

21.2.21 am Who can forgive sins but God alone?

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Preacher: Reverend David MacLeod

[0 : 00] Welcome to the service this morning, those who are watching on the live stream, those who may be listening in on the telephone, it's good for us again to come together on the Lord's Day to worship Him.

One or two intimations, just to say that this evening, the service, the live stream will go out at six o'clock, and within that service we'll have another testimony.

And Alistair MacDonald from Ardazig will be sharing testimony within the service this evening, so be encouraged to tune in for that. The YF will meet at half past seven on Zoom, as is normal, and on Wednesday evening we'll meet again at the prayer meeting on Zoom at half past seven.

And this coming Wednesday we'll have a guest speaker within the prayer meeting, Slavic Gospel Association, I think it's Derek Maxwell, who will be with us this Wednesday.

So it would be good to see as many as possible tuning in to hear how that ministry is continuing.

Now next Sunday as well, perhaps I should say that the morning service will be conducted by myself, God willing, and the evening service will be a Gaelic service, the monthly Gaelic service, and that service will be conducted by Mr. Farrecher MacLeod.

[1 : 20] So these, I think, are all the intimations, and we'll begin this time of worship now. We'll sing to God's praise. We'll sing from Psalm 91. Psalm 91, verses 1 to verse 4.

He that doth in the secret place of the Most High reside, under the shade of him that is the Almighty shall abide. I of the Lord my God will say, He is my refuge still, He is my fortress and my rock, and in Him trust I will.

And we'll sing to the end of verse 4. Our Father here will sing to the end of verse 4 to God's praise. Psalm 91, verses 1 to 4. Psalm 91, verses 1 to 5.

The Almighty shall abide.

And in Him trust I will. Assuredly, He shall be saved.

[3 : 11] He shall be saved. And give deliverance. From subtle fowler's snare and from the noisome pestilence.

His feathers shall be saved. His feathers shall be hide thy trust. Under His wings shall be.

His faithfulness shall be a shield. And bachlor unto thee.

Let's unite our hearts in prayer. Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray.

Let's pray. Let's pray. Our Heavenly Father, we thank you once more that on your day you've given us the desire, you've given us the opportunity to come into your presence and to worship you.

[4 : 38] We thank you that just a few of us are able to meet in this place in the building that you've provided for us. We thank you that your promise stands good that when even two or three of us gather together, you will be with us.

And that's a promise that we take hold of as we stand here in this room. And it's a promise that we take hold of wherever it is that we are found at this moment.

We thank you that you are the God who is not bound by houses made by human hands. You are not bound by the structures and the places that we would perhaps expect to meet with you.

But you meet with us wherever we are. Draw near to God and He will draw near unto you. And so those in homes, those who are in different places this morning, those who may listen to messages in the course of the week and in various states of activity, we thank you that you have given us the promise that you are with us.

And we thank you, Lord, that the desire that we have to listen to your word is a desire which is not found within ourselves because we are sinners.

[5 : 59] But we thank you that that desire is placed within us by your spirit. You are the God who draws us to yourself. So we would seek to come on this Lord's Day morning.

We would seek to make an approach to you and join together one with another in the spirit on the Lord's Day seeking to worship you. And we thank you for the psalm which was sung, the psalm which is familiar to us and has brought such comfort and such strength.

And especially over this last season. We thank you for the psalm which is a blessing that we are with us.

We thank you for the psalm which is a blessing that you are with us in that. You are the God who is able to save us. And that is a promise which is effective in every sphere of life and every state that we find ourselves in.

When we are sick, when we are struggling, when our hearts are sore, when we are anxious. We thank you that we can cry out to you. And you hear our prayers and you meet with us at the point of our need.

[7 : 23] And yet Lord, we know that our greatest need is the need of eternal salvation. And so we pray that you would grant that to us as we look to you and as we trust in the finished work of Christ.

We do pray for those who have struggles at this time. We are conscious of those who are struggling with illness.

And we see them in our mind's eye. Those who are from here and those who perhaps are in different places. We ask Lord that they would know the touch of Christ, the great physician.

We are conscious of those who feel cast down in their souls at this point. Who are feeling the reality of the lack of fellowship that we are having to suffer in these days.

And we ask Lord that you would draw near to them in a special way. And those who are in their own homes alone, we pray that they would know in a powerful way that you are with them.

[8 : 33] And help us, we pray with a psalmist, to preach to our own souls, wherever we are. Saying, why are you cast down, O my soul? Why in me so dismayed?

Trust God. Trust God. So help us, Lord, we pray to trust you. We pray on for those who are battling with addictions. And who are finding this a difficult time where they don't have the support that they had otherwise.

And we bring them to you in prayer. And we ask that they would be found looking to you. And for those who are struggling on with sore hearts, having lost loved ones, we pray that they may know your comfort.

We're conscious that we keep bringing the same prayers week by week. But we are equally conscious that we and those around us have the same needs.

And you call us, Lord Jesus, to come to you. And that's a call not just once in our lives. But it's a day by day call. Come unto me, all who are weary, all who are heavy laden.

[9 : 42] And I will give you rest. Above all, Lord, we pray that we and those whom we think of, those whom we carry to you in prayer, as we see them in our minds eye just now, we pray that they would know the eternal rest that's found in Christ.

The needs that we have in our experience and our physicality day by day are real. And we would not belittle them.

But we know that our greatest need is to be saved. What shall it profit a man if he gains the whole world and has health and wealth and material happiness and yet loses his soul?

And so we pray for those who are still lost. Some who may be tuning in just now, knowing the reality of that. We pray that as you open their eyes to see that they are outside of Christ, we pray that they would hear the call of Christ and that they would come to him and be saved.

And for those of us, Lord, who are trusting in Jesus, help us, we pray, to follow you closely. We know that we are prone to wander as we so often sing.

[11 : 04] But we ask that you would draw us back if we are straying and keep us close to you, that we would be remaining in you day by day, because we know that's the only way that we can be fruitful in this world and bring glory to your name.

So for us, Lord, as we look at ourselves, as we examine ourselves, as we're called to, we confess the sin that we see within our hearts.

We ask that you would cleanse us in the blood of Christ. We confess that often we can be filled with self and we ask that you would empty us of self and fill us with the Holy Spirit that we may see and so that we may show others the Lord Jesus.

And enable us, Lord, we pray, to live for your glory. So hear our prayers. We pray for our country at this time.

We ask, Lord, that as there is a desire to move out of this state of restrictions, we pray for wisdom.
[12 : 11] We look in on those who you have allowed to be in authority over us and we wonder what wisdom looks like. We wonder what the best thing to do is.

We wonder about the advice sometimes that we're given. But we ask, Lord, that you would give to them, that you would give to us the wisdom that comes from heaven. We pray for those that you have set over us in places of authority and we ask that they would be looking to you.

And we pray that as a country we would repent and return to the Lord. So hear our prayers.
Cleanse us from sin.

Help us to fix our eyes upon Jesus. For we pray these things in Jesus' name and for his sake.
Amen. So, boys and girls, I hope there's a few of you listening in this morning.

And I'm going to start this morning by showing you some pictures. So, rather than me trying to describe this, I'll ask Stuart to hit the button.

[13 : 20] And hopefully you'll see some pictures of what I was doing yesterday. Thank you. to ask, what's your question?

Superfighter. Happy boyfriend and advisory for the Rhonda. This, I hope her back under her book at Mar 1000 close missing... This Sh can also hear and give you to me again it ■■■■.

Okay, boys and girls, I hope you were able to see these pictures.

Now, what did you see in the pictures? Well, you would tell me if you were here that you saw, well, it's a cabinet, I think. I think that's what we'd call it. It's a bit of furniture. It's a cabinet.

It's actually a very old cabinet. It came from Glenelg where my mum and dad stayed, but it belonged to my old Auntie Jenny. And we took it from Glenelg and we took it over here.

[14 : 44] And it's looking quite old and it's looking quite tired. And so we decided, or Mary decided actually, last Saturday, that we would start to do some work on it.

So we began that work last Saturday and we were doing some sanding and rubbing and scraping off paint. And I've spent now two Saturdays, quite a few hours on it.

And you've seen the pictures. What do you think? Is it finished? Can we take it now out of the garage and put it back into pride of place in the house?

Is it finished? Well, you can see from these pictures. It's far from finished. There's still loads of things that have to be done before it's ready to go back into the house.

Now there's a verse that came to my mind when I was working on the cabinet yesterday. And it says in Philippians chapter 1 and verse 6, He who began a good work in you, that's God, will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

[15 : 57] That's God's promise to us. That when he begins a good work in us, he will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

Now some people think, boys and girls, that when you trust in Jesus, when you become a Christian, you should suddenly become perfect.

And all the sins that you used to do, they just stop immediately. So I wish you were here and I could ask you the question, do you think that's right?

And I think you would tell me, no, that's not right. Because you know better than that, don't you?

Think about the disciples. Jesus called the disciples.

We saw that last week in the main service. And Jesus, he called the disciples and he said to them, they were out fishing, and he said to them, follow me. He said it to Peter, first of all.

[17 : 00] Simon Peter, follow me. And Peter heard Jesus and he started to follow Jesus. Now, was Peter perfect the second that he began to trust and follow Jesus?

Well, no, he wasn't. And one of the great things about the gospel messages are that God tells us the truth about Peter and all the disciples.

And he tells us not just about the good things they did, but he tells us about all the messes that they made as well. They were far from perfect. And when we become Christians, when we trust in the Lord Jesus, he comes into our lives in the power of the Holy Spirit.

And he begins to work in our lives. And there's a lot of work that's got to be done in us. That old cabinet that you were looking at in the pictures, you could see, if you were looking closely, there's still some big stains on the top of the cabinet.

There's cracks. There's sharp edges. There's bits where the paint is still sticking on and I haven't managed to scrape it off yet. So it's going to take a lot of time.

[18 : 17] It's going to take quite a lot of Saturdays, I think, before the job is done. And for us, it takes a lot of time for God to do his work on us and in us.

You saw the box of tools that Adrian Glenn gave me a shot of. It was all these tools that I was using to try to work on the cabinet.

I'm not very good at using tools, but I was trying. God's much better at using tools. And he uses tools to work in us. Tools like the Bible, his word. He uses tools like prayer, because when we're in prayer, we're with God and he's working in us.

He uses tools like Sunday school lessons, YF. He even uses the things that happen to us, circumstances, as the big ones call it.

And he uses these things to work in us. So how long do you think, boys and girls, if you're Christians, how long do you think it will take for Jesus to scrape all your sharp edges off and all my sharp edges off?

[19 : 34] How long do you think it will take for Jesus to take and scrape some of the stains of sin that we keep on doing from our lives? How long do you think it's going to take for him to work on us and to shape us so that we are like Jesus?

Well, I'll tell you how long. It will take our whole lives. It will take until the day of Christ Jesus.

So when you and I realize day by day, oh no, I'm not perfect. I've done another mistake. We ask for forgiveness for that.

But don't be too disappointed because remember, God is working in us and it's a long work that he's doing. Do you think he might give up on us?

If sometimes we're not doing very well. You know, like I might be tempted to give up on the cabinet and just say after four Saturdays, oh, enough of this.

[20 : 48] This is not worth it. No, God will never do that. And how do we know he'll never give up on us? Well, we know that because he loves us.

And we see how much he loves us when we look at the cross where he went to die to take our sin away. And we know also that he'll never give up on us because he promised he'll never give up on us.

Remember the verse? We'll read it again. Philippians chapter one, verse six. He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion.

He'll finish the job. And that will take until the day of Christ Jesus. What is the day of Christ Jesus?

Well, it means the day that he either calls us to be with him in heaven or the day when Jesus comes back.

Until that day, the work keeps on going. So the question I want to ask, just to finish, is has Jesus begun to work in our lives yet?

[22 : 00] See, that work doesn't begin until we trust in the Lord Jesus. That work doesn't begin until we ask him to take our sins away and until we ask him to come into our lives.

That's when he begins to work. So I want to ask you boys and girls, I want to ask the older ones as well. Has that work begun yet? Have we asked Jesus to come in to our lives and do his work in us? If not, why not ask him even now, even today? It's the best thing you could ever do. We'll pray. Lord God, we thank you that you love us.

We thank you that you love us enough to come to us. We thank you, Lord Jesus, that you came into this world, that you went to the cross to pay the price for our sin.

We thank you that you love us enough to come into our lives, to come into our hearts, and the power of the Holy Spirit. You make your home within us.

[23 : 08] And we thank you that you love us enough to never give up on us. We thank you that when we trust in the Lord Jesus, you begin a work in us to make us more like Jesus.

And you never give up on that work. Forgive us for the times that we stop following you closely. Forgive us for the times that we give in to temptation and we sin and we make more messes in our lives like the disciples did.

We thank you that you're patient with us as you are patient with them. And we ask, Lord, that you would be working in our lives to make us more like Jesus. And for any boys or girls, any of the older ones who have not yet asked Jesus to come into their lives, we pray that even this morning, we may pray, Lord Jesus, take away my sin and come and live in my heart and work in my life to make me more like you.

We thank you. That's a prayer that when we say in truth in our hearts, you will answer by coming into us. So hear our prayers and be with the boys and girls now as they have their Sunday school lesson.

We thank you for the lesson that's been prepared. We ask, Lord, that you would speak to them as we pray that you would speak to us as we read your word now. And we ask all these things in Jesus' name.

[24 : 34] Amen. Thank you, boys and girls, for listening. We're going to turn now to Luke chapter 5. Luke chapter 5.

And we're going to read from verse 17 of Luke chapter 5 into Luke chapter 6.

This is God's word. Luke chapter 5, verse 17. One day as he, that's Jesus, was teaching, Pharisees and teachers of the law who had come from every village of Galilee and from Judea and Jerusalem were sitting there.

And the power of the Lord was present for him to heal the sick. Some men came carrying a paralytic on a mat and tried to take him into the house to lay him before Jesus.

When they could not find a way to do this because of the crowd, they went up on the roof and lowered him on the mat, his mat, through the tiles into the middle of the crowd right in front of Jesus.

[25 : 41] When Jesus saw their faith, he said, Friend, your sins are forgiven. The Pharisees and teachers of the law began thinking to themselves, Who is this fellow who speaks blasphemy?

Who can forgive sins but God alone? Jesus knew what they were thinking and asked, Why are you thinking these things in your hearts? Which is easier to say, Your sins are forgiven?

Or to say, Get up and walk? But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins. He said to the paralysed man, I tell you, Get up, take your mat, and go home.

Immediately, he stood up in front of them, took what he had been lying on, and went home praising God. Everyone was amazed and gave praise to God.

They were filled with awe and said, We have seen remarkable things today. After this, Jesus went out and saw a tax collector by the name of Levi sitting at his tax booth.

[26 : 45] Follow me, Jesus said to him. And Levi got up, left everything, and followed him. Then Levi held a great banquet for Jesus at his house, and a large crowd of tax collectors and others were eating with them.

But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law who belonged to their sect complained to his disciples, Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners? Jesus answered them, It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick.

I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. They said to him, John's disciples often fast and pray, and so do the disciples of the Pharisees, but yours go on eating and drinking.

Jesus answered, Can you make the guests of the bridegroom fast while he's with them? But the time will come when the bridegroom will be taken from them. In those days, they will fast.

He told them this parable, No one tears a patch from a new garment and sews it on an old one. If he does, he will have torn the new garment and the patch from the old one will not match the old.

[27 : 56] The patch from the new will not match the old. And no one pours new wine into old wineskins. If he does, the new wine will burst the skins and the wine will run out and the wineskins will be ruined.

No, new wine must be poured into new wineskins. And no one after drinking old wine wants to new, for he says, the old is better. One Sabbath, Jesus was going through the cornfields and his disciples began to pick some ears of corn, rub them in their hands and eat the grain.

Some of the Pharisees asked, Why are you doing what is unlawful on the Sabbath? Jesus answered them, Have you never read what David did when he and his disciples were hungry?

He entered the house of God taking the consecrated bread. He ate what is lawful only for the priests to eat. And he also gave some to his companions. Then Jesus said to them, The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath.

On another Sabbath, he went into the synagogue and was teaching and a man was there whose right hand was shriveled. The Pharisees and the teachers of the law were looking for a reason to accuse Jesus.

[29 : 05] So they watched him closely to see if he would heal on the Sabbath. But Jesus knew what they were thinking and said to the man with a shriveled hand, Get up and stand in front of everyone.

So he got up and stood there. Then Jesus said to them, I ask you, which is lawful on the Sabbath, to do good or to do evil, to save life or to destroy it?

He looked round at them all and then said to the man, Stretch out your hand. He did so and his hand was completely restored. But they were furious and began to discuss with one another what they might do to Jesus.

Amen. And may God bless that reading of his word to us. Again, let's pray for a moment. Our Heavenly Father, we thank you for your word and we pray now for the help of the Holy Spirit that as we speak, as we listen, as we respond, we may do so under the guidance of your spirit and that we may do so in a way that brings salvation into our souls and glory to your name.

So hear our prayers. Help us, we pray, as we pray that you would help the children in the Sunday school and as we pray that you would help all the other congregations around us who are near to us and far from us.

[30 : 37] Whatever the gospel of Jesus Christ is preached, we ask that you may be active, Lord, that you would be working and that you may be seeking and saving sinners like us.

And we pray these things in Jesus' name and for his sake. Amen. If you could turn back now, please, to the passage that we read.

One television program that I think almost all of us would be familiar with is Question Time. I don't know how many years it's been on television for.

It's been on television for a lot of years and you know the format. Usually there's politicians on the panel and members of the public will question them and as the questions are asked and then answered and very often actually are not answered, we get to know these politicians.

We get to know who they are and we get to know through the questions and the answers what they're all about. Now as we continue moving through Luke's gospel, we see here that Jesus is in a kind of question time period.

[32 : 03] Questions were being asked directly to Jesus and questions were being asked about Jesus. And as we listen to the responses of Jesus, we see more clearly who he is and we begin to get a clearer picture on why he came into this world.

So today, if we have the time, I'd like to look at four questions that were asked of Jesus and his disciples. And the first question that we come to is found in the first section from verses 17 to verse 26.

In the center of that section, we hear that question that comes from the Pharisees and the teachers of the law to Jesus. The question is this, who can forgive sins but God alone?

So that's our first point. We take that question. Who can forgive sins but God alone? Asked by the Pharisees and the teachers of the law and Luke introduces them to us in verse 17.

So we'll follow the text closely. We'll take a moment to get to the question, but we'll step through the text on the way there. Verse 17. One day Jesus was teaching and Pharisees and teachers of the law were sitting there.

[33 : 23] They had come from every village of Galilee and from Judea and Jerusalem and the power of the Lord was with Jesus to heal the sick.

Now we should maybe ask the question, were the Pharisees and the teachers of the law the only people who were sitting there in the congregation as Jesus taught? And we know that the answer to that question is no, they were just one part of the congregation.

So we ask Luke, well why are you identifying them? Why is the camera zooming in on them? And the reason for that is because they were trouble. And Luke begins to highlight here the menacing presence of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law.

They were now on red alert. Jesus is drawing more crowds than they draw. Jesus seems to have considerably more power and power over the people than they had.

Jesus seems to speak with far more authority than they spoke with. And they don't like it. And so a delegation is formed. Religious officials came from every village of Galilee and from Judea and from Jerusalem from HQ.

[34 : 46] And why did they come? Was it to get a blessing from the preaching of Jesus? No, it wasn't. Was it to feel the healing touch of Jesus? Certainly not. They came essentially to begin to gather evidence that they would use against Jesus.

This was in a sense the beginning of the official investigation against Jesus. So the scene is set for us by Luke. Verse 18 Some men carrying a paralyzed man on a mat.

Some men came carrying a paralyzed man on a mat and tried to take him into the house to lay him before Jesus. When they could not find a way to do this because of the crowd they went up on the roof lowered him down on his mat through the tiles into the middle of the crowd right in front of Jesus.

So we have this scene. We have this disturbance. Jesus is teaching. The Pharisees are watching with that critical eye. They're listening with their clipboards out.

Then suddenly there's a disturbance. as these men lower their friends down in front of Jesus. And I want to pause here just to look at these characters because I think they're very much worth looking at.

[36 : 10] These friends of the paralyzed man. We don't know their names. We don't know that much about them but we do know they hear about Jesus. They believe that Jesus can help their friend and so they decide to take their friend to Jesus to carry their friend to Jesus.

And that was quite an undertaking. It would be quite a commitment. It would be quite a laborious task to carry this man from wherever it was that they were coming from to the place where Jesus was.

But they decide they're going to do this. So they carry this man to where Jesus was but there's a problem. The place where Jesus is teaching is so crowded they can't get near Jesus.

They can't get in the front door. They can't get in the back door. So what do they do? Do they go home? Well no, they don't go home. They're determined that their friend must see Jesus.

So up to the roof they go. And they begin to dismantle this flat roof. That wasn't with a sledgehammer. In these days you could actually dismantle a roof without causing much vandalism.

[37 : 20] Still a task and a half though. But they did it. They took the man up on the roof. They began to dismantle the roof and they lower their friend right down in front of Jesus.

And I think by way of application you and I can learn a lot about how we are to behave as we look at these men.

Because if we are Christians if we have faith in Christ I'm sure that we can all think of friends that we have who have never met Jesus. They likely go through our minds even now.

Friends that we have that we love dearly but they don't know Christ. And the reality is they're lost. The Bible tells us that.

they're on the road to a lost eternity. They're in a place of great danger, a place of great need. And the question for you and I to consider is how determined are we to introduce them to Jesus?

[38 : 36] How much faith do we have in the fact that Jesus is able to help them? He's able to save them. Now if we think about the friends of the paralyzed man it would have been much easier for them much less disruptive much less awkward if they just left the paralyzed man where he was.

And for us in our culture it's much easier it's much less awkward awkward not to talk to our friends about Jesus. It's much less awkward it's much easier a life for us if we don't encourage our friends to come to church if we don't challenge them about anything spiritual if we don't seek to share the gospel with them that's the easy thing to do but if we really believe in Jesus and if we really care for someone more than we care about ourselves and our own popularity then we're going to want to bring our friends to Jesus verse 20 when Jesus saw their faith this man is before him now on the ground he's teaching the crowds are around them the roof is now open everybody's waiting for Jesus to respond and it says in verse 20 when Jesus saw their faith he said friend your sins are forgiven and again I think it's worth taking a moment to unpack that statement when Jesus saw their faith that that being the faith of this man's friends he saved him now what does that mean for us today does that mean that we don't have to believe personally in Jesus does that mean that others can believe on our behalf in order for us to be saved and from a wider reading of scripture we don't have time to do that this morning but we could go to various texts to show very clearly that we do need to believe we must in our own hearts in our own lives believe in

Jesus we must come to him and meet with him ourselves we must trust in him ourselves that's how we're saved others can't save us because of their faith in Christ but I think the point that's been made here is that others can be used and their faith can be used in our being saved and my mind goes to to Augustine whom I often quote a great theologian of another era and he was in his earlier years a very rebellious and antagonistic young man he drifted far away from God but he had a mother who was a very godly woman and she prayed for her son and she cried tears for her son she was earnest in her faith and she was earnest in her prayers that her son would come back and he would be saved and on one occasion she met with a minister to speak about her son to share

her grief about her son's spiritual condition and he said having spent time listening to her he said and

I'm quoting here it is impossible that the child of such prayers and tears should perish and in due course Augustine was saved he became a Christian his mother's faithful prayers were answered they were used in his being saved and when Jesus saw the faith of this man's friends as they carried their friend to Jesus he healed the man but note that the healing that Jesus prioritized was heart healing not leg healing when Jesus saw their faith verse 20 he said friend your sins are forgiven he didn't say your legs are healed the first thing he says is your sins are forgiven and that statement may have brought confusion even come as a disappointment to this man's friends in the first instance they came for healing of this man's legs but

[43 : 54] Jesus as he looked into the heart of this man could see that he had a bigger problem than his paralysis he had a sin problem he had a heart problem and so Jesus deals first with that he forgives the man's sin there's another teaching point there in application a teaching point not just for them on that day but for us today we may come to Jesus in prayer we may bring others to Jesus in prayer and we and they may have many problems we may have worries about health we may have worries about finances we may have worries about relationships that have broken down relationships that are under strain and all these things are important and all these things we can come to

Jesus about and with but these things are not the most important thing the most important thing is to be sure that our sins are forgiven that's the point that Jesus is making here we can have health we can have wealth we can have happiness in terms of this world but if our sins are not forgiven then we go from this world we're lost eternally so the most important thing is that our sins are forgiven and it's Jesus declaration that this man's sins are forgiven that prompts the first question that the Pharisees ask of Jesus verse 21 the Pharisees and the teachers of the law began thinking to themselves who is this fellow who speaks blasphemy who can forgive sins but God alone now think about that question for a moment where did that question come from you know was it shouted out from the floor and kind of question time style well no it wasn't was it whispered among the delegation as they passed notes to each other concerned about the heresy that that Jesus was speaking well no it wasn't there's no notes there's no whispers so where did this question get cooked up well it's in their minds Jesus Jesus Jesus hears this question that is bubbling away in their minds and these men were the thinkers they were the scholars of their day they were trained in theology they knew the scriptures they knew that only God could forgive sin they understood that they accepted that but what they didn't understand and what they didn't accept was that

Jesus was God Milne the commentator says they were correct in their theology that only God can forgive sins they were wrong in their assessment of Jesus Hendrickson the commentator says in their hearts we could say as well in their minds the scribes are attacking Jesus so what happened next well we see here that Jesus doesn't write them off he's patient with them Jesus knew what they were thinking and asked why are you thinking these things in your hearts which is easier to say your sins are forgiven or to say get up and walk and we can maybe try to imagine their faces at this point as

Jesus says this we can imagine them looking perhaps at each other and saying to each other how does he know what we're thinking who is this that can read the mind who is this that's able to search the heart and they should have very quickly come to the conclusion it's the Lord they knew the Old Testament scriptures what is Jeremiah 17 and verse 10 says it says I the Lord search the heart and examine the mind so one would have hoped that the penny would have been dropping for these experts in Old Testament scripture one would hope that they would be beginning to say by now could this be the Lord could this be the Messiah could this be the Savior but it seems not so

[49 : 16] Jesus gives them some more help verse 24 Jesus says but I want you to know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins so he said to the paralyzed man I tell you get up take your mat and go home and now we see the faith of this man in action as he responds to Jesus the man doesn't scowl at Jesus and say to Jesus you know fine well that I can't get up and walk no he believes and even though what Jesus asks him to do is medically impossible he takes Jesus at his word and without crutches and without an extensive course in physiotherapy he gets up he picks up his mat and he goes home praising God another evidence of the faith that was within him so we read in verse 25 and verse 26 and everyone that was amazed and gave praise to

God were filled with awe and said we have seen remarkable things today it was a miracle it was another miracle and this was a miracle that was specially tailored by Jesus to be presented as evidence to the Pharisees and the teachers of the law this was a miracle that was designed to be used as an exhibit of evidence to back up the fact that Jesus was the son of man the title that Jesus gave to himself there in verse 24 is a title that the Pharisees and the teachers of the law they knew well it comes from Daniel chapter 7 the title son of man is a title that was firmly applied to the Messiah the saviour of sinners and when

Jesus used that title to speak of himself he wanted the Pharisees and the teachers of the law to see that that's who he was he wanted them to see that forgiveness of sin and salvation came through him but they could not or perhaps more accurately they would not see question for you and I is do we see we can shake our heads in the direction of the Pharisees we actually have a whole lot more information a whole lot more evidence than the Pharisees and the teachers of law had we have the new testament so do we see do we believe that Jesus is the son of man he is the son of God he is the savior of sinners we may not all have the problem of paralysis that this man had but we all have the problem of a sinful heart so who is able to forgive sins

God alone Jesus the God man this man he he believed his friends believed this man sins were forgiven the Pharisees and the teachers of the tragedy of this is that although they had religion in great volume they were serious religious people even though they had such a depth of religion they had no forgiveness even though they had such a vast bible knowledge and could quote huge sections of scripture they had no forgiveness even though they knew what all the law and prophets said about the coming

Messiah when the Messiah came they wouldn't see him they wouldn't trust him even though they had good works in great abundance they had no forgiveness why not well it's very simple it's because they would not believe in Jesus they would not accept that he was the Savior so let me say to all of us let's not make the mistake that they made let's not get to a place where we are so close to Jesus where we hear him speak as we do through scripture where we sense his presence in the power of the

[54 : 55] Holy Spirit where we hear the offer of forgiveness of sin and healing of heart and yet we refuse it who can forgive sins but God alone it's question one of four that I hope to get to today but I think one is enough so let's pray our heavenly father we thank you for this word we thank you for these encounters that we read of in the gospels we thank you that we see not only events that happened in history but we see our own lives on the page we are people who have needs physical needs we have material needs we we we have struggles we have struggles in this world and we may come to and carry others to

Jesus seeking that you would meet us at the point of our need and we thank you lord that you so often do we have so many evidences of it in the past and yet we we see we learn here that our greatest need is to have our sins forgiven and that's a need that all of us have there are none righteous not one there's no one born into this world who has not sinned only Christ has never sinned so all of us are in need of that forgiveness and lord we pray that we would not be like the Pharisees who had so many opportunities who sat at the in the congregation where Jesus preached so often who had so much bible knowledge who tried so hard at the religion and yet would not bow before the son of god confessing that they are righteous in need of forgiveness we see a pride in them and we pray lord that that pride that we know is in us that would not stop us from coming and receiving from jesus the forgiveness that he alone is able to bring what can wash away my sin nothing but the blood of jesus enable us we pray as we look to christ as we think about the cross that he was going on to to simply seek that grace and that salvation is offered to us today and we pray these things in jesus name and for jesus sake amen father girl will now lead us as we hear mission praise 671 son there is a fountain filled with blood drawn from immanuel's veins and sinners plunged beneath that flood lose all their guilty stains it's a hymn that underlines for us the truth that there is forgiveness of sin only in christ and what he would go on to do on the cross so we'll hear this hymn sung to god's praise the head is a fountain filled with blood drawn from immanuel's veins and sinners plunge beneath that flood lose all their guilty stains lose all their guilty stains lose all their guilty stains and sinners and sinners plunged beneath that flood lose all their guilty stains the dying thief rejoiced to see that fountain in his day and let me as by lost he wash all my sins away wash all my sins away wash all my sins away and let me as vile as he wash all my sins away dear dying lamb your precious blood shall never loose its

power tell all the ransomed church of god be saved to sin no more be saved to sin no more be saved to sin no more till all the ransomed church of god be saved to sin no more yet since by faith I saw the stream your flowing wound supply redeeming love has been my theme and shall be till I die and shall be till I die and shall be till I die redeeming love has been my theme and shall be till I die then in a nobler sweeter song I'll sing yet power to save when this poor lisping stammering tongue lies silent in the grave lie silent in the grave lie silent in the grave when this poor lisping stammering tongue lies silent in the grave and may the grace of our lord jesus christ and the love of god the father and the fellowship of god the holy spirit be with us all both now and forever more amen