



LESSON 6

Jesus forgives sin

LUKE 5:17-26



Jesus has authority to forgive sins.



“But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins”—he said to the man who was paralyzed—‘I say to you, rise, pick up your bed and go home’” (Luke 5:24).

Supporting Truths

1. Jesus forgives sins.
2. Jesus has authority to forgive sins because He is God.
3. Jesus has authority to heal disease.
4. Your greatest need is to have sins forgiven.
5. Forgiveness comes through faith in Jesus.

Objectives

1. Define forgiveness.
2. Explain why the Pharisees thought Jesus was blaspheming.
3. Describe how Jesus proved His authority to the crowd.
4. Compare the problem of sin to the problem of sickness.
5. Describe how the men carrying the paralytic showed their faith.

STUDY THE BIBLE LESSON

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Lesson Summary

After news of Jesus' powerful teaching and miracles spread, religious leaders came from Jerusalem to observe Jesus. And Jesus gave them the greatest display of His authority so far: He forgave the sins of the paralytic man, then He proved His authority to forgive by healing the man. No one could deny the miracle and everyone was amazed, but, sadly, few demonstrated real faith like the paralytic and his friends.

Spotlight on the Gospel

Jesus is the answer to all humanity's hopes and fears. He is the great healer, compassionate and competent to heal both spiritual and physical needs. This shouldn't surprise us, as our eternal home in heaven will be a place of perfection, both physically and spiritually. No more sin and separation from God. No more pain, disease, or death. Jesus is the answer to all of your problems—but only if you place yourself under His authority.

LAST WEEK



**Jesus commends the
Centurion's faith**
Matthew 8:5–13

THIS WEEK



Jesus forgives sin
Luke 5:17–26

NEXT WEEK



Jesus promises rest
Matthew 11:20–30

JESUS' MINISTRY IN GALILEE

Lesson Commentary

Jesus has authority to forgive sins.

When Jesus came, He came with authority. With great authority He called followers, taught, cast out demons, and healed (Mark 1:16–28; Matt 8:5–13). But these examples, as great as they are, provide only snapshots of Jesus' limitless power and authority. In reality, His authority extends much further than the ability to solve a problem here or there. Jesus is the great Son of Man, the One who has the authority to solve all our problems, including sin.

The setting: Jesus heals and crowds gather (5:17–20a)

News of Jesus had spread quickly from Capernaum (Mark 1:28), even to the religious leaders in Jerusalem. So a group of Pharisees and teachers of the law made the four to five-day journey to Capernaum to observe Jesus first hand (Luke 5:17; cf. Matt 9:1). The **Pharisees** were a small but influential group of lay people (usually not priests) who were determined to keep the nation faithful to the Mosaic law. The **teachers of the law**, also called scribes, were usually Pharisees. They were religious lawyers who taught how the Mosaic law was to be applied in the details of life. All this sounds good, but they had a big problem: as they applied the law, they created their own oral tradition, which they believed had the same authority as Scripture itself. So a conflict loomed: would Jesus follow their version of the law, or would they abandon their man-made commandments and follow Jesus?

The already miraculous day of healing became even more unusual when several men carrying a stretcher ascended the steps to the roof above where Jesus taught (Luke 5:19). In those days, the roofs of houses acted like a second floor, with walls but no ceiling. The roof itself was made out of beams and branches covered with clay, and sometimes with tiles. There were also stairs on the outside of the house to go up to the roof. So the men, unable to enter the house because of the crowd, hauled their

paralyzed friend up to the roof and began removing the tiles and digging through the clay and branches. What a distraction! As Jesus taught, a hole in the roof opened above Him and bits of debris fell on the listeners below! We can only imagine what the owner of the house thought! But what we know is that the paralytic was now lying right in front of Jesus Himself—the best place for him to be.

Jesus saw their **faith** (5:20). By their creative and persistent effort, the paralytic and his friends showed their belief that Jesus was able to heal. More than that, they show us that faith includes belief that overcomes any obstacle. It is unshakable confidence in the power of Christ to meet our needs. It is clinging tightly to God (Deut 30:20), looking to Jesus (Num 21:9; John 3:14–15), and calling out to Him (Joel 2:32).

THINK ABOUT IT

Do you have a never-giving-up faith in Jesus (1 John 5:4)?



The surprise: Jesus forgives sin (5:20b–21)

In response to their faith, Jesus did something unexpected. Instead of fixing the man's physical need, Jesus addressed a much greater problem: He forgave his sin (Luke 5:20). Perhaps the man's paralysis was the direct result of sin (Ps 32:3–4). Maybe it wasn't (John 9:3). Either way, we know that broken bodies are the result of Adam's first sin (Gen 2:17; 3:17–19; Rom 5:12). Our gradual decay into death is the natural result of being separated from God by our sin (Isa 59:2), since God is the source of life (Deut 30:20). So the man's paralysis was only a preview of something much worse: eternal death in hell, separated from the God of life forever (Rom 6:23).

So when Jesus said, "Your sins are forgiven," He was giving the paralytic the best gift possible. This is because when God **forgives**, He chooses not to hold your sin against you. He throws your sins behind His back (Isa 38:17), refuses to remember them (43:25),

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stomps them into the ground and casts them into the depths of the sea (Mic 7:19). No wonder the one whose sins are forgiven is truly happy (Ps 32:1)! It's like a giant weight has been lifted off of him (32:4). He is so glad that he shouts for joy (32:11)! Why? Because he is no longer condemned (Rom 8:1). He



THINK ABOUT IT

Physical healing is great, but spiritual healing is greater.

belongs once again to the God of life (1 Pet 3:18). He now has springs of true life bubbling up out of him forever (John 4:14). He is truly free (8:36).

But wait! Is this allowed? The Pharisees were right to be shocked: “Who can forgive sins but God alone?” (Luke 5:21). They knew that sin is ultimately an offense against God (Ps 51:4). Therefore, only God has the right to forgive sin (Mic 7:18). They considered Jesus’ words to be **blasphemy**, because Jesus was acting as if He were God! What the Pharisees did not understand was that Jesus truly was God, and that He had become a man for the very purpose of forgiving sin (Matt 1:21). In fact, there is no other way to be forgiven—only through Jesus (Acts 4:12; 10:43).

The sign: Jesus heals the paralytic (5:22–26)

Jesus knew the religious leaders’ thoughts (Luke 5:22). But He didn’t deny the ability to forgive sin. Instead, He did the very opposite, proving He possessed the same authority as God Himself. Jesus knew that any-

one can say, “Your sins are forgiven,” because there’s no way to tell whether the sins are actually forgiven. But if someone says, “Get up and walk,” you can look and see if there is power in those words (5:23). So that’s what Jesus did.

He did this to prove that “the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins” (5:24). The crowd that day probably did not understand how big this claim was, but later Jesus made it clear that He was claiming to be the Son of Man spoken of by Daniel (Dan 7:13–14; Luke 21:27). Over 500 years before Jesus, Daniel had seen a vision in which one like a son of man received authority over all the earth from the Ancient of Days. So by calling Himself the **Son of Man**, Jesus was claiming to be the ultimate human, the great representative of the entire human race, called by God to exercise authority over all the earth, even over sin.

Jesus healed the paralytic’s body to show His much greater authority to heal the soul. But even though physical healing was not Jesus’ primary concern, this event shows that Jesus cares about our physical needs, too. In fact, our physical needs and spiritual needs cannot be separated. Both come from the sin that brought the curse, and both will end one day when God welcomes us into our final home, when we will live on a perfect earth, with perfect bodies and perfect souls. There will be no curse, no tears, no pain, and no death (Rev 21:4; 22:3). Because Jesus has authority even over sin, He truly is the answer to all our needs.

Unfortunately, many people stand in awe of Jesus’ great power without submitting to His authority. When the paralytic did exactly what Jesus said, no one in the crowd could deny the miracle. Every person—which must have included even the Pharisees—was astonished and glorified God (Luke 5:26). But as the rest of Luke shows, the Pharisees refused to follow Jesus because He didn’t speak and act in ways consistent with the law they had created (6:11). Even the crowds wanted only what Jesus could do for them, not Jesus Himself (John 6:34–35, 66). What about you? Are you willing to hand over your life to Jesus as your great healer? Like the paralytic, have you responded in faith, received forgiveness, and erupted in praise to God (Luke 5:25)?



THINK ABOUT IT

It may be easy to claim the power to forgive sins, but Jesus knew how hard it is to actually forgive sin—it would cost Him His life.

Lesson Outline

Jesus has authority to forgive sins.

AGES 3–5 LESSON OUTLINE



1. Trust Jesus and come to Him (5:17–20a).
2. Because He is able to forgive your sins (5:20b–21).
3. And heal your body too (5:22–26).

AGES 6–11 LESSON OUTLINE



1. **The setting: Jesus heals and crowds gather (5:17–20a).**
 - Religious leaders came to see Jesus for themselves (5:17a).
 - Jesus healed by the power of the Father (5:17b).
 - A paralyzed man came to Jesus through persistent faith (5:18–20a).
2. **The surprise: Jesus forgives sin (5:20b–21).**
 - Jesus forgave the paralytic's sin (5:20b).
 - The Pharisees knew only God can forgive sins (5:21).
3. **The sign: Jesus heals the paralytic (5:22–26).**
 - Jesus knew the religious leaders' thoughts (5:22).
 - Jesus proved His authority by healing the paralytic (5:23–25).
 - Everyone was astonished and glorified God (5:26).



TEACH THE BIBLE LESSON

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Lesson Questions

Use these questions to teach or to review this week's lesson.



Ages 3–5 Lesson Questions

1. **What is a paralytic?**
Someone who cannot use his legs.
2. **Why could he not get to Jesus?**
The house was too crowded.
3. **How did his friends get him to Jesus?**
They went to the roof, cut a hole, and lowered him down.
4. **What did Jesus say to him first?**
Jesus said, “Your sins are forgiven.”



Ages 6–11 Lesson Questions

1. **Who came from Jerusalem to see Jesus?**
Pharisees and teachers of the law.
2. **What did the Pharisees put their trust in?**
Their own man-made version of God's law.
3. **Who came to Jesus for healing?**
A paralytic, carried on a cot by his friends.
4. **What was the faith of the paralytic and his friends like?**
It was persistent. They took the time and trouble to get to Jesus.
5. **Why were the Pharisees upset?**
Jesus said, “Your sins are forgiven,” but only God can forgive sins.
6. **What was the paralytic's biggest problem?**
Sin, not paralysis. All other problems are symptoms of Adam's first sin, and sin leads to eternal death.
7. **Why is forgiveness so good?**
God takes away sin forever. He gets rid of it completely. The forgiven person can live with God forever.
8. **How did Jesus prove that He has authority to forgive sins?**
He healed the paralytic completely and immediately. He is the Son of Man spoken of by Daniel.

Lesson Activities

Choose from the following ideas to introduce, illustrate, and apply this week's lesson.

AGES 3–5



JESUS IS GOD

Use this object lesson to show the children that Jesus' ability to heal proved that He is God and is also able to forgive sin. Ask the children to name their favorite animal. Then ask the children to explain how they know which animal is which. Tell the children that we identify animals by what they do. Rabbits hop; alligators swim; eagles fly; and sharks bite. In the same way, Jesus' identity as God was proven by what He did in today's lesson. By healing the paralyzed man, Jesus showed He was God. Because He is God, He also has the power to forgive sin.

DO NOT MOVE A MUSCLE!

Have the children lay on the floor, pretending to be paralyzed. This is a good time to explain the condition of paralysis to the children. Once all are in place, ask them to think about what it would be like not to be able to move. Give some different situations that the children often take their ability to move for granted. Explain that in today's story we will be learning about what the friends of one paralyzed man did to get him to Jesus.



FORGIVENESS

Act out the descriptions of forgiveness listed in the lesson commentary [God throws your sins behind His back (Isa 38:17), refuses to remember them (43:25), stomps them into the ground and casts them into the depths of the sea (Mic 7:19)]. Use an object to represent sin. Have a child hold it, then take it away from the child. Stomp on it. Throw it behind your back. Submerge it in a bucket of water. Then have the children ask you about it. When they do, act like it doesn't exist.

KNOWING OUR THOUGHTS

Think of a number one through ten. Have the children guess until one of them guesses correctly. Give the winner a small prize. Next, choose a letter of the alphabet; award another small prize to the child who guesses correctly. Finally, offer a much larger prize to the child who can guess what you're thinking without any clues. Tell the children that people can guess what someone is thinking some of the time, but only God knows what we're thinking all the time.



ARISE AND WALK

See Year 3 Craft Book, Book 1.

Materials: Craft sheets, brads, scissors, and crayons.

Directions: Students should color the first craft sheet as a background like they would imagine how it would look in the story. The students can then cut out the paralytic and his mat. Two brads should be inserted into the man and the background (at his feet) so that he can lay down and stand up. The second brad should go by his shoulder and should also go through the mat but not the background. This will make the mat appear to be put under his arm when he stands up.

Arise and Walk
See Year 3 Craft Book, Book 1



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AGES 6–8



INTRODUCE

WHICH IS EASIER?

Ask the children a series of questions about which is easier to do. For instance, hopping on two feet or hopping on one foot? Running forward or running backward? Saying a simple sentence or a tongue-twister? The teacher may ask for volunteers to try each thing. Finally, ask the children which is easier, to heal a paralyzed man or forgive his sins? Tell the children that we'll discover the answer in today's lesson.

FORGIVENESS

Forgiveness is an important element of the gospel. Ask the children if they have ever asked for forgiveness or had to forgive someone else. To forgive someone means that you choose not to hold what someone did or said against them. When do we need forgiveness? When we have offended another person. Who can forgive us? Only the person whom we have offended. We cannot forgive or be forgiven on behalf of somebody else. When we sin, who have we offended? Since we have sinned against God, only God can forgive us. If only God can forgive sins, do you think Jesus can forgive sins? Today's lesson will provide us with the answer.



ILLUSTRATE

PUREBRED

Bring in a picture of a dog (or your dog!) to class. Ask the children if any of them have dogs, and what kind of dogs they have. Ask the children if they know what it means when a dog is purebred. Explain that a purebred dog has parents that are the same breed. It's common for owners of a purebred dog to have registry papers. These papers prove their dog is purebred. In our lesson today, Jesus' miraculous healing of the paralytic man proved His power and authority to forgive sin.

IMPERSONATING A POLICE OFFICER

Sometimes people pretend to be police officers in order to commit a crime. Acting like a police officer allows them to do things only police officers have the authority to do, like making traffic stops, detaining people, or searching homes. However, pretending to be a police officer is a serious crime. In our lesson today, the religious leaders charged Jesus with blasphemy because they believed Jesus was pretending to be God, a serious offense in Israel. However, Jesus proved He really is God by healing the paralytic.



APPLY

LOWERING THE PARALYTIC

See Year 3 Craft Book, Book 1.

Materials: Craft sheets, yarn, hole punch, scissors, glue, and crayons.

Directions: Have students color and cut out the pictures on the craft page. Glue the picture of Jesus to the other craft sheet where it says "Glue here." Hole punch the places that have small circles. Use yarn to attach the picture of the paralytic man to the craft sheet. Color the background to look like a building. They are lowering the paralytic through the roof.

Lowering the Paralytic
See Year 3 Craft Book, Book 1



AGES 9–11



INTRODUCE

THE ROOT OF THE PROBLEM

Have you ever weeded a garden or a flowerbed? Is it enough to rip off all the leaves? What if you tear off the weed's flowers or break off its stem? Is that enough? No. To remove a weed, you have to deal with the root. It's the same with human problems like sickness, lawlessness, wars, disasters, and death. In our lesson today, we'll meet a man who has a problem, but instead of fixing that problem, Jesus fixes the problem that is at the root of all the troubles we face in life. Let's find out what that root problem is.

OUR GREATEST NEED

What are some things you need (water, food, oxygen, a home, clothing, etc.)? What do you need the most? What is your greatest need? In our story today, we'll learn about a man with a difficult need: he was paralyzed, and he hoped Jesus would be able to heal him. But we'll find out that this man had an even greater need. Can anyone guess what that was? We'll find out in today's lesson. Jesus is the answer to all our needs, the big ones and the little ones.



ILLUSTRATE

COACHES

Ask the children if any of them compete in sports. Do they have a coach? Some coaches are better than others. However, imagine you have the best coach in the world for your sport. Do you think he or she could help you become a really good athlete? But what if you refused to follow their instructions? This scenario helps us to understand something about Jesus: He is able to heal your soul (and one day your body too), but only if you submit to His authority by following His instructions.

CERTIFICATE OF PROOF

Bring a birth certificate, passport, driver's license, or another official document to class and explain to the children how this document verifies your citizenship, right to drive, date of birth, etc. Explain to the children the rights or privileges this document allows you. In the same way, Jesus' miracles proved his power and authority.



APPLY

FAITH

The paralytic and his friends were willing to do whatever it took to come to Jesus. What about you? We can meet Jesus in the Bible, through prayer, at His church, and by submitting to His control over our lives (obedience). So what things stop you from coming to Jesus? Are you too tired? Too bored? Are there other things you'd rather do (be with friends, go somewhere fun, play games)? Setting aside time to pray takes discipline. So too reading God's Word. Allowing Jesus to have complete control of your life requires daily submission to God's commands. Are you willing to do what it takes to get to Jesus? How does your pursuit compare to the paralytic and his friends?