

The Mind of Christ - Lesson 56

May 27, 2020

Welcome to our Mind of Christ Bible Study. We are still in section 46 of A. T. Robertson's Harmony of the Gospels. This is the second part of this section. We began it last week and will try our best to finish it this week. Our scriptures at **Matthew 9:1-8, Mark 2:1-12** and **Luke 5:17-26**

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 want to recap a little bit of the circumstances that are involved here in this particular study. Remember in “The Mind of Christ” what we’re aiming for is to understand how Jesus thinks so that we can, in our own way, imitate Him, have the same kind of thought patterns that He has and therefore become like Him in our daily lives.

We have the healing of the paralytic in Capernaum. We won’t go back through the text again but Jesus is in a home in Capernaum. The scene here is of a man who was paralyzed, there were people who were gathered in this home, perhaps even the home of where Jesus was staying, and there was a delegation of Jewish leaders who had also come. They were in this home as well. The people who were carrying Him on the mat could not get Him into the house, so they went up on the roof, they cleared away part of the roof, and they let Him down through the roof in front of Jesus. Jesus, on this occasion, has already been teaching but He is going to heal this man and also forgive him of his sins. That is the focal point of this particular story, and we are going to unpack the second half of this story.

We have looked at some of the incidentals, some of the logistics of what is going on in this story, and now we are going to look at little more specifically at what Jesus actually did on this occasion.

The first thing we want to concentrate on is the fact that Jesus forgave this man of his sins. This is notable because this is not something Jesus typically does when people are brought to Him, or at least we are *not told that He does* this when they are brought to Him and He heals them. But on this particular occasion Jesus forgives this man of his sins. So, why did Jesus think to forgive him of his sins? What was it on this particular occasion that caused Jesus to say that this man needs to be forgiven of his sins? Was there a sin connection? We talked about that last week, a sin connection between the illness that he had, so is it connected with some kind of sin that he had in his life?

In John 9 with the blind man, there was *not* a connection between his blindness and sin according to Jesus. Did this man cause, in some way, his own paralysis by sinful behavior? It could be like a criminal who might get shot in the back while he’s committing a crime. He might say that the reason he was paralyzed was because he was committing a crime, the police showed up, and shot him and that is why he is paralyzed. You could see a pretty direct connection between a particular sin and a malady like paralysis.

Well, we don’t know any of these things but we *do* know Jesus’ thought to forgive him of his sins very quickly in this story.

Jesus calls him 'friend' according to the New American Standard Bible; however the Greek word there is not literally 'friend' but it is really the word for 'man' (ανθρωπος). Matthew and Mark call him 'my son', but literally, the word 'son' here is teknon (τεκνον) which means literally, a 'child'. So, He's calling him, 'my child' or 'my son'; in either case, it's a term of endearment. Jesus has some kind of affection for this man.

Another thing we need to note about this is what did Jesus see? We talked about the fact last week when he was *let down* we could see that this man is a total distraction or nuisance because they are tearing the roof apart, he's coming right down in the middle of a time when Jesus is teaching these people. So he could have been seen as a nuisance or distraction, however, that's **not** what Jesus saw. Jesus saw a person who was literally a person, He saw a child no less, and He saw the faith of the men who brought him to Jesus.

Sometimes Jesus sees things in a scene that we don't see. He perceives things in a way that we often don't perceive them. He tells this man to "be of good cheer" or to "take courage". Sin and sickness often need to be approached with courage and boldness. Anytime we are involved in something like sin, or the sickness of another person, we don't need a timid approach when dealing with that. Jesus encourages, always encourages, in every situation He always encourages moving forward ... progress.

You will see in this story, and in other stories in the life of Christ, that people often get in the way of and they try to hinder people. This is what we talked about last week ... this man being hindered, but Jesus, when He picks up and becomes in control, if you will, of a situation, He's trying to move the situation forward from where it is; there is always forward progress. So we need to be careful that we don't become people who are just simply putting obstacles, or road blocks or hindrances into the lives of people. We are to be people who are moving people forward in their lives from wherever they are; it doesn't matter where they are, but we're trying to move them to a better place in their lives. It's the same way John the Baptist cleared the way for Jesus; He was trying to get anything out of the way that would impede the progress of Jesus coming into the lives of other people.

Now, we're going to see it in this story, but the main obstacle that makes it difficult for people to move forward in their lives is what I would call '*mind clutter*'; it's when the mind and the thoughts get cluttered. When we, in our thinking, do not have correct thinking, it's not so much correct thinking but we have so many things in our minds, that it clutters up our thinking and makes it more difficult for Jesus to have progress within our hearts and minds.

It's similar to Matthew 10 when Jesus sent the apostles out on what we call the limited commission. He told them to look for a worthy household. In other words, it was a house where people would have the ability to be receptive; that their minds were not so cluttered, their lives were not so *cluttered with useless stuff*, that they had time to actually hear what is being said. So, what is the main obstacle that people have? It's really their own thought patterns that get in the way. We need to stay the course; we don't need to shrink back.

As Paul says in Philippians 3, we need to forget the things that are behind, because that's where our minds get all cluttered, and we need to strain forward toward the things that are ahead.

I ask the question whether or not this particular man needed to confess, needed to repent; how did Jesus see the heart of this man? Jesus offers him forgiveness without what is typically involved; without seeing, maybe, this man's faith, or this man's repentance, and Jesus was maybe able to look into this man's heart and was able to forgive him just by knowing what was in his heart. So, Jesus just 'wipes away' all his sin *at will, on the spot*, without any preconditions except the evidence of faith itself being present. And even on this occasion, at least from what we can read from this story, it wasn't even the man's faith; it was the faith of the men who brought him to Jesus.

Now this tells us a couple of things about Jesus and the way He thinks and the way He is. *Number one*, He has the authority to do what He did. Jesus has the *authority* to forgive sins. *Secondly*, He has the *grace* to forgive sins. You see, a person can have the authority to do something without having the grace, or the willingness, to do something. So Jesus had both. He had the authority to forgive sins and the grace to forgive sins.

So, what did others think on this occasion? Sometimes it's helpful just to ask some questions about that. At least the friends there had to be very, very happy about what they were experiencing. Jesus had previously given healing to people, He had cast out demons, He had explained truth to them, and now, He is granting, at *least this* man, forgiveness of sin.

The Scribes saw this, and their thought pattern; their thinking, was 'Jesus is blaspheming. Jesus is speaking *evil* according to them. They thought that He was being presumptuous, because only God can forgive sins. I'm sure at this particular moment, the Jewish leader's delegation who came on this occasion perhaps had thought, "*Oh, we got Him! Now He's trapped. Now we have something to pin on Him, some way to accuse Him.*"

The idea of blasphemy, of speaking against; there are many times that phrase is used in the New Testament. Probably the most notable one is the '*blasphemy against the Holy Spirit*' which is, according to Jesus, the unforgiven sin. It is **rejecting the agent of conviction** that leads to forgiveness. In other words, if we reject the Holy Spirit who is the One who can lead us to conviction, then we are 'cut off' from forgiveness of sin, because the work of the Holy Spirit is to reveal and to convict. And if we blaspheme the Holy Spirit or speak against Him, then that work cannot be completed in our lives and we cannot find forgiveness from God. That is kind of a deep passage to get into so we'll just leave it at that (**Matthew 12:31-32**).

In **Mark 15:29** when Jesus was hanging on the cross, it says that they were hurling abuse at Him. Literally, they were hurling abuse *against God* because Jesus was God hanging on the cross. Yet here is Jesus on the cross saying, "Father, forgive them, for they don't know what they are doing" and also forgiving that thief on the cross!

So, Jesus had stepped out, *according to them*; He has stepped out of His proper place. They were probably *struggling with His teaching* and they were probably *struggling with His healing*, but now He has **really** gone too far because now He is offering **forgiveness of sin** so He is way out of line according to these Jewish leaders. But it says here in the text, that "Jesus, knowing their thoughts ..."

Now, it's one thing to know the mind of Christ, to try to understand the mind of Christ, the thoughts in the mind of Christ, however, what about Christ knowing **our** thoughts? On this occasion it says that Jesus knew the thoughts of these people. It was another way of Him showing that He was actually God! Who alone, besides the man himself, knows the thoughts of a man? But God knows all of our thoughts. So when Jesus says, 'I know your thoughts, I know what you're thinking; it's amazing. It's kind of like Joseph revealing the dream to Pharaoh or like Daniel revealing the dream to Nebuchadnezzar. It is being able to the thoughts of another person.

I wonder; would you like the ability ... would you want the ability to be able to read other people's thoughts? Think about that for a minute. If God could give you a gift and you were able to know what everybody is thinking all the time, would you want that ability? I'm not sure I would want that ability. Just imagine if you had that in counseling, and you were counseling an individual or a couple, and you had the ability to read their mind ... what they were really thinking, I wonder if you could cut through some of the words and some of the ... It would save a lot of time if you could get right down to the thoughts.

But if you were in business with someone, do you want to always know what everybody is thinking within that business? Well, maybe so, and you might have an edge if you knew, but I would imagine that would get pretty burdensome. I mean, while I'm preaching, do I want to know the thoughts of the people who I'm preaching to while I'm preaching? I think it would be pretty distracting if I could read your mind ... even right now as you are listening to this class. But it's interesting to consider this idea of being able to read other people's thoughts.

We like to be selective, somewhat in control of the things we share in our lives. We have discretion in revealing things to other people. Therefore, we don't want other people to be able read our minds. We want to be able to tell people what we want them to know, and we have to be somewhat selective about how to do that. Now, the goal is to become more and more transparent as we get to know people and they're trustworthy and there is a benefit to being open with people about things.

In **Matthew 9:4** it says that *their thinking was evil*. It says that *on this occasion*, they were thinking evil thoughts *in their hearts*. This idea of thinking evil reminds me of **1 Cor. 14:20** where Paul says "Do not be children in your thinking but in evil we should be babes, but in your thinking you should be mature." Well, they weren't mature; they were babes. Paul says that we should be innocent when it comes to evil; we shouldn't have evil thoughts. But it seems that they were not being babes in their evil thinking. They were mature in their evil thinking.

In **Matthew 15:19** Jesus says that evil thoughts come out of the *heart* and that's what defiles a man. These Jewish leaders, on this occasion, were revealing their thoughts and Jesus understood that they were defiling themselves by the thinking that they were doing. So, where does an evil thought first originate that starts this defilement process? James 1 says evil thoughts come from desires.

Now a desire may start, and it may not be a ‘bad’ desire. It may just be something that we want. It may be something that is even ‘good’. But it starts with some desire; something that we think we need, and we may actually need it. And then, if it’s not controlled, if it’s not managed in the right way, that desire can turn into an evil desire, and that evil desire can turn into a sin, and that sin can turn into death according to **James 1:13-14**.

So how does a desire become distorted or perverted in some way that it becomes evil? Of course we have many examples of that. There are things that we need; food, clothing and so forth. There are sexual desires; all kinds of desires that we have in our hearts that God placed there. But when those things become perverted or distorted in some way, *then* you begin to have the evil thoughts that lead, eventually, into sin. So it is very important for us to control things at the point of desire. These people were not doing this.

Matthew 12:34 is an interesting passage and I want to go over to that. Jesus said, “**You brood of vipers, how can you, being evil, speak what is good? For the mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart.**” So He is saying to these people that there is some inherent evil within them. He says on another occasion that they have an inherent blindness and therefore everything appears dark to them because they have ‘blindness’ inside of them.

So a person who has a bias, who is stuck on a particular view of something, that view, if it’s not rooted in truth, can become the source of evil in our lives and can make it difficult, almost impossible, for us to have pure, innocent thoughts because everything is being channeled through this evil heart or this wrong view of things that we have.

This seems to be what happened in **Genesis 6:5-6**. “**Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.** ⁶ The Lord was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart.” And of course that led to the flood; it’s why God brought the flood upon people.

Jeremiah 4:14 we read, “**Wash your heart from evil, O Jerusalem, that you may be saved. How long will your wicked thoughts lodge within you?**” It says their thoughts are thoughts of iniquity. Again, what is this heart where these thoughts originate?

If we understand the nature of the heart, the *heart is kind of where the mind and the emotions meet*. So, what is involved in the heart is at least four things involved in the heart of a man. The **first** is the emotions; the **second** is the volition or the will; the **third** is the intellect and the **fourth** is the conscience. These are the four things that are involved in our hearts. We don’t have time to unpack these, but if you think about wanting to keep every one of those areas *pure* and *clean*, then you have to deal with your emotions and make sure that the emotions that you are feeling are proper emotions for the occasion or the event or for the circumstance that you are in. Secondly, make sure that your will is aligned with the will of God. Thirdly, your intellect, the things that you know are rooted and based in truth, and based in what God reveals to us. And then, fourthly that our conscience is calibrated in such a way as to be able to recognize truth, to affirm truth, and to deny those things that are wrong ... those things that are evil. Again, these are the things that are going on in the hearts of these people and all of these things, these four things in our hearts, need to come together.

In **Romans 6:17** it says that we obey from the heart. “But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient **from the heart** to that form of teaching to which you were committed...” So when we have these four areas of our lives focused on God, and they are pure and clean, then the *obedience* that we give to God is **also** going to be pure and clean and acceptable to God.

Now **Luke 5:22** says, “Knowing their reasoning ...” He did not just simply know what they were thinking, He knew the “thought process”, the reasoning process that they were going through ... and the process may have gone something like this: *Only God can forgive sins*. That was one of their premises. *Jesus is forgiving sins. Therefore, Jesus is God!* That is what they would have to conclude. However the problem is that they rejected premise number 2.

They heard Jesus say, “I am forgiving you of your sins.” But, the problem is that they did not believe He had the *authority* to forgive their sins so therefore what He was claiming did not lead to the conclusion that He was God, but simply that **He was making Himself out to be God or equal to God**. That’s their thinking. Jesus wants to redirect their thinking in some ways so He gives them an either / or proposition. So He asks the question “Which is easier? Is it easier to forgive sins or to heal this paralytic?”

Now, I want to go to my journal. I haven’t been reading much from my journal, but on March 19, 2011, I wrote some things that sum up this idea.

So by asking the question, which is easier, and by their having to conclude that they, mere men, Jewish leaders, could do neither, in other words, they could not forgive sins nor heal people, Jesus has them where He wants them. And again, we have to get the thinking here. He’s giving them an either / or proposition. Which is easier to do: forgive sins or heal people? They can’t do either one, so both are impossible to them. But Jesus wanted to know, if you had to pick one that was easier than the other, which one would you pick?

So, in **Luke 5:24** is the key. ★ Here is what Jesus says. “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.” So Jesus is trying to prove to them that He **has** authority on earth to forgive sins, so **how** can He prove that?

He can only do that by doing something tangible ... physical that they can see. So, what does He do? He does something they can’t do; He heals the paralytic. Jesus **visibly** did what a ‘man’ *cannot do* to demonstrate that He could do **invisibly** what a man cannot do! Why would anyone reasonably doubt Jesus’ ability to do the **unseen** when he obviously could do what was **seen!**

In other words, when Jesus says “I forgive you of your sins”, you can’t *see* that. That’s something that happens in the mind of God. They may hear the words but they cannot actually see the “taking away of sin”. So, what did Jesus do? He did the next best thing. He says “I’m going to show you something that you can’t do either.” You can’t heal people, and therefore I am going to heal this man in order *to show you* that I have the authority *to forgive him of his sins*. So **that’s** what is going on here.

They didn't realize what He had to do, *actually*, to forgive this man of his sins or others, including us; that He had to go to the cross. But He wasn't talking about that on this particular occasion with them. He wasn't getting into "the cross" or "into the atonement" or "into redemption" or all those things. He was simply demonstrating to them that there is a connection to His ability to forgive sins and His ability to heal a paralytic.

There is also an issue of **authority** here. Is this authority from Heaven, or is it from Earth? Where does forgiveness come from? Jesus, when He forgives him, is demonstrating authority. But how does He show that authority; *by healing him* from his paralysis.

The Scribes' view that sickness and sin were connected, put them, kind of, in a box. And again, I am not saying this man was sick because of his sin, although Jesus did forgive him of his sin. What I'm saying here is that the Scribes and Pharisees believed that sickness was the **result of sin**. So Jesus, in forgiving him of sin **and** healing him, was putting them in a box. He was addressing both of those issues showing He had authority over sin by showing that He had the authority over the effects of sin which is sickness. Jesus *tangled them up in their own logic*. In their own way of thinking, He just twisted them all up which is amazing because Jesus does this on several occasions when talking to people.

Now Jesus refers to Himself in this particular passage as "the Son of Man". He is the only one who uses this phrase, except for Stephen in **Acts 7:56** when he said, "[Behold, I see the heavens opened up and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.](#)" But Jesus, exclusively in the gospels calls Himself the Son of Man. Now, other people call Him the Son of God, but that is the phrase He uses for Himself because it identifies Him with us and our human condition.

Jesus also, by forgiving sins, associated with the priesthood. His method was eventually a very bloody method of forgiving sins because He shed His own blood on the cross. But, thereafter, He did not have to *continue* to be a bloody sacrifice because He suffered once for all. The priests had to go through this bloody sacrifice over and over again, but not Jesus.

So they saw Jesus as, kind of like handing out forgiveness like candy. It wasn't costing anything. They didn't think it cost anything to forgive this man of his sins. He didn't have to offer a sacrifice; no animal was killed on this particular occasion. What they did not realize, what they did not know and what they did not appreciate was what it would cost Jesus one day to forgive this man of his sins, was He was going to have to go to the cross in order for this man's sin truly to be forgiven ultimately.

So, in forgiveness, Jesus connected Heaven and Earth. Thy will be done on Earth, in the same way that it is done in Heaven. So in forgiving sins here, those sins now would be forgiven in Heaven.

Now I want to read from the journal again. This is from March 21. Connecting Heaven and Earth was why Jesus came. "Thy will be done on Earth as it is in Heaven" ... the Kingdom of Heaven among men ... the godhead inside the temple of our bodies ... the Word became flesh so that we could partake of the Divine nature. How could it be – by Authority?

Jesus was given authority on Earth to forgive sins. The thief on the cross experienced this authority. To be able to tell someone that they would be in paradise today requires a lot of **authority**.

I am not sure any man in the flesh understands this degree of authority. We are impressed with the casting out of demons, the healings, even raising people from the dead. Every miracle in the Old and New Testament seems like “child’s play” when we consider the true authority of Jesus. And we resist it, often! Do we really understand **Jesus is LORD?** Such authority is too great to comprehend.

On that occasion, as I was writing that, I was just thinking about ‘how we take **so ‘for granted’** the authority of Jesus! To look at a man and tell him, “Your sins are forgiven” and to know that *that will be bound in heaven*, it will be written in the record, and it cannot be changed ... *that is huge authority*. And *that* is the authority that Jesus has. The result of all of this was the worship and the glorifying of God. People said, “We’ve never seen anything like this! They were amazed that God gave SUCH authority to men ... or only to **one man**. How could God give such authority to a man that He could forgive sins?”

In some ways, we *all* have the ability because of Christ to dispense forgiveness of sins to the people in our lives! But we need validation from Heaven in order for our forgiveness to mean anything with God. But I can forgive...I can forgive! I have been given authority to forgive you of your sins *if* you sin against me. Now, I cannot forgive you on behalf of God, but I can, in my thinking like Jesus, I can be generous with my forgiveness.

What is one of the things that we learn from this particular story? I hope that one of the lessons we learn is that we need to be generous with forgiveness. And yes, we need to have compassion for the illnesses of other people, and yes, we should pray for people and we should do things to try to alleviate the sufferings of people physically, but one of the things that we can do more freely, than even healing people from their illnesses, is to offer them forgiveness.

First of all, we can offer forgiveness if they have sinned against us; but secondly, to offer them a chance to be forgiven by God Himself. We need to be generous. We need to be extravagant with the forgiveness of God; not to be stingy, because freely **we** have received, and freely **we** should give.

Truly amazing things happened that day in that little house when that man was let down through the roof. And when he picked up his mat and he walked out of that place, he may have been carrying a load that he had not carried in a while ... his own bed, but he walked out of there a “lighter” man because he was not carrying the burden of his sin.

Boy, I tell you what. That particular individual; he got a double blessing that day! Not only was he able to walk, but he was able to walk out of there with a clear conscience that Jesus, Himself, had given him. The mind of Christ ... I don’t want to think like a Pharisee or those teachers of the law. I don’t want to have evil thoughts in my mind. I want to be clear-minded like Jesus was and when I am in a similar situation to be able to dispense the blessings of God, I will do so and I will not care what anybody thinks about it.