

The Mind of Christ - Lesson 55

May 20, 2020

Welcome to our study of The Mind of Christ. We are working through the life of Christ little by little, and there's a lot to cover. We're trying to go intentionally very, very slowly so that we can "*mind*" the mind of Christ. Today, we're what I call Section 46. I am following *A. T. Robertson's*, "**A Harmony of the Gospels**". It is a way for me to chronologically go through the life of Christ.

We are still in the early days of Jesus' ministry. He has not even chosen all of His apostles yet. He only has four as far as I can tell so far; but to this point, He is beginning to wrap up His ministry. He's spending most of His time now in Galilee and various places there. So, this is the story that we are going to look at tonight, and even though it is not a particularly long story, there is a lot of meat in this story, so I decided that I am going to do this in two parts. Tonight's lesson will be the first part, obviously, and then next week we will tackle some other questions that are raised in these particular passages.

Since we are focused on the Mind of Christ, we're looking to try to understand *how Jesus thinks*. In order to do that, we have to have a pretty good understanding of the setting of all the other players who are in the story and as much as possible about what is going on in the story. As we normally do, we are going to start by looking at and reading the 3 passages from Matthew, Mark and Luke. This story is not recorded in the book of John. Remember, I am using the New American Standard Bible because it's a very literal translation of the bible, and it's a very good study Bible. When I am preaching I do not use this but when I am studying in depth Bible studies, I like to use the New American Standard Bible.

Matthew 9:1-8 Getting into a boat, Jesus crossed over the sea and came to His own city. ² And, behold, they brought to Him a paralytic lying on a bed. Seeing their faith, Jesus said to the paralytic, "Take courage, son; your sins are forgiven." ³ And, behold, some of the scribes said to themselves, "This fellow blasphemes." ⁴ And Jesus knowing their thoughts said, "Why are you thinking evil in your hearts? ⁵ Which is easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up, and walk'? ⁶ But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins"—then He said to the paralytic, "Get up, pick up your bed and go home." ⁷ And he got up and went home. ⁸ But when the multitudes saw this, they were awestruck, and glorified God, who had given such authority to men.

Mark 2:1-12 There are some details given in Mark and Luke that are not found in Matthew. When He had come back to Capernaum several days afterward, it was heard that He was at home. ² And many were gathered together, so that there was no longer room, not even near the door; and **He was speaking the word to them.** ³ And they came, bringing to Him a paralytic, carried by four men. ⁴ Being unable to get to Him because of the crowd, they removed the roof above Him; and when they had dug an opening, they let down the pallet on which the paralytic was lying. ⁵ And Jesus seeing their faith said to the paralytic, "Son, your sins are forgiven." ⁶ But 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?" ⁸ Immediately 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.” ¹² And 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.”

Luke 5:17-26

One day He was teaching; and there were some Pharisees and teachers of the law sitting there, who had come from every village of Galilee and Judea and from Jerusalem; and the power of the Lord was present for Him to perform healing. ¹⁸ And some men were carrying on a bed a man who was paralyzed; and they were trying to bring him in and to set him down in front of Him. ¹⁹ But not finding any way to bring him in because of the crowd, they went up on the roof and let him down through the tiles with his stretcher, into the middle of the crowd, in front of Jesus. ²⁰ Seeing their faith, He said, “Friend, your sins are forgiven you.” ²¹ The scribes and the Pharisees began to reason, saying, “Who is this man who speaks blasphemies? Who can forgive sins, but God alone?” ²² But Jesus, aware of their reasoning, answered and said to them, “Why are you reasoning in your hearts? ²³ Which is easier, to say, ‘Your sins have been forgiven you,’ or to say, ‘Get up and walk’? ²⁴ But, so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins,” — He said to the paralytic—“I say to you, get up, and pick up your stretcher and go home.”

²⁵ Immediately he got up before them, and picked up what he had been lying on, and went home glorifying God. ²⁶ They were all struck with astonishment and began glorifying God; and they were filled with fear, saying, “We have seen remarkable things today.”

I read all the texts so that we can get every detail out of the story. So let’s get a little bit of background here for the story. Jesus is back home; at his home base in Capernaum. It’s called ‘His own city’ because that’s where He set up His Galilean base. Instead of doing it in Galilee where He was not received very well, He set up His base in Capernaum. He’s in Capernaum, He has a house there ... His own place, and this is His home base in Galilee.

The second thing to note is He had been spending more time in lonely places. We talked about that last time and I’m not going to go back into much detail about that, but He is coming off one of those times where He has been alone and He’s coming back to His home town.

Matthew says He took a boat to get home, suggesting, and if you look at the geography, Capernaum is on the Northern part of the Sea of Galilee. It suggests that perhaps He had crossed over into Decapolis, which would be southeast of Capernaum, or perhaps He has gone a little bit northeast of Capernaum and He had to take a boat to get back the easiest way to His hometown.

The audience that day included a delegation of Pharisees, and teachers of the Law, and it says they came from many different places; from the villages in Galilee, from Judea, and even from Jerusalem. So this was quite a delegation of people who had come to check Jesus out.

Remember the last thing we talked about last week was about the leper who had gone and shown himself to the Priest. Could it have been that this priest alerted these Pharisees and the teachers of the Law of the activity of Jesus; and that He had healed a leper, and that the priests had certified that He had healed this leper, and perhaps it was because of *that* they sent a delegation to see what Jesus was up to? I wonder if a couple of people who were probably in that Sanhedrin, the rulers of the Jewish council like Nicodemus ... (I wonder if Nicodemus was in this group. Remember, Nicodemus already had had an encounter with Jesus. It doesn't say if he was in this group.) Who formed this delegation? We don't know exactly who formed it. Was the High Priest involved with this; was Herod involved in this delegation being sent to question Jesus? Did they meet to organize and prepare questions, or did they just kind of show up that day to see what was going on? They were there by design, and not by happenstance. They weren't just 'in the area'. These people came from a lot of different areas and it took some organization to get them all there at the same time because of the different places they came from. So just keep that in mind that those are the people in the room when Jesus is doing this teaching.

I wonder; did Jesus struggle knowing that He was 'more under a microscope' if you will, with those folks being there. I wonder; He hasn't had too many encounters at this point with the Jewish leadership, but I wonder if it really made Him nervous to know that they were in the room. In a sense, they are His enemies. They are the ones He is going to do battle with. They are going to cost Him the most trouble in His ministry and they were looking for things to accuse Him of. And He is going to give them something in this story that we're looking at tonight! They were there by *design* and because He was just getting started in His ministry, I am sure He was, like, 'I've got a long way to go here. I've got 3 years of teaching and preaching before the cross comes'. Again, keep that in mind as we move through the story.

In the story itself, the people must have heard that Jesus had come home and was no longer in the lonely places. Many stories, I'm sure, were swirling around because He had healed a lot of people by this time in Galilee. *He was front-page news*. He was all the buzz, and now the authorities were coming to check Him out.

Here is what they are going to see on this occasion: They are going to see, **first** of all, He will heal someone. **Secondly**, they are going to hear His testimony. They are going to hear the Word of God being preached and proclaimed. And **thirdly**, and this is probably the most important thing in this particular story, is they are going to witness Jesus forgiving this man of his sins ... and that will cause a great deal of attention. (We won't get to a lot of that tonight.)

The scene begins with Jesus speaking the 'word' it says. He is, in a sense, **exegeting** God. In **John 1:18** we read, "No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, **He has explained Him.**" Jesus came to *explain* God to us. The word in the Greek is to "exegete" God. So, Jesus is here specifically to *reveal the Father* to the people who listen to Him, so that must have been partly what He was teaching that day. Another theme that was very prominent in Jesus' thinking was the 'Kingdom of God', and obviously He must have been talking about that as well.

So, here is the Logos (λογος), the word of God (**John 1:1, 14**); here is the Logos speaking a logos (because that's the word '**word**') of God to these people! And He knew that many of the hearts in that room were hard hearts. He knew that He was going to be throwing seed, the word of God, on pathway soil – soil that had been beaten down, that had been walked upon, and that the seeds are not going to penetrate the hearts of many of the people in that room. He *knows* that, but He continues to put the 'word' out to them. He knows that Satan is going to come; he's going to snatch that 'word' away before it gets into the hearts of many of these Jewish leaders. But still, He is teaching, and there were others who were in the room who probably would hear, and understand, and respond in a positive way.

Now Luke adds in this story that the power of the Lord was present for Him to perform healing. That's an interesting phrase. It raises the question; didn't Jesus always have the power and the authority to heal? Do you remember a similar phrase was used in **Luke 8:46** (we haven't gotten to that story yet in this study). It is where the woman who came up behind Jesus, she had an issue of blood, and she touched the hem of his garment, and it says that Jesus felt power leave Him. And do you remember that when Jesus went to His hometown of Nazareth, it says that He was unable to "perform many miracles there because the people had no faith." (**Matthew 13:58**).

It raises this issue of whether or not Jesus had to be, at least in some way, around people who had faith in order to have the ability to heal people. Now, it seems like Jesus should be able to heal people under **any** circumstances, at **any** time, and we are going to see other stories, I just thought of this. It's the story when Jesus comes down the mountain from being on the Mount of Transfiguration, and He is being confronted by the disciples who tried to cast out a demon from a little boy and they were unable to cast out the demon. Jesus said to them, "Why couldn't you do this?" He says, "**Because of the littleness of your faith**" in **Matthew 17:20**. The father indicated that he had faith, but he needed 'help' with his unbelief. But Jesus *was* able to heal that boy on that occasion and remove the demon from him and He said on that occasion that 'this one comes out only by prayer and fasting'.

Here we have, what is called, the 'dunamas kurios'; the 'power of the Lord'. It was the power of the Lord for Jesus to be able to do this healing. So wasn't the power of the Lord always with Jesus? Wasn't He always, on every occasion, able to do healing? Did it come and go? Did God turn it off so Jesus was able to 'stick to preaching'? Did God say to Him, "Look, I'm going to turn the power to heal off for a while so you'll get back to preaching and teaching, and on occasion He'll turn it back on so He'd be able to ... I know that sounds kind of crazy, but I'm trying to understand how this works and why Luke would make such a statement as that. Or was Luke just simply giving us a matter of fact? The fact is that the power of the Lord was present to perform healing, and we should take it just at face value.

Notice here, Luke, often in these stories when it has to do with healings; that Luke is the observant one. He is the one who is picking up...now of course Luke wasn't there. He wrote this later on. He did a careful search of all the things (**Luke 1:1-4**). Perhaps He interviewed a lot of people in order to get all these stories. But Luke was a physician; he was a doctor, and he was giving particular attention to the circumstances of the healings that Jesus did. On this occasion Luke observed and understood that Jesus had the power to heal unlike Luke, who healed people through the natural means of medicine that he had studied.

Another question that arises for me when Jesus was healing is whether or not Jesus only healed the *presenting* disease that the person had. Now in this case, in this story, the presenting disease was the man was a paralytic; it was obvious that he couldn't move and he needed to be able to walk again.

In the previous story the presenting disease was leprosy and Jesus healed him of his leprosy. There are many *presenting* diseases that people have at various times and various places, however, there may be more things wrong with us medically ... physically than meets the eye. I may go to the doctor and I may say to the doctor when he asks, "What's going on with you" so I tell him my symptoms and he says, "Okay. Here's how we are going to treat that." He might give me a check-up to see if he can find anything else wrong with me, but it doesn't mean that's the only thing wrong with me. So my question is, is whether or not Jesus only dealt with the *presenting* illness or whether He just healed the entire person and made them perfectly well again no matter what they had going on. If they had some arthritis or if they had some indigestion going on; anything that may have been a problem even if they didn't present that to Him, did Jesus heal the entire person? I don't know. I raise all these questions because this was so much a part of the life of Jesus that I want to understand what *He* understood He was doing on those occasions. That's why I raised that issue.

Now I want to go over to the book of Acts because there is a reference in **Acts 10:38** and I believe this was when Peter was teaching. It says as he was teaching Cornelius and his household, "You know of Jesus of Nazareth, how God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and with power, and how He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him." So the power of the Lord was on Jesus to heal.

Now, this raises a question. This oppression that he mentions here is of tyrannical rule of the devil himself. So, was Peter indicating that all diseases have a component of a person being oppressed by Satan himself ... by the devil? The word oppression is used in **James 2:6** where it talks about the tyrannical rule of the rich oppressing the poor.

In **Luke 13:16** "And this woman, a daughter of Abraham as she is, whom Satan has bound for eighteen long years, should she not have been released from this bond ...?" She was bound by Satan. So, the question I have is, "Is all sickness caused by Satan?" Is there an element of satanic oppression associated with the illness that is presented? If not all, how do we know which ones? If it's not all diseases, then which diseases might be of Satan and which are not? And, again, the bible connects these things. We see it in the stories of Jesus but we also see it in the preaching of the Apostles ... the connection that they often make between the diseases that needed to be healed and the work of Satan.

So, what are the treatments? Should we always connect forgiveness with healing? Now, again, I'm going to talk a lot more about that next week but I want to introduce it today. Again, should we always connect forgiveness with healing? In this story, the first thing Jesus did, before He even healed the man, it says that He forgave him of his sins.

One of the texts that comes to mind is over in **James 5:13-16**. "Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing praises. ¹⁴ Is anyone among you sick? 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; ¹⁵ and the prayer offered in faith will restore the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up, **and if he has committed sins, they will be forgiven him.** ¹⁶ Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much.”

Now, again, we don't have time to unpack all of that, but he says if a person is sick, he should call for the elders of the church, they should pray over him, they should anoint him with oil, and if he has sinned, he should confess that sin, they should pray for him for that sin that he will be healed. The reason I bring that particular passage up is because we're asking this question, “what is involved in illness or the sicknesses that we have?”

1. Is there a satanic oppression involved with the illness?
2. Is there sin that is sometimes involved, or at least, a corollary of the illness?
3. Does every illness have a spiritual component to it?

You remember in **John 9:1** that the disciples, in observing this blind man asked the question, ‘who sinned that this man was born blind? Did his parents sin or did he sin for him to be blind?’ It's kind of a ridiculous question in regard to the man; how could he sin before he was born in order to bring about his own blindness? But yet, the apostles connected sin with sickness. It's the same thing Job's friends did; they connected his misery and all the things he went through, not just the sickness he had, but *everything* that happened to him; that it *must* be related to some sin. But even though, clearly in Job's case and in the blind man's case (because Jesus said, ‘neither his parents nor the man sinned, that he was born blind, but this was done for the God's glory to be revealed’) so it is certainly true that not **all** sickness is related to satanic oppression or to sin, but there does seem to be, in some cases, a corollary between the illness, satanic oppression and forgiveness of sins.

I don't know how to work all that out; I don't know how to give you a formula to know how that is, but I'm just trying to present to you that facts as I understand them, as I know them, so you can factor all of this in.

Let's talk about the men who carried the paralytic to Jesus, for a moment. You remember they could not get in the door. Matthew doesn't tell us that but Mark and Luke do. They could not get in the door so they had to go up on the roof. They dug through the roof, they removed the tiles and things that were on the roof, and made a big enough hole (and I'm sure, a big enough mess, not only on the roof but down below with the people having all the debris falling down on them). So, they made a big mess but they were able to lower this man down into this house. Now, if Jesus was in **His** house, perhaps a rented house or someone loaned Him a house, well ... now He's got a hole in His roof and He's going to need a roofer to come and help Him get His roof fixed.

Anyway, they're lowering the man down and it shows the persistence of these people. It reminds me of Matthew 18 where the persistent widow who would not leave the judge alone. She just continued to just ‘bug him to death’ with her request until he finally said, ‘Look. I don't care about you, but you are wearing me out and I will give you what you want just so you'll leave me alone.’

Well, Jesus admired that kind of persistence and encouraged us to pray with that kind of persistence. This is what is going on in the story here. These men who were carrying the paralytic on the mat were being very persistent. They *insisted* that Jesus have an opportunity to, at least, see their friend. They were not going home until they got an appointment with Jesus.

Jesus did not see this as a disruption – at least there is no indication that He did. It doesn't seem like He's angry or upset because He's in the middle of teaching.

I don't know, I might be a little upset if I were teaching right now and somebody started digging through my roof; I think I might be a little upset, I might pause the recorder, and come back to this later. But Jesus saw this as an *opportunity*, not as a disruption, which tells me that sometimes we need to stop and try to understand, *what is the difference between a disruption and an opportunity*, because some things that *we* may call a disruption; *God* may see it as an opportunity. For him, it was an opportunity to heal, to teach and we are still talking about it ... even today.

They were hindered by the crowd from getting to Jesus which raises another issue. This is the 'preacher' in me because I think it's important for me to make this point: "How do we hinder people from getting to Jesus?" Are we so "crowded around Jesus" that we are not even aware that people are trying to get to Him and we're not even helping them to get to Him?

Jesus talked about the Pharisees in **Matthew 23** about not allowing others to enter the Kingdom of God. It says that they would not enter themselves, and they were *hindering* other people from entering the Kingdom of God. There are other things Jesus said about putting stumbling blocks in people's way and hindering them from getting to Jesus.

You remember the children who tried to come to Jesus and Jesus said, "Don't hinder them. Let them come to me because such is the Kingdom of God." Sometimes in situations where we feel it's a disruption, where Jesus needs to be protected from something or from someone, Jesus is looking at it entirely differently and says, 'Don't stop people from coming to Me.' So, this is noisy. It's messy. It is destructive. It's disruptive, but yet, in the midst of it all, Jesus is making the *most* of every opportunity.

Now, I want to deal, just for a moment, with this idea of the motivation that these men had. It doesn't tell us exactly, but there is an indication of some things we need to understand about the men who actually carried the paralytic and went to all the trouble of tearing the roof off, and bringing him down through the roof.

Perhaps it was just pure love for this man. We don't know the relationship between the men who carried him; we don't know exactly how many men there are, but I kind of envision at least four if they have four corners of this mat and they let him down, so it could have been that their motive was just pure love for him ... that they wanted to see him healed.

There could have been more of a selfish motive they had, and one of the reasons they were being so persistent, and perhaps it was just that they were tired of caring for this man.

There could have been more of a selfish motive they had, and one of the reasons they were being so persistent. Perhaps it was just that they were tired of caring for this man. Maybe they had taken care of him and taken care of him and served him and his every need; and he was totally paralyzed and all thing things that go into caring for someone in this condition. Maybe it was like, Jesus came home, they saw an opportunity and they thought, '**let's finally get this man healed** so we don't have to take care of him anymore.' Well, it could have been that.

It could have been that the family of this man who was caring for him came to these men and said, "Please, do something to help us. Our loved one is very, very sick; he's a great burden on the rest of the family, and would you please take him to Jesus" and they agreed just simply to do a service for a family that was in great need.

Perhaps, another motivation was that maybe these men had been healed themselves. You remember that Jesus had been here in this area healing a lot of people. Maybe these men had previously been healed by Jesus Himself and they saw an opportunity for this man to be healed; and they wanted **him** to experience the **same thing** that had happened in their lives.

But notice what the **text** actually says! It says, "Seeing their faith..." What did Jesus see? You know, we can question, what were the motives, why did they do it, and what were all the circumstances of the things that we don't see in the story, but when Jesus saw them, when He looked up and saw them letting him down, it says that **He** saw **their faith!** That was the motivation; that was the thing that was causing them and driving them to help this man.

It was obviously an active faith – It was not just simply 'I know that Jesus can heal this person.' They put their faith into action! They actually **did** something. **They** put him on the mat. **They** carried him. **They** tried to get through the door. **They** carried him up onto the roof, and think of the task that was. **They** had to climb a ladder and hoist him up on the roof. **They** dug through the tiles. **They** let him down in the middle of Jesus. **They** risked all of that disruption and what people would think just to help this man. This was an active faith that they had.

It's an example how the faith of others helped this man. This is a curious kind of question that arises. There is no indication that the man, himself, had faith in Jesus to heal him. I wonder if the man even understood what was going on. We don't know the nature of his paralysis; we don't know if he was conscious ... there are a lot of things we don't know about his condition. But it doesn't mention that 'he' had faith; it only mentions that the men who brought him had faith. This raises a lot of issues about can we utilize **our** faith in Jesus in helping people who may have **little** faith or **no** faith; and that Jesus will do something because He sees faith being put into the mix. In other words, "Can I believe for somebody else?"

When it comes to salvation, I cannot believe for you; but I can believe **in** you and that **you can believe** if I will present the Gospel to you. In other words, my faith can be active and, in some ways, carry you for a while, for the time when you're too weak to carry yourself. Maybe that is what is going on here.

Maybe they had taken care of him and taken care of him and served him and his every need; and he was totally paralyzed and all thing things that go into caring for someone in this condition. Maybe it was like, Jesus came home, they saw an opportunity and they thought, '*let's finally get this man healed*, so we don't have to take care of him anymore.' Well, it could have been that.

It could have been that the family of this man who was caring for him came to these men and said, "Please, do something to help us. Our loved one is very, very sick; he's a great burden on the rest of the family, and would you please take him to Jesus" and they agreed just simply to do a service for a family that was in great need.

Perhaps, another motivation was that maybe these men had been healed themselves. Remember, Jesus had been here in this area healing a lot of people. Maybe these men, the two, three or four or however many there were who helped him, maybe they had previously been healed by Jesus Himself and they saw an opportunity for this man to be healed; and they wanted *him* to experience the *same thing* that had happened in their lives.

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When it comes to salvation, I cannot believe for you; but I can believe *in* you and that *you can believe* if I will present the Gospel to you. In other words, my faith can be active and, in some ways, carry you for a while, for the time when you're too weak to carry yourself. Maybe that is what is going on here.

I don't think He was teaching some principle here that you can somehow have faith for someone else. It's not like *1 Corinthians 15:29* where Paul raises the question about being baptized for the dead. That's a whole other story and we won't get into that tonight. But no one can be baptized for anyone else. I don't think you can have faith for anyone else. You cannot confess the name of Jesus for anyone. But I *do* believe that there are things that you can do to help people when *they* don't have any faith. *Your* faith may be what will bring them healing or help to them in their circumstances. So, just keep that in mind while you're trying to help them.

So, what of those paralyzed by sin, and they need someone to carry them to Jesus? Perhaps there are times when you will meet people and they're paralyzed by sin. They may have addictions or other problems in their lives and they just need someone to carry them to Jesus; carry them to a place where they can hear the word of God.

And again, they may not go. You cannot make that person go. You can't make them listen; and you can't make them receive the Gospel, but maybe you can make opportunity for people to have all of what is needed for them to come to faith in themselves and to receive the forgiveness and the healing that they need.

On this occasion, *this* man is there because *these* men had faith, and Jesus recognizes this faith.

Now, that's as far as we're going to go tonight. There is a lot more in the story and we are going to take that up next week. And we are really going to look at this idea of Jesus forgiving this man; the reaction of the Pharisees and the teachers of the Law, and all that was going on there.