



## The Gospel According to Luke Wk. 23 "When the Rules get in the Way" By Pastor Jody May

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### Luke 5:17-26

#### Jesus Heals a Paralytic

<sup>17</sup>On one of those days, as he was teaching, Pharisees and teachers of the law were sitting there, who had come from every village of Galilee and Judea and from Jerusalem. And the power of the Lord was with him to heal. <sup>18</sup>And behold, some men were bringing on a bed a man who was paralyzed, and they were seeking to bring him in and lay him before Jesus, <sup>19</sup>but finding no way to bring him in, because of the crowd, they went up on the roof and let him down with his bed through the tiles into the midst before Jesus. <sup>20</sup>And when he saw their faith, he said, "Man, your sins are forgiven you." <sup>21</sup>And the scribes and the Pharisees began to question, saying, "Who is this who speaks blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God alone?" <sup>22</sup>When Jesus perceived their thoughts, he answered them, "Why do you question in your hearts? <sup>23</sup>Which is easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven you,' or to say, 'Rise and walk'? <sup>24</sup>But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins"—he said to the man who was paralyzed—"I say to you, rise, pick up your bed and go home." <sup>25</sup>And immediately he rose up before them and picked up what he had been lying on and went home, glorifying God. <sup>26</sup>And amazement seized them all, and they glorified God and were filled with awe, saying, "We have seen extraordinary things today."

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HEART or CONFLICT & CONVICTON

HEAD or CONFIDENCE:

HANDS or CONDUCT:

**Main Thought: Take your DISTRESS to He whom gives REST!**

Illustration from our youth to adulthood how our propensity to when we are distressed in life is to hide it from God and others.

Jesus heals a paralytic and by the way He wants to do the same for you!

#### 1. The Law does nothing for your Distress.

In the text we see the Lord is teaching to a room full of Pharisees and Teachers "Scribes" from all over Jerusalem. This was not the G3 conference on mission, they didn't come to check out



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all the book tables, these guys came for a purpose and it was to listen to Jesus to build evidence against Him.

The Pharisees, we have talked about them before, they were one of the main 4 religious sects of the land similar to our political parties; Sadducees, Pharisees, Essenes, and Zealot. Pharisees were sort of an ultra-conservative type choosing to follow a religious code for life and they worked hard to promote good Jewish living by teaching others that life works better by how well one could live out the Torah, and to help you live out the OT Covenant of Moses they concocted more moral code to help you. They invented a law code to go along with their constitution if you will. Sort of our Bill of Rights that goes along with the Constitution.

Pharisees get such a **bad Rap at this point**, we always see them as the bad guys in the scripture but let's picture them not so much as bad guys but guys that went too far with a good thing. You see this whole thing started back with a familiar character to us, **Ezra**. Ezra, at the completion of the wall, after the temple has been rebuilt reads the law and essentially begins this tradition of ultra-conservatism, to help the people not fall into paganism again, of ways to help people do better with righteous living. But what seems to have happened is that the people got more carried away with the thought of remaining holy instead of remembering the words of Jeremiah, the Lord will one day make a covenant in which He will provide the ability to live law better, it was to come through the Messiah. **Essentially people stopped looking for the one to come to put hope in and became more centered on living out of fear and hope that God would bless them for their good endeavors.**

**Pharisees became the heroes of the land**, almost like a new age of Judges and even before the Maccabean revolts there were hundreds of them crucified by foreign powers for being strong religious leaders that the people could count on. **They did not set out to be the enemy of the people but over time they had become like the persecutors of the Jews and were controlling them by behavior coupled with threats through religious tyranny.** On top of that you have here that they brought to the party the Scribes these were the teachers of the law, the ones that taught the Pharisees, the priests, they were the rabbis. They were the seminary professors that were trying to corner Jesus on some doctrinal error so they could prove that He was a blasphemer.

So here they are invited by Christ to His home base in Capernaum and it is packed, no standing room, and Jesus is teaching all of them. And it is into this scene that the main character of our



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story pops in. This is the pre-ordained time that God the Father wanted this guy to show up, know how? Because it said in v.17 that "the power of the Lord was with Him to heal,"; the HS had determined that Jesus would do a healing today among these fellow teachers. That was a divine will outside of Jesus.

The paralytic comes and his buddies find that there is no way to get him in, no one is going to give up his seat. I mean I guess that the Pharisees and scribes after hearing about the work of Jesus **have no desire to actually see if He can do miracles** because that would be too easy, it would answer questions too fast. **Maybe today that is your stance, in coming to our gathering today, you didn't come here for help because you haven't been convinced yet if Jesus can help you.**

So when the gentlemen gets there no one moves, you see the tradition of the Pharisees is they didn't associate with sinners, so a man that was a quadriplegic could have been someone deserving of that debilitating disease because of sin. So, the friends take him up on the roof. These are the type of guys I want in my life. Listen if I ever have a hard time getting to Jesus, I want a bunch of dudes to kidnap me, tie me down and bring me to Him!

They lower him through the roof and drop him right in front Jesus. And friends please understand that this man, crippled, can't move, he has to be carted around by his friends, I don't even know what that means for him on a personal level but all I do know is **that is the best position for him to be in because his level of distress is what finally got him in front of Jesus.** When we look at his life and we think we are blessed that we don't have to experience what he did, I tell you that man would pity us for **it was his position and need for stress relief that prepared him for faith in Jesus.**

The reality of this picture is that the defenders of the law and Jewish practices, the new shepherds could not help this man, nor would they do it. They became a physical representation of the barrier between him and Lord. The law and even the Pharisaic practices to help follow the Torah are good in its' uses as in it reflects God's perfectness and our sinfulness, it restrains evil that we want to do, and it will in the heart of the believer become good works but it can in no way give you rest from a guilty conscience, it cannot heal what is broken in you.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.ligonier.org/blog/threefold-use-law/>



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What we can learn from this is let's stop blaming our conditions for why we can't live as spiritually healthy people and let's start looking for the blessing that can be hiding in what is causing us distress in our lives. Your distress may be the situation that is actually leading you to your greatest encounter with the one that can actually give you some rest... There's more good news here because **even when your Distress is overwhelming a glorious thing about Jesus is He is great at helping you get it off your chest and here is how:**

### **2. The Lord knows what you Need before you even Ask.**

The dude gets lowered down in front of Jesus and doesn't even open up his mouth and Jesus declares 1<sup>st</sup> what this man needs:

**<sup>20</sup> And when he saw their faith, he said, "Man, your sins are forgiven you."**

Jesus looks right past the physical distress, the paralysis and goes right for what is important, the man's heart. Jesus has never failed to help those that put their faith in Him. Jesus is never short on compassion but **you have to be ok that when you come to Him how he helps you is up to Him.** How are your prayers sounding right now? Do they have a lot of you telling God how to help or do you come in a spirit of reverence and wait on Him to do what He wants? Is it "Please Help?!" or is it "Help me to do???"

But this causes a stir in the Pharisees and teachers now, there is an emotional wave that goes through their midst. Much like for football fans when Tom Brady comes back again to win the game... AGAIN, it turns your stomach collectively and you can't stand it.

**<sup>21</sup> And the scribes and the Pharisees began to question, saying, "Who is this who speaks blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God alone?"**

The Lord senses the collective catch in their hearts and turns to address it.

**<sup>22</sup> When Jesus perceived their thoughts, he answered them, "Why do you question in your hearts?"**

This should have been their first warning here to stop looking for how to disprove Him but to look for what His actions really meant. The fact that He could discern what is the need of the heart is a thing that only God can do.



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### Jeremiah 17:10 ESV

<sup>10</sup> "I the LORD search the heart  
and test the mind,  
to give every man according to his ways,  
according to the fruit of his deeds."

The scribes missed that fact and so Jesus keeps going.

<sup>23</sup> Which is easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven you,' or to say, 'Rise and walk'? <sup>24</sup> But that you may know that the **Son of Man** has authority on earth to forgive sins"—he said to the man who was paralyzed—"I say to you, rise, pick up your bed and go home."

Jesus gives the guys that which they were looking for. They want to charge Him for blasphemy because they think He is trying to do something only God has the power to do, FORGIVE SINS, but He goes way beyond that and actually says He is God hence why He uses the title "Son of Man".

### Daniel 7:13-14 ESV

<sup>13</sup> "I saw in the night visions,  
and behold, with the clouds of heaven  
there came one like a **son of man**,  
and he came to the **Ancient of Days**  
and was presented before him.  
<sup>14</sup> And to him was given dominion  
and glory and a kingdom,  
that all peoples, nations, and languages  
should serve him;  
his dominion is an everlasting dominion,  
which shall not pass away,  
and his kingdom one  
that shall not be destroyed.

Jesus is saying I can forgive sins because it is what I was given power to do. 80Xs out of 83Xs in the NT Jesus uses this title for Himself. If you ever wondered if Jesus thought He was God, if you have ever discussed this with people of other faiths **you can be absolutely clear Jesus knew He was divine**. If you have been having a problem with getting rid of your distress



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perhaps it is because you have faith not in a divine Jesus. **Having faith in this Jesus means you don't doubt whether He has the right to judge your life or not, if you are not ok with that you may be wasting your time praying to Him.** Coming to Jesus with that which Distresses you means that you are coming to the one that can give you what you really need, forgiveness.

Just so we are all also on the same page Jesus tells them I admit it is easier for me to forgive sins because that is something you cannot see so let me do something that only I can do that you can see. **The physical healing was the proof to them that He in fact already did forgive the sins of the man.**

Without going to the one that gives rest by the Forgiveness of sins we will never be able to be rid of our Distress.

### **3. The Lord uses our stories of distress to offer to others rest.**

**<sup>25</sup> And immediately he rose up before them and picked up what he had been lying on and went home, glorifying God. <sup>26</sup> And amazement seized them all, and they glorified God and were filled with awe, saying, "We have seen extraordinary things today."**

You may be in a situation where you have asked God numerous times to help, you have come in faith, and yet there has been no alleviation of the pain. Wounds are like that sometime, whether they be emotional, physical, or spiritual. It may be because the Lord is using the story of your distress to reach other people. **(Illustration of my friend Todd and my Brother)**

**As we close today family let me ask you a simple question what is paralyzing you?**

**[Doctrinal Issue]** Are you letting your religious life get in the way of going to Jesus and asking for help? Do you believe that Jesus is unwilling to help you, has not the power to help, or that He is ok with your sins? What in your religious convictions keeps you from approaching Jesus as someone that can help you with your worst nightmares?

**[Search your heart question]** Do your friends in this church treat you as a gatekeeper from getting to Jesus or are they likely to come to you because they know you are willing to lower them down on a stretcher to get you to Him?



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**[lack of Gospel belief]** Do we get discouraged when we see others that have things we don't because we are believing that God likes them more because of their good deeds? Are we just comparing ourselves to others way too much?

Whatever that is family that is paralyzing you in your distress understand this one thing today, whatever it is there is only one person that can give you rest, but you have to come to Him not as an option but as your only hope. Come to Jesus today and let Him give you rest.

**PRAYER**

**COMMUNION**

**BENEDICTION**

Go in the name of the Father that may allow our distress so that we seek his Son for Rest.

Go in the name of the Son that knows what we need before we even ask it.

Go in the name of the HS that will help us to use proclaim Jesus to others as the one that has delivered us true rest.