

ABLE TO HEAL, ABLE TO FORGIVE

THE LESSON: LUKE 5

On one occasion, when a man born blind came to Jesus for healing, his disciples asked the question, “Who sinned, this man or his parents?” You see, the disciples believed that the man’s illness was the direct consequence of a specific sin. Perhaps they were remembering the warnings of God’s judgement against sin found in the Law (Deuteronomy 28). But Jesus replied, “It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in him” (John 9:2-3).

In the beginning, God’s creation was good in every way. Before human disobedience had entered the world, there was no sickness and no death. But we live in a world in which all kinds of harmful effects resulting from sin affect every one of us. We all experience sickness, suffering and death. God’s wonderful plan of redemption in Jesus Christ is the ultimate response to this.

Nevertheless, scripture exhorts us to pray for those among us who are sick. This does not mean we will always get the answer we would like. But in the moments when our circumstances make us *feel* hopeless, believers are to turn to the God who sees and cares, finding comfort and confidence in his character, knowing that he is faithful, and knowing that he is *able* to do anything, including heal the sick.

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During Jesus’ earthly ministry, there was an unfolding “epiphany” for his followers, as they began to understand who he really was. Let’s take a look now at one of the healing narratives found in the Gospel of Luke.

AT-HOME CHALLENGE

Each morning and evening, follow your own rule of prayer.

(IF YOU DON’T HAVE ONE, TRY SAYING THE MORNING AND EVENING PRAYERS FROM THE “FORMS OF PRAYER TO BE USED IN FAMILIES”, WHICH BEGINS ON PAGE 728 OF THE BCP. IF YOU DON’T HAVE A COPY, YOU CAN LOOK IT UP HERE: [HTTP://PRAYERBOOK.CA/RESOURCES/BCPONLINE/FAMILY-PRAYER.](http://PRAYERBOOK.CA/RESOURCES/BCPONLINE/FAMILY-PRAYER.))

We are invited to present our requests before God in faith, persisting in prayer, but also following the model of Jesus by saying “thy will be done”. Continue to pray for the sick people that you know, using the prayers below to ask for their healing and for a spirit willing to surrender to God’s will.

O Lord and heavenly Father, who dost relieve those who suffer in soul and body: Stretch forth thine hand, we beseech thee, to heal thy servants, and to ease their pain; that by thy mercy they may be restored to health of body and mind, and show forth their thankfulness in love to thee and service to their fellow men; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen. (PRAYER FOR THE RECOVERY OF A SICK PERSON, BCP PAGE 578)

O Lord Jesu Christ, thou great Physician: Look with thy gracious favour upon this thy servant; give wisdom and discretion to those who minister to him in his sickness; bless all the means used for his recovery; stretch forth thy hand and, according to thy will, restore him to health and strength, that he may live to praise thee for thy goodness and thy grace; to the glory of thy holy Name. Amen. (PRAYER FOR A BLESSING ON THE USE OF MEANS, BCP PAGE 578)

O God our heavenly Father, in whom we live and move and have our being: Grant to these thy servants grace to desire only thy most holy will; that, whether living or dying, they may be thine; for his sake who loved us and gave himself for us, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (PRAYER FOR SUBMISSION TO THE WILL OF GOD, BCP PAGE 579)

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LUKE 5: **COMPASSION + AUTHORITY**

¹⁷On one of those days, as Jesus 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. ¹⁸And behold, some men were bringing on a bed a man who was paralysed, and they were seeking to bring him in and lay him before Jesus, ¹⁹but 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. ²⁰And when he saw their faith, he said, “Man, your sins are forgiven you.” ²¹And the scribes and the Pharisees began to question, saying, “Who is this who speaks blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God alone?” ²²When Jesus perceived their thoughts, he answered them, “Why do you question in your hearts? ²³Which is easier, to say, ‘Your sins are forgiven you’, or to say, ‘Rise and walk’? ²⁴But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins”—he said to the man who was paralysed—“I say to you, rise, pick up your bed and go home.” ²⁵And immediately he rose up before them and picked up what he had been lying on and went home, glorifying God. ²⁶And amazement seized them all, and they glorified God and were filled with awe, saying, “We have seen extraordinary things today.”