

Crippled Man

I don't know why my friends cared about me. I was an unpleasant, bitter man who did not even appreciate their acts of kindness.

They had heard about the healer and decided to bring me there. From what they said, even I began to get a little hope. But after they carried me to the house where he was speaking and found it full, my thought was, "Of course, nothing ever goes right for me."

But they found a way to lower me through the ceiling right in front of Jesus so he could not help but notice me. As he looked at me and spoke, my dreams of walking, running, living as other men do returned to my discouraged imagination.

But the words I heard were all wrong, "Take heart, son; your sins are forgiven." I wanted to shout, "No! I want to walk!" but something stopped me. And in an instant, I had a vision of my life as it truly is and how it might have been. I actually wanted my health in order to pursue my own pleasure and would have made myself a horror of degradation and those around me casualties of my selfishness were it not for my disability.

I pictured myself healthy in body and sick in soul, headed towards the eternal punishment reserved for evil-doers because of the hardened and crippled heart that cherished anger, self-pity and hate. Forgiveness of my sins was what I really needed!

I was vaguely aware of a disturbance in the crowd and some calling him a blasphemer for claiming to forgive sins and he responded to them, "Which is easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up and walk?'"

Then he turned to me again and said it, "Get up, take your mat and go home." Just as I had come to peace with my condition, it was changed and with joy in my heart and strength in my legs, I leapt up and walked, as the bewildered crowd parted around me and my faithful friends followed along.

What did I do after that? I began to live! Not for myself but for others. And that included bringing everyone I could to the healer of body and soul. I could start a conversation with anyone now and have their complete attention. I did not do it for the fame or acclamation but for the opportunity to allow others to experience what had happened to me.

Matthew 9:1-8, Mark 2:1-12, Luke 5:17-26