

Luke 5:20

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And when he saw their faith, he said unto him, Man, thy sins are forgiven thee.

Analysis

When friends brought a paralytic to Jesus, 'when he saw their faith, he said unto him, Man, thy sins are forgiven thee.' Jesus responds not to the paralytic's faith but to the faith of those carrying him—faith demonstrated through determined effort (removing roof tiles to lower him). Significantly, Jesus addresses sin before disease, identifying spiritual need as primary. The declaration 'thy sins are forgiven' (Greek 'aphēontai,' ἀφέωνται, perfect passive) claims divine prerogative—only God forgives sin. This bold claim triggers the scribes' accusation of blasphemy (v. 21), which Jesus then validates through healing.

Historical Context

Jewish theology connected some sickness to sin (John 9:2, though Jesus rejected automatic causation). Many believed Messiah would heal Israel spiritually and physically. Jesus' forgiveness pronouncement without requiring sacrifice shocked hearers—only God could forgive sin apart from temple atonement. His subsequent healing proved His authority to forgive—physical healing validated spiritual healing. The paralytic's friends' faith demonstrated in action (overcoming obstacles, taking radical measures) illustrates true faith's perseverance. Jesus honored their faith by healing their friend, teaching that intercessory faith matters.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. What does Jesus' addressing sin before sickness teach about humanity's primary need and the gospel's priorities?
2. How does Jesus' honoring the faith of the paralytic's friends illustrate the power and importance of intercessory faith and persistence?

Interlinear Text

καὶ	ἰδὼν	τὴν	πίστιν	αὐτῷ,	εἶπεν	αὐτῷ,	Ἄνθρωπε
And	when he saw		faith	their	he said	their	Man
G2532	G1492	G3588	G4102	G846	G2036	G846	G444
ἀφεόνται	σοι	αἱ	ἁμαρτίαι	σου			
are forgiven	thee		sins	thy			
G863	G4671	G3588	G266	G4675			

Additional Cross-References

Acts 14:9 (Faith): The same heard Paul speak: who stedfastly beholding him, and perceiving that he had faith to be healed,

Matthew 9:2 (Faith): And, behold, they brought to him a man sick of the palsy, lying on a bed: and Jesus seeing their faith said unto the sick of the palsy; Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee.

Colossians 3:13 (Parallel theme): Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.

Mark 2:5 (Faith): When Jesus saw their faith, he said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, thy sins be forgiven thee.

John 2:25 (Parallel theme): And needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man.

Luke 7:48 (Sin): And he said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven.

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