

Jesus Heals a Man Sick of being bedridden with Paralysis

[A Bible Re-enactment script by CedarS Bible Park Rangers, Lauren C. & Warren H.]

Bible Verses: Matt. 9:2-8 or Luke 5: 18-25 w/ insights from B. Cobbey Crisler's commentary in *Book of Matthew, Auditing the Master: A Tax Collector's Report* (p. 42-43)

Characters:

Jesus

Narrator 1 or Narrator 1, Narrator 2...

Friend(s) who bring sick man

Man ("Stuck-in-bed Fred") sick of staying in bed with paralysis ("the palsy")

Scribes (or Teachers of the Law, as many as you want)

Narrator 1: Right after Jesus shares the Sermon on the Mount, he is given a series of 10 tough tests that show he can "walk his talk". Jesus passes these tests with flying colors as recorded by Matthew in chapters 8 & 9. At the start of Matthew 9, Jesus is confronted by the friends of a man who has been paralyzed and unable to move for quite a long time. (In the Luke 5:18-25 version his friends lower him to Jesus through a hole they make in the roof!)

Narrator 2: Let's call this poor man "Stuck-in-bed Fred" to give a face to his suffering. He is sick (and tired) of being confined to his bed, unable to move unless he is carried around on his sleeping pad (bed) by his friends. They bring him to Jesus and one asks:

Friend: Please, Jesus, will you heal "Stuck-in-bed Fred"?

Narrator 1: "Stuck-in-bed Fred" must feel and look terribly discouraged about the condition of his body, especially since nearly everyone in those days (like the friends of Job) thought that suffering was a sure sign of punishment from God and so the sufferer must be a sinner. Jesus thought differently, but was impressed by the faithfulness and the faith of Fred's friends. Always discerning what's most needed for healing, Jesus says two unexpected things to unhappy, "Long-Stuck-in-bed Fred":

Jesus: Cheer up, Son, dear Child of God! Be full of joy and courage; your sins are pardoned.

Narrator 2: The Teachers of the Law drop their jaws and start thinking "This Jesus has no respect for God; he's claiming to be better than God who has chosen to punish this man." Jesus detects the Scribes' limiting line of thinking that would keep Fred stuck-in-bed. Correcting this doctrine, Christ Jesus says to the scribes:

Jesus: I can read your minds and tell what you're thinking; and you're wrong. For whether it's easier to say, 'your sins are forgiven', or to say 'arise and walk', I would have you know that the Son of man has divine authority on earth to forgive sins and to heal...

(turning to "Fred in-bed")

Arise, take up your bed, and go home free.

"No-longer-Stuck-in-bed Fred" (*springs to his feet and says*): **Thank you, Jesus!**

Follow-up questions to help us reenact the lessons of such Christian healing– TODAY!

Has “cheering up” ever been what you needed most for healing? (like “Stuck-in-bed Fred” who was paralyzed with guilt, worry, depression...) How do cheering up and gratitude-in-advance break the habit of worrying (or of “being ungrateful in advance”)?

Have you ever felt immobilized in any way, maybe just listless with apathy or with “writer’s block”? Or, maybe stuck in a rut or in a dead-end situation or habit like a miserable sinner, unworthy of God’s love and outside of it? (Christ Jesus’ merciful grace is calling you today to stop beating up and belittling yourself! His grace is calling you a loved “Son” (or “Daughter”) of God who should cheer up and accept God’s loving forgiveness of all past sins (or “missing of the target” as the original Greek means). How did (or would) knowing that you are loved, loveable and loving bring about your healing and restoration to wholeness and perfect goodness?

Have you ever had an “Aha-moment”, talked about it, and right away had an opportunity to prove it? (like Jesus did after stating the Beatitudes with his 10 tests in Matt. 8 & 9)

Glorify God, which has “given such power unto men”

It is important to note that the last line of this story is, “when the multitudes saw it, they marveled, and glorified God, which had given such power unto men.” (Matthew 9:8) By striving to “have the mind of Christ” (1 Cor. 2:16) which is the “remedy for Adam” (S&H 534:13) we too can demonstrate the authority to relieve ourselves and others from the unnecessary suffering of thinking and acting like miserable sinners. Then we too will “heal the sick” as Jesus commanded us to do. (in Matt. 10:8)