

Healing or Forgiveness.

Jesus Christ's sermons, messages, conversations and discourses are marked by brilliant, concise and comprehensible rhetoric. He used a range of strategies in countering his adversaries who always murmured and grumbled against. In more situations than one, Jesus handled His word expertly dismissing the accusing fingers pointed at him. His discourse strategies included prolonged silences as well.

In the second chapter of Mark there is a very interesting discussion.

A paralytic is lowered from the roof for Jesus to heal. Jesus is touched by the faith of their friends and the man too, for he must have insisted on seeing Jesus however. And He said to the paralytic, "son your sins are forgiven."

As soon as this word came out of His mouth, the scribes and the Pharisees sitting there 'reasoned in their hearts' about his phrase, 'your sins are forgiven.' And Jesus also knew in his heart, that they were dissenting in their hearts and puts forth this question.

Mark 2:5-12 (NASB) ⁵And Jesus seeing their faith said* to the paralytic, **"⁶Son, your sins are forgiven."** ⁶But some of the scribes were sitting there and reasoning in their hearts, ⁷"Why does this man speak that way? He is blaspheming; who can forgive sins but God alone?"

⁸Immediately Jesus, aware in His spirit that they were reasoning that way within themselves, said* to them, **"Why are you reasoning about these things in your hearts?"** ⁹"Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven'; or to say, 'Get up, and pick up your pallet and walk'?" ¹⁰"But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins"—He said* to the paralytic, ¹¹"I say to you, get up, pick up your pallet and go home." ¹²And he got up and immediately picked up the pallet and

went out in the sight of everyone, so that they were all amazed and were glorifying God, saying, “We have never seen anything like this.”

So now here is the question Jesus puts in their midst. The question itself is the answer. Because Jesus also knew in his heart that they were questioning His divinity thinking, “Who does He think He is? God?” In order to underline the horrifying thought that came to their minds, Jesus teased them with the question : which is easier, healing or forgiving sins?

The obvious answer should have been healing. Faith healing, motivational healing, inspirational healing should have existed all through the ages. Something like, “keep thinking you are healed and keep proclaiming you are healed then you are healed,” kind of preaching could have existed then also. And some would have been healed by this inspiratio healing which is ubiquitous till today. This is not something sudden or radical.

But saying something like, “Son your sins are forgiven,” jolted the crowd. Jesus was only thirty something then, and this man would have surely been older. Why call an older man, “son?” Isn’t this Jesus the carpenter’s son? Do not we know He is from the bottom rung of the society? How can He presume such authority? – These questions were just there in the minds of many.

And the next incredulous thing was why should Jesus dare to declare his sins be forgiven. Why bring the uncomfortable word, “sin” here? Wouldn’t healing do just fine? This is a greater problem today. In today’s post modern world the word ‘sin’ is banned. It is only what you feel like enjoying or feel like doing. There should not be a guilt tag attached to our licentious life.

And Jesus put His finger right there on the sore spot. Sin was and is the root of the problem in many of our afflictions. This person’s sickness is the

result of some sin and that is why Jesus tells Him that, He has forgiven his sins.

Secondly Jesus' purpose in forgiving sins is to draw the attention of the crowd, that He has come to atone our sins. The one Person who is going to pay for the sins, has every right in the world to forgive sins also. May be the whole crowd understood this truth retrospectively after Jesus was crucified and not at that moment.

Incurring the displeasure of all the die hard traditionalists and Pharisees, Jesus now tells him to pick up the bed and walk and which he does promptly.

There was healing yes, yet Jesus here underlined the fact that the most important thing is not healing but forgiveness of sins. Today's good news lacks this uncomfortable truth. It lacks the sting of addressing sin. The Cross is somehow shoved out of sight. Rather we are very comfortable with healing crusades and blessing meetings. Time and again, Jesus pulled our attention to sin-forgiveness-Cross-His Blood- Kingdom of Heaven and eternity. We need to get back to this message even though it seems outdated on many fashionable pulpits of today.

Dear Jesus help me to have a fresh revelation of my life from Your Life and through Your work on the Cross and through the eternal Word of God. Help me to reperspctivize my religiosity with the bare truth of Your Word. Oh Spirit of God open the eyes of our heart that we may see in the Light of Life. Amen. Amen. Amen.