

Greetings to you! The theme for our meditation this morning is, 'The Church shares in Christ's authority to heal sickness and sin.' Today is also Father's day and we give thanks to God for all the fathers who reflect something of God's love for us as a father. In the Gospel reading for this morning taken from Mark we notice that Jesus has again entered Capernaum, most probably in the home of Simon Peter. As he had come, a large crowd had gathered there to hear Jesus teach and there was absolutely no space in the house. As Jesus was teaching, some men came carrying a paralytic to enable him to meet Jesus so that he could be healed. When they came to the house they found that they could not get in because of the crowd. So they decided to go to the roof of the house and open the roof up. A typical house in West Asia usually had a flat roof and was made of a mat of branches laid across wooden beams and covered with a layer of clay and pressed down with a stone roller. These four friends were determined to make sure that their friend would meet Jesus because they had the faith that if he did so, he would be healed. Their faith was so strong that they were willing to open the roof of a stranger's home in order to let their friend meet with Jesus.

Imagine the scene for a moment; the mud would have been falling all over the place! People may have been annoyed at the disturbance to the meeting, but these friends persisted and opened the roof and got their friend bang in front of Jesus as they lowered the mat he was lying on. When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, 'My son, your sins are forgiven.' While he said this there were scribes who were questioning in their hearts, 'Why does this man speak like this? This is blasphemy! Who can forgive sin but God alone?' Jesus' statement had shocked the scribes because he was claiming the divine prerogative to forgive sin. Who was this man who was claiming this divine prerogative? Mark in other words is answering this implicit question, 'Who is this man?' He shows that Jesus is indeed God and therefore has the authority to forgive sins. Jesus not only claims that he has the authority to forgive sin but also that he has the authority to heal people. Jesus then questions the scribes as he is aware of what is going on in their minds. He asks them whether it was easier to tell a person that his sins are forgiven or to tell a paralytic to get up and walk. If one tells a person that his sin is forgiven there is no physical and tangible proof that it has happened. Jesus therefore heals the paralytic and gives them tangible evidence that he has indeed the power and the authority to forgive sins as well as to heal people. Forgiving sins and healing are signs of the presence of God's reign on earth. The man who was healed took his mat in full view of them all and went home. This amazed everyone and they praised God saying, 'We have never seen anything like this.'

In our text we see the authority of Jesus over sin and sickness being revealed. The

Scribes were right in saying that no one but God had the right to forgive sins, and Mark shows us that Jesus is indeed the Son of God who has this authority. This morning we as a church are called to share in Christ's work of healing and forgiveness. As we share the good news about Jesus, his life, death and resurrection for our sins and the hope of his coming again we too become co-workers in his ministry. Our medical missions are also part of our calling to bring healing into a broken world. Sin and sickness are prevalent in all our lives and therefore we all need the healing touch of Jesus. May we on this Sunday morning be healed in body, mind and Spirit, and spread this healing and forgiveness to those who are around us.

Shalom
Paul Swarup

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