men expended great effort to help their friend.
- **Faith persists** - They didn't let personal inconvenience stop them. The religious who would not let them through...they

**overcame obstacles...the man himself who seemed somewhat apathetic...**

- **Faith succeeds - Their faith was rewarded. The man was healed.**<sup>8</sup>

### ***b. The power of the Lord (5)***

**Luke mentions that Jesus was filled with the power to heal. Why is Luke telling us that? Luke is stressing that Jesus is a God empowered man. He is filled and led by the HS.**

He says, "your sins are forgiven." He simply makes a statement. The authority and power of Jesus' word is demonstrated.

As a side note, we ought to see that these men came with the implied request that their friend be physically healed. Instead, he was first given a spiritual healing. The lesson is that God, in His grace, sometimes answers our prayers in a way that is different from that for which we have asked.

It appears that the man's paralysis resulted from personal sin. I think Jesus recognized that the man's greatest need was spiritual and not physical.

Jesus' first act was to forgive the man, not to heal him. That seems backwards. To us the most important thing about this man is that he could not walk.

We should ask if the paralytic's greatest need was for forgiveness or for the ability to walk. If all we have is this life, then walking is more important than forgiveness. If we believe that we have a future beyond the grave that is governed by our relationship with God, then forgiveness is more important than walking.

Even today, disabilities beget virtues. We live in a society in which the blind see with Braille, the deaf hear with closed captions, and the lame walk with wheelchairs. We even have surgical procedures to reattach retinas and embed cochlear implants. All of these technologies spring from the compassion of the able-bodied for the disabled. Some time ago, I had an opportunity to speak with a man who lost his arms and legs to a blood disease as a teenager

What is the message of all this to Peter and his friends who are now observing as Christ models man-fishing for them? They should be learning that in order to be a fisher of men you have to get your hands dirty.

Christian ministry is not something that can happen in an ivory tower. To be effective in it you have to get involved with people; you have to be willing to touch the untouchable. The point is made physically here with the leper and the paralytic

There is no real ministry without risk, without exposure. It is costly. Dr. Francis Schaeffer of L'Abri fellowship put it like this:

"Don't start a big program. Don't suddenly think you can add to your church budget and begin. Start personally and start in your homes. I dare you. I dare you in the name of Jesus Christ. Do what I am going to suggest. Begin by opening your home for community. . . . L'Abri is costly. If you think what God has done here is easy, you don't understand. It is a costly business to have a sense of community. L'Abri cannot be explained merely by the clear doctrine that is preached; it cannot be explained by the fact that God here has been giving intellectual answers to intellectual questions. I think those two things are important, but L'Abri cannot be explained if you remove the third. And that is that there has been some community here. And it has been costly. In about the first three years of L'Abri all our wedding presents were wiped out. Our sheets were torn. Holes were burned in our rugs. . . . Blacks came to our table. Orientals came to our table. It couldn't happen in any other way. Drugs came to our place. People vomited in our rooms, in the rooms of Chalet Les Melezes which was our home, and now in the rest of the chalets of L'Abri. How many times has this happened to you? You see, you don't need a big program. You don't have to convince your session or your board. All you have to do is open your home and begin."

Perhaps not everybody is called to take the kind of risks the Schaeffers took. But there is no man-fishing that follows Jesus without some kind of risk.

I have seen churches with dress codes, churches which would have gone into epilepsy if the "wrong" kind of person came there to be saved.

This is less than Christian discipleship; it has missed the lessons in being fishers of men that Jesus wanted Peter and his friends to understand.

O. K., then, someone is going to say, if we do not hide from the world, if we are going to be willing to go out into it and get our hands dirty, how will we maintain our own purity and avoid compromise with the world?

I would have to ask, purity from what? What a lot of Christians call "purity" is a very artificial construct that has very little to do with the way Jesus actually loved and ministered.

It is mainly an excuse to avoid the way Jesus actually loved and ministered, to avoid real risky following of our Lord.

Yet there is a moral purity, rooted in a purity of devotion to the One who leads us into these non-antiseptic situations, with which we do need to be concerned.

And the answer to preserving that is not in preserving it so much as in nourishing it. That is what Jesus shows us in vs. 16.

Our connection with God has to be strong to maintain us in all the challenges of life. So like Jesus, we must make the pursuit of it a priority.

If I do not love the Lord and pursue fellowship with him, what do I have to offer anyone else?

To be a fisher of men we have to be a disciple; to be a disciple is to attend to and follow Jesus' example. This we must never forget.

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We are all faced with innumerable opportunities brilliantly disguised as impossible situations. Citation: Chuck Swindoll

### **Most people prefer the certainty of misery to the misery of uncertainty."**

It takes courage to step out...we all need courage...

- They all would rather risk criticism and experience failures in the pursuit of success, then remain silent and die on the sidelines.
- They would rather live with the prospects of having tried and failed.
- than live with the prospects of not having tried at all.
- Courage is when you fear Missing out ...More than Stepping out...
- That is the deadliest mind set of a fearful person...they would rather miss out, than step out...

You see without Courage we simply accumulate a collection of good ideas and a lifetime of regrets...

Do you realize that none of us lack insight and ideas; some lack the courage to do something about with them.

- Fear is what keeps one from taking a risk...from progressing

- Why? Because we were not convinced the future will be better than the past..
- Fear is the enemy of courage

The miracles we will examine today reveal Jesus' choice to show mercy taking away the diseases, infirmities and sins of two people. Reaching out to touch and heal the outcast, the untouchable, the desperate, the sin soaked...

As the leper said to Jesus...“If you are willing, you can make me clean.” Today's narratives are about one man who chose to ask for healing, and friends of another who brought a person for healing, and the great healer who chose to heal them both....giving them both new beginnings

- Now there is a risk for the person who asks for healing or help...they risk rejection.
- They could be denied, or outrightly rejected...or not be able to be helped at all...which would result in further alienation, rejection and hopelessness.
- And even if they are helped...that means a change in their lifestyle and even their relationships...which also can be quite scary and overwhelming...risky...
- Now...The person who “offers healing” risks also...they risk relationship
- They might face the ...we don't want them kind round here!! So they would risk immediate relationships..
- They also risk developing a relationship with the one helped...and you know that whenever you help someone up...it can get messy...it can require time and energy...and most definitely inconvenience...
- There is a big difference between a hand out...no personal involvement

- **And a hand up... requires personal involvement...** because each of us is a complex human being in need spiritually, emotionally, mentally and bodily.

**But that's Jesus ...and it will cost him....** I am thankful he takes that risk everyday in my life to love and help...even when he knows I will hurt him...

- Because I am often in need of help...and I am messy...and sometimes slow to change...
- But he is always accepting, never rejecting...and he continues to heal body mind and soul....
- As followers of Jesus, we are called -- among other things -- to include outcasts and to heal the sick.
- To offer cleansing and community to those whom others consider unclean: the poor, the ill, the imprisoned and the improper.
- We are called to love people who create either physical or social revulsion in their neighbors.