

Translation from the Book

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The Cure of the Paralyzed Man in Capernaum Lk 5:17-26

(For our better understanding it is necessary to mention the way people built their houses at that time. The houses had a flat roof which was made by heavy tiles and it was supported by wooden beams. There was an indoor or outdoor ladder in order to have access on the roof.)

Christ was preaching in a crowded house in Capernaum. Suddenly the silence was interrupted by a strange noise. Everyone's eyes turned to the roof where the noise was coming from. Some people were removing tiles until they made a big hole. Then they started lowering a bed through the hole by using ropes. On the bed there was a paralyzed man who couldn't walk. He had heard that Christ would be in that house and he really wanted to meet Him. He **believed wholeheartedly** that Jesus Christ had the power to cure him from his terrible illness.

The man's relatives had been carrying him on the bed but they couldn't enter the house because there were a lot of people. How could they reach Christ whom they were so eager to see? Should they leave without achieving their goal? Impossible! They believed that Christ had the power to cure their sick relative.

Their **strong faith** prevented them from leaving in disappointment. They were determined to overcome every obstacle, so they found a solution; to enter the house through the roof.

They climbed on the roof; they removed the tiles and they lowered the paralyzed man's bed through the hole. At last, he was in front of Christ!

Christ looked at him compassionately, not only because of his illness but also because of his sins. Before his body was paralyzed, his soul had been paralyzed by the number of his sins. It's even probable that his sins had caused this serious illness. **Christ is omniscient.** His eyes can pierce the depths of the heart. He could see the repentance and the faith of the man in front of Him.

"My child, your sins are forgiven", He said affectionately.

Some Pharisees were in house in order to find a reason to make an accusation against Christ. They thought; "What a blasphemy! Who does he think he is? Who can forgive sins except for God?"

But Christ is the one and only God. Not only He **can forgive sins** but **He can also read the thoughts** of everyone.

So, He turned to them and said; "Why are you having these thoughts? What is easier, to tell the man that his sins are forgiven or to tell him to stand up and walk?"

Imagine how the Pharisees must have felt! They were certainly speechless when they realized that Christ knew their thoughts.

"In order to see that the Son of man - this is how Christ referred to himself – has the authority to forgive sins on the earth" He turned to the paralyzed man and said; "I tell you to get up, take your bed and go home".

To everyone's astonishment the paralyzed man, who had been carried by four men, stood up! He lifted his bed and took his way home just as our Lord instructed him! The amazed people, who had witnessed the event, were discussing; "What extraordinary and wondrous things our eyes saw today!"

The Sacrament of Confession

Indeed, it is an extraordinary and wondrous event that a paralyzed man stood up walked home carrying his bed. However, it is not the only thing which should impress us.

Christ read the Pharisees' minds. He revealed them their thoughts as a proof of His divinity and as an assurance that He has the authority to forgive sins.

Christ gave this authority also to His disciples after His Resurrection. During His first appearance among them he said; **"Receive the Holy Spirit: Whose soever sins you remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins you retain, they are retained."** (Jn 20:23). This is a great gift to the Church, the Sacrament of Confession. We can humbly confess our sins to the priest and we can hear the same sweet comforting words; "My child, your sins are forgiven". At that moment a miracle happens; **the Holy Spirit erases our sins and our soul is cleansed!** How great is God's love for us!

On the contrary, there is someone who hates us and wants to destroy us: the enemy of God and the enemy of everything good is the devil. He encourages us to sin and he tries to prevent us from confessing because he doesn't want us to become free from our sins.

Let's see some of the obstacles he puts in our way:

a. Shame. He minimizes the feeling of shame when he motivates us to sin, but he magnifies it when we want to confess. In other words, we don't feel any shame when we speak or behave in a bad way but we feel ashamed to confess it. However, Christ knows everything, even our thoughts. He knows what we did, even in secret and he is waiting for us to confess it so that He can cleanse us. Then, why should we feel ashamed? During Confession we see Christ in the face of the priest. Would we be ashamed to tell the doctor about our illness? The Confession is the remedy for our soul. We show truthfully the illness of our soul to the priest so that he can give us the appropriate medicine with his enlightened advice. He doesn't expect us to talk about our achievements or virtues. He expects to hear our sins and he feels happy when he sees our honest repentance.

b. Postponement. If we overcome the obstacle of shame, the devil presents us with another one; postponement. "You can go to confess. But not right now, another time" he

whispers. But why should we wait? If we fall in the mud, won't we go and change clothes immediately? If we get sick, will we delay making a doctor's appointment? So why should we postpone our confession which will cleanse our soul from its muddy sins and heal it from all wickedness?

We should rush happily to confess every time we get the chance. It's the Sacrament given to us by the love of God so that we can hear His sweet voice; "My child, your sins are forgiven".

I overcome every obstacle
Shame and procrastination.
Only when I go to confess
I enjoy my soul's purification.

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