

Behold!

Illustration

Have you had that experience of seeing something amazing, then trying to get someone with you at the time to look so they could see it as well?

Certainly, you have had the experience reversed. Someone you were with saw something incredible and invited you to look.

How does that invitation to look usually come out?

For many, the invitation to look usually comes out passionately, urgently, and excitedly.

Introduction

Would you open your Bibles to Luke chapter five?

Before we read the text entirely, would you notice the second word of our text? The text is Luke 5:18-26.

What is the second word of Luke 5:18?

"Behold."

"Behold" translates a Greek verb. The root verb, *eido*, means to see and implies that seeing

leads to knowing. Here, "behold" comes from the imperative form of the verb. It indicates a command to look and, through looking, acquire knowledge.

Luke commands us to pay special attention to this specific passage, this particular miracle.

Why?

I offer you three reasons:

1) It reveals a hint of divinity in a way not previously revealed. Jesus expressed the authority to forgive sins.

2) It marks a transition in Jesus's ministry. We are not informed of specific conflict between Jesus and the Jewish religious body of leaders before this account in Matthew's, Mark's, or Luke's record of the Gospel. However, this conflict occurs regularly after this event.

3) It teaches us valuable truths to which we should pay particular attention.

Follow along as I read the remainder of the passage.

Bible

(18) And, behold, men brought in a bed a man which was taken with a palsy: and they sought means to bring him in, and to lay him before him. (19) And when they could not find by what way they might bring him in because of the multitude, they went upon the housetop, and let him down through the tiling with his couch into the midst before Jesus. (20) And when he saw their faith, he said unto him, Man, thy sins are forgiven

thee. (21) And the scribes and the Pharisees began to reason, saying, Who is this which speaketh blasphemies? Who can forgive sins, but God alone? (22) But when Jesus perceived their thoughts, he answering said unto them, What reason ye in your hearts? (23) Whether is easier, to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Rise up and walk? (24) But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power upon earth to forgive sins, (he said unto the sick of the palsy,) I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy couch, and go into thine house. (25) And immediately he rose up before them, and took up that whereon he lay, and departed to his own house, glorifying God. (26) And they were all amazed, and they glorified God, and were filled with fear, saying, We have seen strange things to day.

Luke 5:18-26 - KJV

Introduction

As we "behold" Luke's account of the paralytic, could you ponder three critical aspects presented by the text?

1...Ponder the Faith He Observed (vv. 18-20a)

Explanation

Is anyone surprised by verse 20 of our text?

We may expect it to say, "And when he saw *his* faith, he said unto him, 'Man, thy sins are forgiven thee.'"

Instead, Luke records that Jesus "saw their faith." Jesus responded to the faith, not of the man who needed Him, but of his friends who knew he needed Jesus.

Illustration

Pastor and author, David Guzik wrote, "In this account, the emphasis is on the faith of the friends of the paralyzed man. We need to have faith for more than our own needs, but also have faith that Jesus can and will meet the needs of others whom we bring to Him" (David Guzik).

Application

Do you have faith for someone else that needs Jesus whom God has placed before you?

Who?

Who is the person, family, group of people, or community for whom you have faith in Jesus?

Explanation

Jesus "saw their faith."

How does one see faith?

Jesus, as God, sees the heart. However, that does not accurately reflect the reality of this passage. One sees faith by what faith produces.

What did their faith produce?

How was it visible?

Their faith produced their actions to get the man to Jesus.

A...They were Creative

Explanation

"They sought means to bring him in."

It means exactly as it sounds. They looked for how they could get this man, a paralytic confined to a bed, to Jesus, Who was surrounded by a crowd.

Application

We need to be creative, as we need to be active, in bringing people to Jesus.

Illustration

I recently heard a pastor preach who said, "We will do anything short of sin to bring people to Jesus."

Application

We should actively and creatively bring people to Jesus.

B...They were Committed (v. 19)

Explanation

Those who sought to bring this man to Jesus faced difficulty and distraction. Yet, Luke records that...

1) Nothing hindered them

Explanation

People were in the way so that they could not get to Jesus. A roof came between them and getting the man to Jesus. They were not hindered by these challenges.

2) Nothing distracted them

Explanation

Just as they could have been hindered by the people and the roof in the way, they could have been distracted by other cares. They were not.

Application

What hinders or distracts you from committing to bringing people to Jesus?

Like these bringing the paralytic, we can and will face challenges. We can be distracted. Jesus saw their faith through their commitment to bring the paralytic to Jesus. Nothing hindered them.

Nothing distracted them. Through creativity and commitment, they brought the man to Jesus, Who could work.

Illustration

This past Wednesday (April 19, 2023), I was privileged to join with twenty-four other faith leaders from our community at a meeting hosted by Chief Robert Hassell of the Rocky Mount Police Department. He shared his burden for our community and desire for the department to join forces with the faith community to discuss and implement initiatives to meet the challenges facing our community.

During the meeting, Chief Hassell commented on how he previously met with local mental health professionals along similar lines. He shared that he told them that "you have to do outreach or missionary work as churches do. Because the souls that need to be saved won't always come in your door" (Chief Robert Hassell).

Application

Friends, if you ponder the faith Jesus observed, you will recognize that He observed faith that prompted these men to bring a paralytic to Jesus. They were creative and committed. Nothing hindered or distracted them.

We must practice faith as they did. Let us creatively and committedly go and seek out people who need to be brought to Jesus. Believe that we can effectively make a difference for Him and that He can make a difference in the lives of those we bring.

2...Ponder the Forgiveness He Offered (vv. 20b-23)

Explanation

Jesus did what no one expected. He did not immediately heal, but forgave sins.

Why?

Jesus did not always operate this way, so any answer I contrive comes from conjecture.

Jesus sees hearts. Did He see a man sensing the burden of his sin? Maybe.

Religious leaders were present. Did Jesus sense it was time to reveal He was more than the average teacher or miracle man? Perhaps.

Whatever the reason, Jesus identified His ministry as more than healing physical maladies; His ministry included reconciling man to God. Only forgiveness can do that. Only faith in Jesus results in forgiveness.

Application

Yes, that means that good works do not yield righteousness, nor earn forgiveness and favor.

You cannot overwhelm your badness with some amount of goodness. The problem you have is not badness, but deadness. You are dead before and to God. Your efforts of righteousness do not impress Him. He's perfect, and only equal perfection could come into His presence eternally.

So, Jesus came. Forgiveness comes only through Him through His death and resurrection.

A...The Essence of Forgiveness

Explanation

What is forgiveness?

The word Jesus used, as recorded in Luke 5:20, is a compound word. The main part of the word means to send, and it combines with a preposition that means off or away. So, forgive means to send off or send away.

Would you look at Matthew 4:20 to see another use of the word?

Bible

(20) And they straightway left their nets, and followed him.

Matthew 4:20 - KJV

Explanation

"Left" comes from the same word translated forgive in Luke 5:20. It well represents forgiveness.

When God forgives sin, He sends it away. He no longer holds or retains it. He lets it go.

Consider two passages in Psalms that explain how God views the sin of those apart from Christ versus those in Christ.

Bible

(7) For we are consumed by thine anger, and by thy wrath are we troubled. (8) Thou hast set our iniquities before thee, our secret sins in the light of thy countenance.

Psalm 90:7-8 - KJV

Explanation

In New Testament terms, if you are not in Christ, your sins are all known by God, and you are condemned in and by your sins before God.

Bible

(1) Bless the LORD, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name. (2) Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: (3) Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases;

Psalm 103:1-3 - KJV

(12) As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us.

Psalm 103:12 - KJV

Explanation

In New Testament terms, if you are in Christ, God has removed your sins from you and from Himself. Your sins were all judged in Christ when He gave Himself on Calvary.

Bible

(32) And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as

God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.

Ephesians 4:32 - KJV

Explanation

"For Christ's sake" identifies the cross. Jesus took the punishment for your sins at Calvary.

Because He did, God removed your sins from you. He does not retain or hold on to them. This represents the Godward side of forgiveness.

B...The Experience of Forgiveness

Explanation

Can you imagine the man's response?

The Bible does not identify what it was, but I imagine he rejoiced.

Application

To know God's forgiveness is the greatest joy of salvation and the remedy for the guilt and shame of past sins. Nothing thrills me more in this life than to know that my past, with all its sins and stain, is forgiven. My sins are washed away by the blood of Jesus, and God has removed them from me as far as the East is from the West. This represents the manward side of

forgiveness.

Illustration

“This reminds us that only God can solve our sin problem. We can’t even forgive ourselves, because we don’t have the power and authority to forgive ourselves. We must be persuaded that God has truly and rightly forgiven us in light of what Jesus did at the cross” (David Guzik).

“Our rest in the sense of forgiveness is always created by the certainty that it is the gift of the grace of God” (Morgan, quoted in David Guzik).

C...The Evidence of Forgiveness

Explanation

In the context of Luke 5, the Jewish religious leaders who gathered were appalled at Jesus's remark. They rightly judged that only God could forgive sins. They mistook Jesus as only a man and not God. So, Jesus provided Himself with a challenge after identifying the unspoken thoughts of their hearts.

Jesus would have healed the man either way, but the circumstances provided Him with an opportunity to prove Himself, His identity, and His authority. Through this, Jesus proved the man's forgiveness and His right to forgive sins.

3...Ponder the Force (Power) He Owns

(vv. 24-26)

Explanation

As we close out the passage, would you meditate for these moments on the power of Jesus?

A...He has the Force to Heal

Explanation

Jesus, at the time and way of His choosing, spoke the word and healed this man. A man, who had been confined to his bed for an indefinite amount of time immediately had the power to get up, pick up his bed, and walk home.

Application

That's the same for us.

Spiritual healing comes from Jesus. He gives the power to get up, pick up your bed, and walk.

You have the power. It's your choice to put it to work.

Physical healing comes from Jesus. We all need it, to differing extents. Your healing is not a question of if, what, who, or how; it's only a matter of when. Your healing will happen. It will be complete healing. Jesus will do it of His power. The only question is when, but He knows the answer.

B...He has the Force to be Honored

Explanation

How did the people respond to what they saw?

The man who was healed glorified God. The people who saw it were amazed, glorified God, and feared. They said, "We have seen strange things to day." "Strange" comes from the Greek word "paradoxos." It means that they would not have expected what they saw and heard to be true, but the evidence was so overwhelming that they had to admit and accept it as true.

Application

The glorious power of Jesus demands that we honor Him.

C...He has the Force that brings Hope

Application

The reality of His great power brings hope.

Wherever you need His power today, let this and other accounts of His power give you hope.

Do you need His power for your own healing: physical, spiritual, emotional, mental, and relational? Put your hope in Him.

Do you need His power to save a loved one? Put your hope in Him.

Do you need His power to bring back a wayward son or daughter? Put your hope in Him.

Do you need His power for deliverance from some bondage? Put your hope in Him.

Do you need His power to see justice done? Put your hope in Him.

Do you need His power to revive you? Put your hope in Him.

Bible

(13) Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.

Romans 15:13 - KJV