

## Sermon Manuscript

**Title:** Proof You Can Stand On

**Text:** Luke 5:17–26

**Big Idea:** The surest proof that your sins are forgiven is not a feeling, but a fact — the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

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### Introduction

Have you ever had someone tell you something that sounded too good to be true, and you wanted proof before you believed it?

A mechanic says, “*The car’s all fixed.*” But you don’t take his word for it — you turn the key and want to hear the engine start.

A doctor says, “*The treatment worked.*” But you don’t just smile — you want to see the test results.

A kid says, “*I cleaned my room.*” But you don’t rest until you open the door and check for yourself.

Why? Because words are easy. Proof is harder.

That’s exactly the tension in our passage today. A paralyzed man is carried to Jesus by his friends. Everyone expects Jesus to heal him. Instead, Jesus looks at him and says: “*Friend, your sins are forgiven.*”

That’s not what they came for. The man came for healing, not forgiveness. And the Pharisees in the room? They’re furious. Who does Jesus think He is? Forgiveness is God’s job, not a man’s.

And in that moment, Jesus presses a question that still matters for you and me today: *What proof do we have that our sins are really forgiven?*

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### Jesus Knows Your Greatest Need (vv. 17–20)

The man’s friends brought him to Jesus for one reason: physical healing. That’s obvious. But Jesus surprises everyone with His first words: “*Your sins are forgiven.*”

It would be tempting for us – as even just a sort of thought experiment – to project our own perspective on that of the four friends. They brought this man to Jesus because they had some sort of pre-existing connection or friendship with the man lying on the mat. He could have been a relative or just a friend. They carry him up on the roof, scratch a hole in it, then lower the man down.

These friends clearly cared about the man. They also wondered if Jesus would be willing to heal the man. But neither Matthew, Mark, or Luke give us any extra insight into what they were thinking. We can't assume they were disappointed. We should never rely on our "biblical imagination" because that tends to run away from the actual fact and truth of Scripture. Our biblical imaginations tend to shout out things that the Bible never says and very often remains silent about.

Nowhere do these men get rebuked by Jesus for having the wrong expectation. While Luke provides what the Pharisees and scribes were thinking because Jesus addressed that specifically. However, whatever the four friends thought remains a secret and one that Jesus never felt compelled to address.

Now, that is not to say that you and I cannot learn from the silence after the lowering. There will be many, many times that we will bring our friends to God in prayer. We may ask for one thing but in reality God will move in a different, unexpected way. Like these friends, let's condition our hearts to simply allow Jesus to work in whatever way brings good for their lives. That could mean continued hardship for this one we love and care for. It could mean no improvement in their health. But your faith on their behalf, interceding in prayer, will be a benefit for them. It will be a blessing.

Jesus was moved by their faith – not necessarily the man who was healed. Jesus saw the faith of the four friends and the lengths they were willing to go to get their friend in front of Jesus. And then they watched Jesus meet their friend's greatest need. The friend's may have brought him for physical healing, but their faith that Jesus could heal was met with something greater: spiritual healing.

Why? Because Jesus knew his greater need wasn't outside of him, but inside of him. His greatest problem wasn't paralysis of the body — it was separation from God. The man needed salvation more than he needed to walk.

Think about it: sin is ultimately an offense against God Himself. Which means forgiveness is God's prerogative alone. No rabbi, no priest, no friend could do this for him. But Jesus looks at the man and claims God's authority.

**Illustration:** Imagine you go to the doctor for back pain. He runs some scans and comes back serious: *"I know you came here for back pain, but we found something worse — you have cancer. And if we don't treat that, nothing else will matter."* That's what Jesus does here. The Great Physician goes deeper than the presenting problem.

**Application:** We often come to Jesus with surface-level needs: *"Lord, fix my finances, help me through this relationship, give me peace in my job."* And He cares about all of those. But His first priority is always deeper: *"I came not just to help you with life's problems, but to give you life itself — by forgiving your sins."*

Every person's greatest need — yours, mine, his, hers — is NOT food, water, medicine, shelter, clothing, transportation to doctor's appointments, or paying the bills. Every person's greatest need is a relationship with God. And the only way to begin that relationship is through the forgiveness of your sins. And the only One who can provide that is Jesus.

**Transition:** But talk is cheap, right? Anyone can say, *"Your sins are forgiven."* That's exactly what the Pharisees were thinking. And so Jesus presses them with a question: *Which is easier?*

### **Jesus Holds the Greatest Authority (vv. 21–24)**

The Pharisees are outraged: *"Who can forgive sins but God alone?"* They were right — only God can. Which means Jesus is making a shocking claim about Himself.

Jesus asks, “Which is easier: to say, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Get up and walk?’” It’s easier to say, “Your sins are forgiven,” because you can’t verify it. It’s invisible. Non-falsifiable. You don’t have to prove that. It is immeasurable. It is unquantifiable.

So, to prove His authority, Jesus does the harder thing: He heals the man. In one moment, the *invisible pardon is validated by the visible miracle*.

**Illustration:** Imagine being in a courtroom. A random bystander stands up and says, “Case dismissed. You’re free to go.” The bailiff would laugh. The only voice that matters is the judge’s. Jesus is saying: “*I am that Judge. I have the authority of God to declare forgiveness.*”

And with one command — “*Get up, take your mat, and go home*” — the man rises to his feet. The proof is standing right in front of them.

**Transition:** But Luke wants us to see something even greater. As astonishing as this miracle was, it wasn’t the ultimate proof. It was a preview of something bigger still to come...

## **Jesus Provides The Greatest Proof (v. 25; Luke 24; Acts 2)**

Luke writes, “*Immediately he stood up in front of them.*” That little phrase is loaded with meaning. The Greek word for “*stood up*” is the same word used for “*rise*” — the same root as “*resurrection.*”

Do you see it? Luke is pointing forward. The paralytic’s rising is a signpost to an even greater rising. The ultimate, objective, verifiable proof of forgiveness is the resurrection of Jesus from the dead.

The cross was the payment for our sin. The resurrection is the receipt that says, “*Paid in full.*”

**Illustration:** A check is only good if it clears. On Friday, forgiveness was written like a check at the cross. On Sunday, the resurrection cleared it. Now we know the debt is settled.

And that's why our assurance of forgiveness doesn't rest on how we feel. Facts don't care about our feelings. Our assurance doesn't rest on whether we had a good worship experience, or whether our life looks cleaned up enough. It rests on this historical fact: the tomb is empty. Jesus stood up again.

Because He rose, He has the authority to say to you — right now — *“Your sins are forgiven.”*

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### **Conclusion: Proof You Can Stand On**

The paralyzed man walked home forgiven because Jesus had authority over both sickness and sin. But our confidence today rests on an even greater moment: when Jesus Himself stood up from the grave.

That empty tomb is God's declaration in stone: *“Paid in full.”*

So you don't have to guess if your sins are forgiven. You don't have to wait for goosebumps or a spiritual high. You can point to a fact in history — the risen Christ.

### **Memorable line for Monday:**

- *“My forgiveness isn't based on how I feel. It's based on who stood up again.”*

So, here's the invitation: come to Jesus not just for help with life's problems, but for the life only He can give. The risen Savior still says, *“Your sins are forgiven. Rise, and walk with Me.”*

*Let's Pray together.*

For some of our friends, their feelings don't care about your facts. You can claim Resurrection Life until you are blue in the face. They need to see your authentic Christian life lived out. They need to feel the power and love of Christ in and through you before they will truly consider your facts more carefully.

