

- Peter had to be **open** to the Lord's coming.
- " " " " " allow the Lord intervene.
- Peter had to be open to obey the Lord even when the command did not make sense to him.
- Peter had to learn his sinfulness in his daily work.
- When he allowed the Lord to transform **THE WAY HE WORKED**, he became one of the most famous men who ever lived!
  - famous for his work! - famous for his martyrdom!

### **What could our sinfulness be in daily work?**

- The world works for fame, success, honour, power and recognition.  
What do we, Christians, work for?  
If **our motivation** is the same as that of the world, then we prove ourselves worldly, **not** Christian.
- Do we obey God's Word consciously by showing justice, mercy, kindness, forgiveness, meekness, tolerance, etc.? Do we go against our selfishness just to please **Him**!

#### **Nota Bene:**

Peter's weakness / sinfulness **was NO BLOCK to God** once he confessed it and would do something to change his lifestyle. Jesus does not need us to be perfect before he uses us.

- he uses imperfect people all the time!

### **Miracle 2: The Leper: The Untouchable One:**

This is the first public healing in the Gospel. Its importance lies in the OT background.

Peter was a good, decent man, whose sinfulness had to be made known to him before he could convert. The leper who approached Jesus now **had his uncleanness exposed to everyone**. No one would go near him for fear of contamination.

**Lev 13:45-46** obliged him to wear his clothes and hair dishevelled, and to cry "unclean! unclean!" whenever he saw anyone along the road ... He had to live apart from the community.

This illness was thought to make a person unfit (unclean) for God's Presence – hence it was **a graphic symbol** of the uncleanness of sin.

The Mosaic Law was hard on the sufferer, but it was necessary **FOR THE HEALTH OF THE NATION**.

Leprosy began with a red swelling on the skin...then incubated until it reached maturity when it turned white as snow: **Isaiah 1:18**.

**Leprosy was viewed as a symbol of sin.** **Isaiah 1:4-6** accuses the nation of being leprous.

The ugliness of the disease reminded them of the ugliness of sin and its destructive power in the soul.

The prophets taught that only God could forgive sin – and that this gift would come through the Messiah. Before that time the sick person had to endure isolation from family, society and temple.

**On the spiritual plane**, sin also isolates us from God and from all relationships...

**(NB)** **Because of this** the cure of the leper **must be seen** from the higher - moral / spiritual level – rather than just the physical.

Why? Because **Jesus was a Prophet as well as a Healer** and **all** of his healings were **SIGNS** of deeper realities.

They were also graphic illustrations of what Redemption entailed for the individual – as in this case – or the group / Nation – as in other cases.

- Each case has to be examined on its own merits.
- The leper **represents** all of unredeemed humanity – unfit for the Presence and Glory of God because of the uncleanness of unrepented sin.
- **“covered with leprosy”** means that sin leads to sin until our souls are disgusting in God’s eyes. He sees us as mortally sick.
  - we think we are okay because “everyone is doing it”.
  - this statement shows the contagion of sin and how it spreads in a community gradually destroying the spiritual life, and moral fibre of the people.

**(NB)** Sin has to be dealt with if the Nation is to stay alive spiritually. Otherwise the Light of Truth will be obscured and the moral standards plunge into the gutter, killing the Nation.

**(NB) A NATION IS AS STRONG AS THE MORAL FIBRE OF ITS PEOPLE**

Sin destroys this moral fibre, making a weak people who cannot deal with evil in its midst, so evil begins to get the upper hand.

- Once the human Race is “covered with leprosy” God **alone** can deal with the problem. So, the man fell on his face, pleading with Jesus to help him.
 

{ The sight of Jesus raised **HOPE** in man.  
 “ “ “ “ “ **EXPECTATION** of salvation.
- This action on the part of the leper was
  - an acknowledgement of his own hopeless predicament
  - an act of faith and hope in the Person of Jesus for **NEW LIFE**.
- **“If you WANT TO, you CAN cure me”**. The man (and through him the whole Human Race) tells Jesus that he has **THE POWER** and **THE AUTHORITY** to deal with sin (uncleanness) **IF HE CHOOSES TO!!**

5:12 Notice the doubt. Nobody would touch a leper for fear of contagion.

**5:13 The Saviour’s Response: “Of course I want to! Be cured”!**

**He touched the leper.** This gesture alone would have brought so much healing to one who was forbidden to touch or be touched by anyone... but the crowd would move away from Jesus in fear!

- The emotional deprivation would have caused considerable pain.
- In **that touch** Jesus said: **“you are not a leper to ME; you are a son of God”**
- The declaration that Jesus made in this healing was **that he had come to cure the incurable disease of humanity**, and **that disease was sin**, which only the Messiah could deal with.

→ • In that touch Jesus **REMOVED** the leprosy from the man and **TOOK IT UPON HIMSELF!** Jesus died a leper on the Cross... he was socially ostracised and covered in wounds from head to foot. Jesus died in that condition – accused by the priests of being an unclean sinner!

Cf. Isaiah 53:2-11: **“ours were the sufferings he bore...**

**he was pierced for our faults...**

**crushed for our sins...**

**for our faults he was struck down in death...”**

- The leprosy left the man **at once**. This cleansed, healed and liberated man was sent to “the priests **AS A TESTIMONY to THEM**”.

**Why?**

- Jesus upheld the authority of the Mosaic Law, so He asked the man to obey it. Only the priests could declare a leper clean, offer sacrifice for him and send him home to his family and village.
- The priests were never friends of Jesus. From the beginning to the end of his life they opposed him. Here Jesus sent them testimony **OF WHY HE CAME**
  - that **HE WAS THE LIBERATOR**: Cf. Isaiah 35

**NB Jesus and Prayer:** Luke emphasises Jesus’ relationship with the Father in the Spirit.

Prayer was his power-house, where he drew strength for the trials and challenges of his ministry. 4:42-44; 5:16; 6:12 etc.

**MIRACLE 3: THE PARALYTIC: 5:17-26**

This is a major event in Jesus’ Ministry. Luke indicates this by telling us **who was there TO WITNESS** the event.

(a) **Pharisees** –

- who haunted Jesus during his ministry, challenging him on every possible occasion
- they disputed **HIS IDENTITY, MISSION, TEACHING, AUTHORITY, HOLINESS**
- everything He stood for.

(b) **Doctors of the Law**: very seldom present at **any** event. These are the experts in Theology whom Jesus disputed with in the Temple when he was 12 years old (2:46-48)

- \* Here, Jesus challenges them again **on their own ground**.  
Did they suspect that this was the boy they had met before?

**V.I.P. Information for the Reader:** Since Jesus is Lord (Kyrie), (5:9,12), then we must realise that the Son of Man **has Authority on Earth**: he has authority as God, but authority on earth pointed him out as the Messiah.

- to forgive sins: (5:24)
- to call sinners to repentance (5:32)
- to interpret the Sabbath according to God’s Will (6:5)

**V.I.P.** Clue for **reading the text**: 5:17b

**“the Power of the Lord God was Present in his works of healing”**

**OCCASION OF THE MIRACLE:** A paralysed man was carried on a stretcher

**v 19:** The entry of the sick man was dramatic – his 3 friends (3 wise men!) went to great lengths to get him **IN FRONT OF JESUS...** the crowds made it impossible to go in normally...

**Symbolism:** The man represents **the Human Race made helpless** by the disintegrating power of sin. Humanity can no longer walk in God’s Ways. He needs Jesus desperately in order to be able to get up and live again.

The world (crowds) will always make it difficult for you to **reach** Jesus, but, like this man’s friends you need: (a) to go to great lengths to succeed  
(b) to persevere until you **do** reach Jesus.

5:20

The friends had put their faith and trust in Jesus to act for them... without saying anything!  
So, Jesus decided in his sovereign Wisdom to **go to the very root of Humanity's problems: SIN** and its destructive power.

- \* **"My friend"**: God is everyone's **FRIEND**... the One who loves you the most... the One who wants your ultimate good... the One who loves you even when you reject Him.
- \* **Your sins are forgiven**: this was pure gift from Jesus!  
He asked for no repentance... no change of lifestyle... nothing! (preview of Good Thief)

**BUT** Jesus would have to take those sins to the Cross and suffer the consequences of God's judgement for sin (Is 53:8-11)

#### **Reaction from the Doctors of the Law and Pharisees: 5: 22-22**

**Only** God can forgive sin! This is blasphemy!

**NB** Israel taught that **God** forgives repentant sinners, but **NO** human being – no matter how Holy, could arrogate to himself this divine privilege.

... and Jesus had forgiven **IN HIS OWN NAME**  
**IN HIS OWN PERSON**

... Jesus had not prayed to God for the permission to do it.

∴ **Jesus was claiming DIVINE PRIVILEGE** – hence the accusation of blasphemy.

**Jesus' Response:** was to demonstrate by a miracle that **he had** the authority **ON EARTH** to forgive sin  
∴ He was **MESSIAH!!** This authority was his as **Son of Man – second Adam**. Cf. Dan 7:13-14

**5:23-25:** Jesus **simply COMMANDED** the paralytic to walk: this was **the power of the Divine Word**  
i.e. the man was healed **BY A DIVINE COMMAND** of Him who was **THE WORD INCARNATE!**

**Result:** The man who **left** the Synagogue was a "completely new creature in Christ" (2 Cor 5:127)  
- an example of what "Redeemed" meant. He was cleansed of sin, healed and set free to live a **NEW LIFE** in a **NEW WAY** according to the grace that Christ won for him.

**5:26:** This redeemed man was "the strange thing" they had seen; Isaiah's promise was being fulfilled: (Is 35:9-10)

**Question:** Had **anyone** in that house eyes to see and discern the **Presence** of the Living God among them?  
Or, were they **blinded** by petty prejudices? Worldliness?  
Or were they **blinded** by self-interest? Sin?

\* What a tragedy to have the Power of the Lord present and not benefit from it!

**Final word:** **Did anyone thank Jesus** for His gift of redemption to this man? No!

- The 3 wise men on the roof didn't!
- The healed man didn't!
- The crowds didn't!
- The religious authorities responded negatively, accusing him of blasphemy!

**What was the issue?** It was Jesus' WORD!

Here Jesus revealed Himself as the creative, spirit-filled, life-giving Word of God!