

A LAME MAN AT THE KING'S TABLE

A LAME MAN AT THE GATE BEAUTIFUL

There are some thrilling and beautiful stories in the Bible. We sincerely trust that you will enjoy the stories of two lame men which we shall relate in this message. And, of course, we do want you also to be spiritually blessed as you learn that God has a message for you and for me in these stories. So we pray that you may receive this message with profit as well as with enjoyment.

THE FIRST LAME MAN

II Samuel 9:1 to 13

And David said, Is there yet any that is left of the house of Saul, that I may shew him kindness for Jonathan's sake? And there was of the house of Saul a servant whose name was Ziba. And when they had called him unto David, the king said unto him, Art thou Ziba? And he said, Thy servant is he. And the king said, Is there not yet any of the house of Saul, that I may shew the kindness of God unto him? And Ziba said unto the king, Jonathan hath yet a son, which is lame on his feet. And the king said unto him, Where is he? And Ziba said unto the king, Behold, he is in the house of Machir, the son of Ammiel, in Lodebar. Then king David sent, and fetched him out of the house of Machir, the son of Ammiel, from Lodebar. Now when Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan, the son of Saul, was come unto David, he fell on his face, and did reverence. And David said, Mephibosheth. And he answered, Behold thy servant! And David said unto him, Fear not: for I will surely shew thee kindness for Jonathan thy father's sake, and will restore thee all the land of Saul thy father; and thou shalt eat bread at my table continually. And he bowed himself, and said, What is thy servant, that thou shouldest look upon such a dead dog as I am? Then the king called to Ziba, Saul's servant, and said unto him, I have given unto thy master's son all that pertained to Saul and to all his house. Thou therefore, and thy sons, and thy servants, shall till the land for him, and thou shalt bring in the fruits, that thy master's son shall eat bread alway at my table. Now Ziba had fifteen sons and twenty servants. Then said Ziba unto the king, According to all that my lord the king hath commanded his servant, so shall thy servant do. As for Mephibosheth, said the king, he shall eat at my table, as one of the king's sons. And Mephibosheth had a young son, whose name was Micha. And all that dwelt in the house of Ziba were servants unto Mephibosheth. So Mephibosheth dwelt in Jerusalem: for he did eat continually at the king's table; and was lame on both his feet.

THE SECOND LAME MAN

Acts 3:1 to 11

Now Peter and John went up together into the temple at the hour of prayer, being the ninth hour. And a certain man lame from his mother's womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, to ask alms of them that entered into the temple; Who seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple asked an alms. And Peter, fastening his eyes upon him with John, said, Look on us. And he gave heed unto them, expecting to receive something of them. Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have

give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk. And he took him by the right hand, and lifted him up: and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength. And he leaping up stood, and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God. And all the people saw him walking and praising God: And they knew that it was he which sat for alms at the Beautiful gate of the temple: and they were filled with wonder and amazement at that which had happened unto him. And as the lame man which was healed held Peter and John, all the people ran together unto them in the porch that is called Solomon's, greatly wondering.

Does this question come to your mind, why was one man healed of his physical affliction whereas the other remained a cripple.

MEPHIBOSHETH, THE LAME MAN

Mephibosheth was of the house of Saul. So also was Jonathan; for he was Saul's son. Perhaps it would be impossible for one man to hate another with a more jealous and vicious hatred than did King Saul hate David. King Saul was the sworn enemy of David, and time and again not only threatened to murder him but made several unsuccessful attempts to take his life. If you care to look into the record, read I Samuel 18:11 and 29; I Samuel 19:9 and 10 and I Samuel 26:2.

By way of contrast note these statements concerning the friendship and love that existed between David and Jonathan. I Samuel 18:1, "The soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul." Then hear the words of David concerning Jonathan, "Very pleasant hast thou been unto me, thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of Women." II Samuel 1:26. It is of interest to note that the word "David" was one of the Hebrew words meaning "love". And note the meaning of "Jonathan", "Jehovah", the Lord, "Nathan gift, God's gift. Immediately this takes our thoughts to John 3:16.

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

Then in I John 4:8 we read "God is love." David is "love". Christ on the cross of Calvary was "Jonathan" ; God's love gift. For Saul's sake Mephibosheth deserved death at the hands of King David. Mephibosheth knew this and was, perhaps, hiding from the king. He was at Lodebar. Lodebar means "the place of no pasture." Note how the sinful Israelites are described in Isaiah 53:6, "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all." Ask any shepherd where the sheep go when not guided by the shepherd. They will stray to the place of no pasture. If you and I could take in at one glimpse the whole creation we would believe Romans 8:22 and I John 5:19.

"For we know that the whole world groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now."

"And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in the wicked one."

Think of the millions upon millions of heathen in darkness and superstition and awful sin and suffering. Then behold the rest of the human race in the most brutal, cruel war of human destruction ever known on earth. Think of all the pagan religions and the false philosophies, and satanic vagaries that are being propagated and received by human beings all over this inhabited earth, not only in Africa and China but in this so-called Christian America. Satan is accused of

the crime of deceiving the whole world. And God's Word tells the truth when it says that the human heart is deceitful and desperately wicked.

Even the members of the human race, born under the most favorable conditions, are conceived in sin and shapen in iniquity. They are born spiritually lame. Mephibosheth was lame on both feet. No man by natural birth or by any human cure can walk or do one single thing to please God. Note Romans 8:8, "So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God." But a marvelous transformation is told in Ephesians 2:10.

"For we are His (God's) workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."

Yes, here is the one and only remedy for any and every Mephibosheth, "lame on both his feet." "God's workmanship", "Created by God", "Created in Christ Jesus", "Unto good works", "To walk in good works." The creation is by God's grace and not by man's doing or walking. Ephesians 2:8 and 9. The creation by God, in Christ Jesus, by grace through faith, the gift of God, raises the lame to walk in newness of life. Romans 6:3 to 6.

Note the testimony of the man who became number one Christian, the apostle Paul, "I am carnal, sold under sin." Romans 7:14. Sold under sin. In bondage to sin and Satan. This is the predicament of man by nature, even the religious man. Mephibosheth was in the house of Machir. Machir means "sold", that is, "sold into bondage." By nature the sinner is the strong man's house. Satan is the strong man. Matthew 12:29. Note Ephesians 6:10 and 11.

"Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil."

Only the omnipotent Christ can deliver Satan's helpless victims from his wiles and power, and from the bondage of sin, and bring redeemed humanity to the glorious climax of Romans 8:21.

"Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God:"

Ziba was an obedient servant, and we may rest assured that he lost no time in the mission of the king; that he permitted no personal desire or duty to delay him, as the king's messenger to the poor unfortunate and unattractive Mephibosheth. What a scene when he reached the lame man, David's enemy, with the message of kindness! Can you imagine yourself in the house of Machir looking at Mephibosheth when Ziba told him the good news, that David would not only pardon him but adopt him into his family, not as a servant, but as a son, and would let him enjoy the bounty and blessings of the king's table? Surely this was the kindness of God. But remember, it was for Jonathan's sake.

Here again we pause to meditate upon Romans 5:10, Ephesians 4:32 and 2:19, and Romans 8:15 to 17.

"For if, when we are enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life."

"And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you. "

"Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God."

"For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit Itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God; And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ."

Can you understand why any lame sinner will refuse to become a son of God, a joint-heir with the Lord Jesus Christ, and sit at God's table?

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies in Christ." Ephesians 1:3.

One reason is stated in II Corinthians 4:3 and 4:

"But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost; in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ Who is the image of God, should shine unto them."

But here is God's message directed to those who are members of the household of God, and are supposed to be faithful Zibas.

"So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God:" Romans 10:17.

"How then shall they call on Him in Whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in Him of Whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?" Romans 10:14.

How many Mephibosheths are there in Lodebar, in the house of Machir, waiting for a faithful Ziba to come with the King's message? Hear the words of Christ.

"Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest. And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal; that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together." John 4:35 and 36.

Note in II Thessalonians 2:13 how sinners are saved.

"But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth."

Note the responsibility and privilege of the King's messenger, in I Corinthians 3:7 to 9.

"So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither is he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase. Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one; and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour. For we are labourers together with God; ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building."

What a tremendous responsibility is that of the child of God. The Holy Spirit is always present, faithful and obedient to convict the sinner of his sin of unbelief and of his need of Christ and ready to do his Divine work in II Thessalonians 2:13. But if the sinner is to be saved by believing the truth, he must hear the truth. Faith cometh by hearing. But how can he hear without a preacher? To this question God adds, "How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things." Romans 10:15.

Although our feet once were ugly because they carried us according to the course of this world into sin and away from God, after we have been redeemed by God's grace and the precious blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, they can be beautiful, if used to carry God's message of kindness to those who are where we once were.

Well, surely Mephibosheth rejoiced when Ziba brought him glad tidings of good things, and we may rest assured that they lost no time in leaving for the king's palace. Mephibosheth was so overwhelmed when he heard from the king's lips what was in store for him that he bowed in humiliation, and likened himself to a dead dog. But David was thinking of Jonathan when he looked upon the poor deformed Mephibosheth and said, "he shall eat bread alway at my table." "As for Mephibosheth, said the king, he shall eat at my table, as one of the king's sons." II Samuel 9:10 and 11. Then note, "And all that dwelt in the house of Ziba were servants unto

Mephibosheth. So Mephibosheth dwelt in Jerusalem; for he did eat continually at the king's table and was lame on both his feet." II Samuel 9:12 and 13.

This was indeed the kindness of God. This surely was grace. Did you ever read Ephesians 2:7? "That in the ages to come He (God) might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus"

Did you ever read II Timothy 1:9 and 10? "Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, Who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel."

How long will sinners, saved by grace, sit at the King's table? Forever and ever and ever. Unending bliss and glory awaits the child of God. God has wonderful news for poor lame sinners. Hear it: "Where sin abounded grace did much more abound." Romans 5:20. Hear again: "But to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." Romans 4:5.

Surely the Bible tells us of God's eternity of grace. After the Bible describes the awful predicament of the poor wretched lame sinner, in Ephesians 2:1 to 3, we read these words in verse 4, "But God, Who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us."

This brings to our minds a message concerning the kindness and love of God in Titus 3:3 to 7.

"For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another. But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life."

Then note what Christ's coming will mean to those who are sitting at His table, already blessed with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies.

"Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself." Philippians 3:21.

AT THE GATE BEAUTIFUL

Many times have we seen a lame man on the streets of our cities begging for money. Some of them are pitiful sights. They frequently find a place on the sidewalks right in front of a fine church edifice, especially on some religious feast day when they think the religious people will be a bit more generous because they are religiously stirred up.

Peter and John found the beggar in a very select spot. He was at the gate of a most magnificent temple. He was at the gate Beautiful. That name would seem to be significant. The temple was located in what had been God's holy city, the city of the great King. That city had been selected by God as the city on earth from which his religion and His Divine blessing should go out to all the world. Just before Jesus Christ was crucified by the very religious men who were in charge of the religious services in the Jerusalem Temple, we read concerning Him: "And in the daytime He was teaching in the temple; and at night He went out, and abode in the mount

that is called the mount of Olives. And all the people came early in the morning to Him in the temple, for to hear Him.” Luke 21:37 and 38.

On another occasion Christ told these religious rulers that He was greater than the temple. Matthew 12:6. Well, He certainly proved that statement in doing for that poor lame man what the rulers of the temple could not do. Before the religious Sabbath-keepers had the Creator of the universe, their own Messiah and God, nailed to the cross He said, “the Son of man is Lord of the Sabbath day.” Mark 2:28. Then he spoke to them in very plain language. Note some of His statements:

“ . . . It is written, My house is the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves.” Luke 19:46. “Woe unto you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchers, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men’s bones, and of all uncleanness.” “Yea blind guides, which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel.” “Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?” Matthew 23:27, 24 and 33.

Rather harsh language. Just visualize those self-righteous, profoundly religious men, clad in their costly and beautiful religious robes, going religiously through their ceremonies and ritualism in the midst of all their religious paraphernalia in the temple, blind guides and hypocrites headed for the damnation of hell, as human serpents. Christ spoke of them and their followers as “blind leaders of the blind” all headed for the ditch. Matthew 15:14.

This surely should teach us not to follow some human leader because he dresses religiously and goes through a religious program with religious vessels in a religious building. Here is some wonderful truth for all of us to grasp and believe: “I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law; then Christ is dead in vain.” Galatians 2:21. “For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.” Romans 10:4. “That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.” Romans 5:21.

The friends of the crippled beggar not only selected a good spot, but just, the right religious hour of prayer. Do you recall the words of the Bible, “having a form of godliness but denying the power thereof ?” II Timothy 3:5. You will recall that Christ told about a very religious man who went up into the temple to pray. Read it in Luke 18:9 to 11. That man prayed with himself. He told God he was very religious and good. His prayer never reached God but it seemed to satisfy his religious soul. Is it not strange how millions of religious people think they can fool God with religious forms and ceremonies? Yes, strange; but it is because they have been blinded by the god of this age, who is the most religious creature in the universe of God, the clever devil, who transforms himself into an angel of light and has his religious messengers in so-called Christian pulpits all over Christendom. II Corinthians 11:13 to 15.

Perhaps you have seen or known of many very pious, religious people who regularly attend religious meetings. They watch the religious leaders going through their ritualism, worshipping God with images and religious things and praying not only with their lips, but with their hands and religious pots and vessels and chains and candle-sticks. Then as they reach the front door, having done their religious duty, they light their cigarettes and then are away to mingle with the worldly crowd for worldly amusements and go right along in their ungodly habits and practices until the religious urge again leads them to their religious shrine to go through their ritualism. Thus they follow their religious leaders without once looking into the infallible Word of God to see whether or not they are following self-appointed, blind, religious

dignitaries and potentates who know little or nothing of God's spiritual program for this age of grace.

Perhaps ninety-five per cent of the people, even so-called educated, intelligent people, permit religious leaders to do their religious thinking for them. As some man of God has said, the great masses have not reached the true Christ and true Bible Christianity because of the mysticism of medievalism or the rationalism of modernism. The first of these is little more than Christianized paganism and Judaism and the second nothing more than Christianized agnosticism. In the first, the true Christ, by unscriptural religious prelates, princes and priests and unscriptural and unchristian religious rites and ceremonies, has been placed at such a distance from the blind followers of the blind leaders that they have not found Christ as an all-sufficient Saviour. On the other hand, in the language of Shakespeare, the Christ of modernism is no more like the Christ of the Bible than I to Hercules.

Surely, in the sight of God, those who have led the poor, blind, gullible religious victims into these pseudo-Christian organizations, are spiritual criminals, for any man who pretends to be the messenger of the Lord Jesus Christ, in this age of grace, and presents to poor lost hell-bound sinners any gospel message other than the gospel of the grace of God, or who so mixes in ritualism, religion or fanaticism as to frustrate the grace of God, is indeed a spiritual criminal.

Be not deceived; there is no panacea or cure for the groaning creation, for sinning suffering humanity, in the religion of religious prelates, princes and priests who make merchandise of human souls or in the counterfeit Christianity of the cultured, clever, eloquent Christian infidel (an impossible paradox) who propagates his agnosticism and infidelity with Bible terminology and Christian phraseology, calling himself a Liberal. To these menaces add the twenty or more modern metaphysical cults, who mix in a few scattered Bible verses with their unscriptural errors of the mortal mind, to propagate their satanic vagaries and lead their followers religiously to perdition.

All of these religions, which we have mentioned, are in no small way responsible for the worldwide disorder, violence and bloodshed which God is permitting to bring sorrow and suffering to this Christ-rejecting religious world.

And what folly to believe that political pacts and police will alter world conditions or bring peace to mankind, if there is not to be a radical change in the message and program of those who claim to be the Lord's messengers and ministers in the Christian Church. We are supposed to be fighting for religious freedom. If this means that the great majority of so called Christians are to go right on practicing and propagating ritualism, modernism and fanaticism and the satanic vagaries of the metaphysical cults, then the same God will permit the same judgments, or even worse, to afflict not only the guilty nation who delivered Christ to the heathen Pilate to be crucified when they said, "let His blood be upon our heads," but all people, no matter how religious, moral or well educated they may be, who are equally guilty of the precious shed blood of the eternal Son of God by refusing to bow to the authority of God's Word and thus refusing to appropriate by faith that one and only Divine remedy for sin. "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Romans 5:1. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." John 3:36.

In the midst of the religious confusion and entanglements of the day how helpful and satisfactory it should be to everyone to turn in the Bible to the question the bewildered disciples asked the Lord Jesus and the Lord's answer. The question was, "Lord, how can we know the

way?" Note carefully the answer of the Lord Jesus, "I am the way: no man cometh unto the Father but by Me." John 14:6. Christ is the way, "The free Gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." Romans 6:23.

Christ opened up the new and living way by His own precious shed blood and entered once into heaven, having obtained eternal redemption for us. Hebrews 10:20 and Hebrews 9:12. Christ is the believer's redemption, holiness and righteousness. I Corinthians 1:30. As many as received Christ were given the right to become the children of God. John 1:11. Galatians 3:26 and 27.

We hear much today of victory and peace. We must win the war. Then we must win the peace. Jesus Christ made peace by the blood of His cross. Colossians 1:20. He is coming to this earth as the Prince of Peace. Isaiah 9:6 and 7. Victory and peace without Christ are impossible. Religion in Europe brought anything but victory and peace. Religion will do no better after this war. Christ is the only panacea for the human race.

Think of the millions of dollars invested in costly church buildings and cathedrals in our largest city. There is no lack of religion there. But Oh what a lack of the preaching of the gospel of the grace of God, an all-sufficient Christ, to the great multitude of lost, condemned sinners in that city of sin and corruption. Some of the preachers who stand in those religious pulpits do not know the meaning of Ephesians 2:8 to 10, salvation by God's grace. If the priests and preachers would really experience the Divine transformation of I Corinthians 5:17 and then take Christ to those who have been lame from their mother's womb, we might talk about victory and peace.

The word "Christianity" is not in the Bible. In this age of grace there is no such thing as the Christian religion. God does not want any person to be religious. He does want every person to be righteous and spiritual. Note carefully I Timothy 2:4 to 6: "God, who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus; Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time." Note also Ephesians 1:6 and 7: "To the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the Beloved: In Whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace." When the believer has Christ he is adequately provided for: "He that spared not His own son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" Romans 8:32.

Well, we left that poor cripple at the gate Beautiful. Let us get back to him. God did not leave him lame and we certainly do not want to. Note again what happened: "And a certain man lame from his mother's womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, to ask alms of them that entered into the temple; Who, seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple, asked an alms. And Peter, fastening his eyes upon him with John, said, Look on us. And he gave heed unto them, expecting to receive something of them. Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee; In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk. And he took him by the right hand and lifted him up and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength. And he leaping up stood, and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping and praising God. And all the people saw him walking and praising God: And they knew that it was he which sat for alms at the Beautiful gate of the temple and they were filled with wonder and amazement at that which had happened unto him." Acts 3:2 to 10.

Peter and John had been partners in the fishing business. Perhaps they had some silver and gold at the time when they left their business. At the Lord's command they went fishing for lost sinners. But now they had given up all their material wealth to tell their fellow-men of the

inheritance incorruptible, undefiled and that fadeth not away, about which Peter wrote in the first chapter of his First Epistle. In that same first chapter of First Peter he had something to say about silver and gold: "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ as a lamb without blemish and without spot." I Peter 1:18 and 19.

Perhaps if that unfortunate lame man had had more silver and gold, he might have paid a good doctor, a limb specialist, and received some help. But from the story we would judge that he was incurable, so far as any natural remedy was concerned. Even so, the rich sinner, afflicted with soul sickness (sin), cannot buy pardon, peace or righteousness with silver and gold. God is not a merchant. God is a King. His spiritual blessings are not for sale. Silver and gold cannot buy God's blessings. God gives salvation, eternal life, pardon, peace and joy to all who will receive His Son; for it is with this Son that God freely gives its all things. God hath chosen the poor of this world to be rich in faith.

When believers receive Christ as Saviour, they are not their own, their silver and gold belong to their Saviour and Lord and they will be rewarded for using it to the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ in His work. The priests and high priests, with all their perfunctory religious doings and their stereotyped formal prayers could not do anything to help that afflicted beggar. But the two humble men had what he needed. They presented an omnipotent, crucified, glorified Christ. Note what they had said in the preceding chapter: Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made the same Jesus, Whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ." "But my God shall supply all Your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus." Philippians 4:19.

Christ is the man's superlative need. Not the philosophy or ethics of Jesus, not Jesus the way-shower, not the sermon on the mount or the golden rule, but Christ and His precious shed blood is the first all-important need. Before the individual can walk to please God he must be God's workmanship created in Christ Jesus. Ephesians 2:10.

RISE UP AND WALK

"In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk." Then note what happened: "and he leaping up stood, and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God." Surely this was according to the prophecy Isaiah 35:5 and 6, "Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as a hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out and streams in the desert." In this miraculous healing and other healings by Christ and His apostles we have the firstfruits of what is going to take place on this earth when the King returns to establish His kingdom, to bring about the restitution of all things spoken by the prophets since the world began. This is proved by comparing Acts 3:8 with Acts 3:20 and 21.

God permitted Paul to duplicate the miracles performed by Peter. Note Acts 14:8 to 10, "And there sat a certain man at Lystra, impotent in his feet, being a cripple from his mother's womb, who never had walked. The same heard Paul speak: who steadfastly beholding him, and perceiving that he had faith to be healed, Said with a loud voice, Stand upright on thy feet. And he leaped and walked."

In II Corinthians 12:12 and Hebrews 2:3 to 5 we learn that these miracles were the signs of an apostle. Inasmuch as we do not have apostles, we do not have apostolic signs, but we can constantly behold great miracles performed in and through and by the Name of the Lord Jesus

Christ: "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." II Corinthians 5:17. This great miracle is also stated in Ephesians 2:10.

Read this blessed experience of the new creature in Romans 6:3 and 4 and Galatians 3:26 and 27: "Know ye not that as many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death? Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." "For we are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ."

This is a more wonderful miracle than being healed physically, although many of God's children, like Epaphroditus, in Philippians 2:25 to 29, have been restored to health by the prayer of faith. Nevertheless, all of the sick, lame, blind and afflicted people, who received physical healing from Jesus Christ of Nazareth and his apostles, later on died with the same disease or some other disease and demonstrated the truth of II Corinthians 4:16, Romans 8:23, and Philippians 3:20 and 21, that no matter how spiritual a saint may be his outward man daily decays, he groans within himself, waiting for the redemption of the body, he has a body of humiliation and no permanent change may be expected until the Lord Jesus comes out of heaven and calls the dead in Christ out of their graves and corruption and the living saints to be changed in a moment in the twinkling of an eye. Until that time the death rate will continue to be one apiece, saint and sinner alike. However the after-death experiences of saint and sinner are altogether different.

Using the slogan, "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, today and forever" (Hebrews 13:8), and Matthew 8:17, "that it might be fulfilled that was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities and bare our sicknesses," many sincere, earnest Christians have tried to persuade themselves and others that the Church could have and would have perpetuated or duplicated the miracles of Christ and Peter and Paul, if they had not declined spiritually and drifted into unbelief.

Every attempt to demonstrate the eternal Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ and the power of the gospel of the grace of God by duplicating the miracles of Jesus Christ has not only failed but it has caused confusion, fanaticism and misunderstanding as to God's eternal purpose and spiritual program during the present economy of grace. In the Gospel of John we find the record of the seven miracles to demonstrate the eternal Deity of Christ. John 20:31. Seven is God's Divine and perfect number. Jesus Christ was God's Divine and perfect Son. That is the story of the Gospel of John from first to last. John 1:1 to 3, John 10:33, John 17:3 and 5, John 19:7, and John 20:28.

In this Record we learn that Christ turned water into wine, Christ walked on the water, Christ healed the nobleman's son, Christ healed the impotent man, Christ fed 5000 people with less than one pound of food, Christ put clay on the blind boy's eyes and he was healed when he washed in the pool, Christ raised from the dead a man who had been dead four days.

If Christians, by perpetuating or duplicating the miracles of Christ, are to prove that He is the same yesterday, today and forever, as Christ proved it, they should not put asunder what God hath joined together. When they demonstrate by cunning, or attempting to cure, some physical infirmities, let them walk on the water, turn water into wine, feed the hungry multitudes with one scanty meal and raise the dead.

In the doctrine of Divine healing, like all other doctrines in the Bible, God's children need to obey II Timothy 2:15: "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of truth."

In this same farewell message of the greatest of all saints, to Timothy, the apostle Paul said (note almost his last words), Erastus abode at Corinth: but Trophimus have I left at Miletum sick." II Timothy 4:20.

Why did Paul leave this faithful saint sick? Why did not Paul give us the news before he died that he had performed a miracle and healed Trophimus? Why does God's Book tell us about sick Trophimus? This very statement is recorded to help God's children to know the truth concerning spiritual healing of physical diseases.

The risen Lord especially selected Paul to indoctrinate members of His Body. Note Ephesians 3:1 to 3, "For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: How that by revelation He made known unto me the mystery (as I wrote afore in few words)." It was this man of God who said: "For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish (rot thoroughly), yet the inward man is renewed day by day. II Corinthians 4:16, "Of such a one will I glory; yet of myself I will not glory, but in mine infirmities." II Corinthians 12:5.

Paul at times was a sick man. His friend Timothy was a sick man. To him Paul wrote: "Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine oft infirmities." I Timothy 5:23. Epaphroditus was more critically ill than either Paul or Timothy. Note Philippians 2:25 to 27: "Yet I supposed it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother, and companion in labor, and fellow soldier, but your messenger, and he that ministered to my wants. For he, longed after you all, and was full of heaviness, because that ye had heard that he had been sick. For indeed he was sick nigh unto death: but God had mercy on him; and not on him only, but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow. " God had mercy on this faithful saint and raised him up, for his ministry was so much needed.

You may not be as faithful as Trophimus, Timothy, or Epaphroditus, but if you are redeemed, you are precious in the sight of the Lord, even at the time you die of sickness. "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints." Every child of God should have sufficient faith and confidence to not only say, but believe, "we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to His purpose"; and should say truthfully, with Paul, "And whether we live we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's." Romans 14:8.

There must be a reason why Paul put hands on heathen who were then and there miraculously healed of their disease by God (Acts 28:7 and 8) and why a faithful saint was left sick or why Paul did not put hands on Timothy for his oft sicknesses or send to Timothy a handkerchief or an apron. (Acts 19:11 to 13).

I knew a faithful saint of God who was crucified, dead, buried and raised with Christ to walk in newness of life. Very few times did she stand on her feet for ten or twelve years. No, she was bedridden. But she walked in newness of life. She was a consecrated saint and she walked with God and praised God in the midst of her affliction and physical pain. She walked spiritually but not physically.

An attendant at one of the hospitals in a large city asked me some "why's." One "Why" was, why is it that some ungodly sinners frequently die with little pain and some consecrated saints suffer much physical pain at the time they depart to be with the Lord? Of course, we know that there is no such general rule, as many saints have quiet, peaceful, painless moments when

they give up their earthly tabernacles and depart to be with Christ. But we might ask why some ungodly unbelievers and some compromising carnal Christians enjoy excellent health, whereas some exceptional spiritual, praying saints suffer much from physical disease, in spite of all the earnest, fervent prayers of righteous friends? Why did God raise up Epaphroditus and leave Trophimus sick?

Why did lame Mephibosheth, who received such honor from God and David, remain lame at the king's table, whereas the lame man at the gate Beautiful was healed of his lameness and rushed into the temple at Jerusalem praising the Lord? David, who bestowed such mercy and grace and honor upon Mephibosheth, was a man after God's own heart and was one of God's heroes of faith. In his days he was just as great as was Peter in his days. But they lived and served God under different Divine economies.

God is omnipotent, a miracle-working God; but, according to the Bible, there were certain periods when God performed very special miracles by His, servants, not because they were more faithful than the servants in other periods, but because there were periods for special miracles, as in the days of Moses and Aaron, in the days of Elijah and Elisha, in the days of Christ and His apostles. Then there will be signs, miracles and wonders in the coming days of the Beast and the Antichrist. Revelation 13 and II Thessalonians 2:3 to 11.

In this connection we note in I Corinthians 1:22, "for the Jews require a sign." Then again the words of Christ in Matthew 16:2, "a wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign." Thomas wanted a sign. The Lord said to him, "Thomas, because thou hast seen Me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed." John 20:29. Then we read in II Corinthians 5:7, "For we walk by faith, not by sight."

When Job was suffering the loss of his earthly possessions, but still enjoying good health, note what Satan said to the Lord: "And Satan answered the Lord, and said, Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life." Job 2:4. Satan knows, God knows, and you and I know that this has been true concerning many sick people who have bartered their souls to Satan in exchange for the imaginary cure of some real ill or the real cure of some imaginary ill in some metaphysical religions cult.

Much of the time that Paul was presenting the gospel of the grace of God he was not in tip-top physical shape. He mentioned many times that the Lord Jesus died for our sins, to save our souls; but he never said, or intimated, that Christ died for our sicknesses or that any saint could look to Christ and Calvary and find physical healing. He did write "Now unto Him who is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us." Ephesians 3:20.

Such a God, with such ability, is surely able to restore to health any sick saint. Many saints have been wonderfully restored to health more than once, but the next time, with just as much faith and prayer, they died. Other saints, equally spiritual and faithful, have remained physical invalids. So we must see that we should not use some healing experience to establish some Divine healing theory. It is strange how some sincere saints will pray "give us our daily bread" then go to work, earn the money, and go to the bakery for the bread, but they consider it a lack of faith to pray for God to heal them, if they go to a physician for the material remedy for physical sickness. Surely we see the truth of elective healing in Gods messages to the members of the Body of Christ in this dispensation of grace. Let us read II Timothy 1:7, "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind." What a splendid combination! This is spiritual sanity. This is what is needed in this day of disunity, confusion and fanaticism.

The Greek words “bare” in Matthew 8:17 and I Peter 2 :24 are very different words.

ANOINTING WITH OIL

But what about James 5:14 and 15? “Is any sick among you, let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.”

As the Greek verbs are different where it is stated that Christ bare our sicknesses (Matthew 8:17) and that He bare our sins (I Peter 2:24) with different meanings, it is interesting to note that two different Greek words are translated “sick” in James 5:14 and 15. The second word means “worn out” or “tired out.” Perhaps you would join me in the question, what is it that saves the sick, the faith, or the oil, or both? If faith, without the elders and the oil, is not sufficient then we should know what kind of oil to use and how to apply it. The word here translated “anoint” is from the Greek “fat” or “grease.” Many doctors and masseurs today smear oil on those whose bodies are weary and sore, and often report splendid restorative results. But the doctor couldn’t qualify, in James 5:14, unless he is a saint, the husband of one wife.

I TIMOTHY 3:2 TO 7

A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach; Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous; One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?) Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil. Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.

Here we learn what constitutes an elder. Sometimes women use the oil on the sick. No woman however pious, is the husband of one wife, and therefore cannot qualify as an elder.

Now when we have found the elder and just the Scriptural oil then we want to know where to smear it on.

But before we do any of this let us note that James, in James 2:2, speaks of the synagogue (assembly). Let us also note carefully that James wrote to the twelve tribes of Israel. James 1:1. James was the Lord’s messenger to Israel. Galatians 2:9. We have no record that James ever preached to any Gentiles. Neither do we find in the Church Epistles where any servant of the Lord put oil on Gentiles. Read about James in Galatians 2:11 to 13 and in Acts 21:18 to 25. And as you read Acts 21:25, before you use oil read carefully Acts 15:19, important words of James: “Wherefore my sentence is, that we trouble not them, which from among the Gentiles are turned to God.” Trouble them with what? With religious ceremonies permitted for believing Jews.

I have talked with Christians who have used oil on the sick. They acknowledge that sometimes the sick get better; sometimes they get worse and die. They also acknowledge that they get the same results with prayer without the oil. The Christians, who anoint with oil, do not refrain when they are not sure of the right oil to use, but they refuse to prescribe Paul’s remedy in I Timothy 5:23, wine, because they do not know what kind of wine Paul meant. The Lord used the two together in His story in Luke 10:34.

Others prefer aprons or handkerchiefs, or just the naked hands rather than the oil or the wine. They quote Acts 19:11 and 12 and Acts 28:8. But let us also note Acts 5:15 and 16.

“Insomuch that they brought forth the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and couches, that at the least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them. There came also a multitude out of the cities round about unto Jerusalem, bringing sick folks, and them which were vexed with unclean spirits; and they were healed every one.”

Here the cures were accomplished by a mere shadow. In Luke 7:1 to 10 we learn that the Lord Jesus, by His Word, healed a sick man who was quite a distance from where Christ spoke. Then note He used clay and water in John 9:1 to 15.

So the bewildered Christian might well ask, “what shall I use, “clay”, “hands”, “shadows”, “aprons”, “handkerchiefs”, “oil”, or “wine”? Or just faith without any material remedy? Better call a good doctor, if you are really sick. Ask the elders and Christian friends to ‘join’ you in fervent prayer; but at the same time remember Romans 8:33 and II Corinthians 4:16.

“And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.”

“For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.”

Now once more back to our man whom we found at the gate Beautiful, a helpless invalid, outside of the temple, and then left him a leaping, rejoicing, well man on the inside of the temple. There is rejoicing in the presence of the angels in glory when a sinner comes to Christ and is saved (Luke 15:7); but those self-righteous religious performers in that temple did anything but rejoice when they learned that that afflicted beggar had been supernaturally cured by the name of Jesus Whom they had selected for the cross in the place of Barabbas the murderer. Note what Peter said to them in Acts 3:14 to 16.

“But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you. And killed the Prince of life, Whom God hath raised from the dead, whereof we are witnesses, And His name through faith in His name hath made this man strong, whom ye see and know; yea, the faith which is by Him hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all.”

What would you have done, if you had been given the chance, between Barabbas and Christ What are you doing now concerning your chance between Satan and Christ?

Perhaps, if you had been present and had had a voice in the matter, you would not have endorsed the action of the religious leaders in demanding that the heathen judge nail the Son of God to the cross intended for Barabbas. You might have been more opposed to that awful crime than was the heathen judge (Pilate) who washed his hands of the blood of that Man in Whom he found no fault. But if you continue day by day refusing God’s gracious invitation to come to Calvary’s cross and take your stand for His Son Who died for your guilty, sinful soul, are you less innocent than those wicked men who killed the Prince of life. who crucified the Lord of glory? Note God’s own Word in Hebrews 10:29 to 31.

“Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace? For we know Him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto Me, I will recompense, saith the Lord; And again, The Lord shall judge His people. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.”

As that poor afflicted man was made physically whole, in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and went into the Jerusalem temple praising God, you may experience an even greater

miracle, if you will accept the Lord Jesus Christ as your own personal Saviour. You will enter a wonderful temple. Note carefully Ephesians 2:13, 19, 21 and 22. "But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ." Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God." "In Whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In Whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit."

For this Divine transformation and blessing you will never cease to praise God either here on earth or hereafter in glory with the blessed Saviour.