
GOD IS ABLE TO FORGIVE

'Jesus said to the man, 'Take heart, son; your sins are forgiven.' (Matthew 9:2).

A Sunday school teacher asked her class, *'Can anyone tell me what you must do before you can obtain forgiveness of sin?'*

One small boy spoke up, *'Sin!'*

If sin is our greatest problem, then forgiveness is our greatest need. This story of the healing of the paralyzed man reminds us that God is able to forgive our sins.

Jesus' first words to the paralytic focus on forgiveness, even though his friends lowered him through the roof to be

healed by Jesus. Matthew is making the point that forgiveness precedes healing, as Jesus came first to restore our relationship with God as Father. Like the man, we too can be paralysed by past actions, hurtful words and unforgiveness, that leave us guilty and ashamed. Jesus offers us forgiveness and acceptance to enable a fresh start in our lives.

Jesus was aware of the criticism of the teachers of the law, who believed that only God could forgive sins. As Jesus says, *'Which is easier: to say, "Your sins are forgiven," or to say, "Get up and walk"?' And of course, the teachers of the Law were correct, only God can forgive sins; and Jesus, of course, is God made man for our sake. Jesus*

secured forgiveness on the cross, which secures transformation from the inside. It gives us power to forgive others and ourselves from past hurts and actions.

Finally, Jesus says to the paralysed man, *'Get up, take your mat and go home.'* The man's trusting obedience enables him to be completely healed and go home. Where do we need to know forgiveness in our lives and relationships? Are we ready to receive what God promises in our lives?

'If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.' (1 John 1:9).

In service of Jesus' ministry of forgiveness of sins a priest is in St. Martin's on Wednesday evening beginning at 6:45pm to hear confessions and give God's absolution. You can also arrange a different time if it suits your commitments better.

