



Jesus Forgives Sin

Matthew 9:2–8



LESSON GOAL

The student will understand that he or she must turn to Jesus for forgiveness of sin.

BIBLE TRUTHS

- The paralytic's friends had faith that Jesus could heal.
- Jesus' ability to heal proved He could forgive because He is God.
- The people praised God after seeing Jesus' miracle.

KEY VERSE

“But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins’ —then He said to the paralytic, ‘Arise, take up your bed, and go to your house.’”
—Matthew 9:6

APPLICATION

- Trust in Jesus to forgive your sins.
- Glorify God who gave Jesus the authority to forgive.
- Thank God for forgetting sins that He has forgiven.

NEXT WEEK

Jesus Has Power over Disease and Death
Matthew 9:18–26

Symbol Key



Craft



Finger Play



Memory Verse



Object Lesson



Game



Visual Aid



Center



Activity



Q & A



Age Group

Teacher Planning Sheet

PREPARE

Objectives/Truths to cover this week

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Personal Application

As a result of my study in this passage, God wants me to...

- _____
- _____
- _____

Three ways students need to apply this passage are...

- _____
- _____
- _____

Materials Needed:

POINT

Choose from various ideas to point them to the coming Bible lesson.

- _____
- _____

PROCLAIM

Choose from various ideas to proclaim the Bible lesson.

Presentation Ideas

- _____
- _____

Praise/Music Ideas

- _____
- _____
- _____

PRACTICE

Choose ideas to help review and apply today's lesson.

- _____
- _____

PREPARE WITH THE TRUTH

“Therefore you shall lay up these words of mine in your heart and in your soul... you shall teach them to your children.” —Deuteronomy 11:18–19

Please take time to prepare your mind and heart to accurately handle the truths of God’s Word (2 Tim. 2:15). Read through the Bible background and study the truths contained in this lesson. Crucial background information is included here that will aid you in understanding the Scripture.

Bible Background

Introduction

Between Matthew 8 and 9, Matthew records ten miracles to demonstrate Jesus’ authority as the Messiah, the Son of God. Instead of organizing these miracles chronologically, Matthew records them topically. A comparison of Matthew’s telling of Jesus’ miracles with those in Mark and Luke reveals that Jesus’ calming of the storm and casting out of the demons into the swine (Matt. 8:23–34) occurs after Jesus’ healing of the paralytic (Matt. 9:2–8) but before His raising of Jairus’ daughter from the dead (Matt. 9:18–26). By placing many miracles in quick succession, Matthew emphasizes the extent of Jesus’ authority. Not only does Jesus have the power to heal from a distance (Matt. 8:5–13), to stop a storm (Matt. 8:23–27) and to cast out demons (Matt. 8:23–34), but the Son of Man also has the authority to forgive sins.

Jesus’ Authority Exercised (Matt. 9:2)

After recording Jesus’ return to Capernaum from the opposite shore of the Sea of Galilee (Matt. 9:1), Matthew quickly begins to tell another of Jesus’ miracles. Matthew simply says, “Then behold, they brought to Him a paralytic lying on a bed.” Because he is eager to proclaim another aspect of Jesus’ authority, Matthew leaves out many of the fascinating details included by Mark (2:1–12) and Luke (5:16–26). Jesus was preaching inside a house, surrounded by Pharisees and teachers of the law (or scribes) who had “come out of every town of Galilee, Judea and Jerusalem” to hear Jesus (Luke 5:17). The religious leaders were only part of the massive crowd which made it impossible for anyone else to enter through the door (Mark 2:2). Because of the crowd, four men could not carry their paralyzed friend before Jesus to be healed by Him (Mark 2:3; Luke 5:18). Confident that Jesus could heal the man, the men carried their friend to the rooftop (where people commonly relaxed in the evening), removed tiles from the roof, and lowered the paralyzed man upon his bed into the house where Jesus was teaching (Mark 2:4; Luke 5:19).

The dramatic effort upon the part of the men revealed their faith. Matthew writes that “when Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytic, ‘Son, be of good cheer; your sins are forgiven you’” (Matt. 9:2). Jesus’ response to the men’s faith is surprising. While neither Matthew, Mark or Luke mention the men asking anything from Jesus, the men had obviously come for the paralyzed man to be healed. But Jesus knew the man had a more pressing need. He knew the bed-ridden man was afraid to be in the Messiah’s presence. He knew that the man was conscious of his wickedness. He knew the man had responded not only to Jesus’ ability to heal but also to His preaching of repentance. Aware of the man’s fear and concern, Jesus first comforted the man by calling him son (the term actually referring to a child

of any sex or age) and then telling him not to be afraid. Then Jesus pronounced the sweetest, most precious words: “Yours sins are forgiven.” The Messiah had come to “save His people from their sins” (Matthew 1:21) and now the Son of God had actually declared someone forgiven. Jesus had exercised His authority to forgive a man.

Jesus’ Authority Challenged (Matt. 9:3)

Both scribes and Pharisees were appalled at what they had just heard (Matt. 9:3; Luke 5:21). Scripture clearly teaches that only God can forgive a man’s sin. In Isaiah 43:25, God says, “I, even I, am He who blots out your transgressions for My own sake; and I will not remember your sins.” Micah 7:18 asks, “Who is a God like You, pardoning iniquity and passing over the transgression of the remnant of His heritage?” The scribes and Pharisees reasoned to themselves that Jesus had blasphemed since no one can forgive sins but God alone (Matt. 9:3; Mark 2:6–7). The logic of the scribes was right to an extent: only God can forgive sins. But their conclusion was wrong. Jesus was not guilty of blasphemy because He is God and does have the authority to forgive. Instead of correctly evaluating that Jesus must be God, they shamefully criticized the Messiah of blasphemy.

Jesus’ Authority Demonstrated (Matt. 9:4–8)

Although the scribes kept their criticisms to themselves, Jesus knew how wicked their thoughts were (Matt. 9:4). The scribes were the ones with the blasphemous thoughts. Jesus confronted the perverse scribes by challenging their reasoning. He asked, “For which is easier, to say, ‘Your sins are forgiven you,’ or to say ‘Arise and walk?’” (Matt. 9:5). The scribes had most likely seen Jesus do healing miracles and accepted His power to heal. In the past, God had healed through other prophets like Elijah and Elisha. But Jesus’ claim to forgive sins made him unique. While other prophets had pronounced God’s willingness to forgive or announced that God had forgiven, none had ever himself forgiven sins committed against God. Jesus was the first and only. The scribes understood that forgiving sins was obviously impossible for man, but that God had given some prophets the ability to heal. They would have answered Jesus’ rhetorical question by claiming it was easier to say, “Arise and walk.”

Jesus then proceeded to demolish their wicked thoughts by also doing the easier thing. Before healing the man, Jesus told them the purpose of what he was about to do: “But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins” (Matt. 9:6). Jesus then commanded the paralytic, “Arise, take up your bed, and go to your house.” The paralyzed man did exactly as Jesus said: “He arose and departed to his house” (Matt. 9:7). (Luke also describes that the man picked up his mat and went away glorifying God (Luke 6:25).) After seeing the miracle, the scribes were left without a defense. Jesus claimed that by healing the man the scribes would know that Jesus, the Son of Man, had the power to forgive. When Jesus did the easier of the two things, He proved He could also do the more difficult. No one could both claim God’s power to forgive and exercise God’s power to heal unless that person’s claim was truth. Jesus’ authority to forgive was authenticated by His authority to heal. The scribes had already determined that only God could forgive. They were now faced with whether they would accept that Jesus was God.

Although the scribes and Pharisees’ response to this miracle is not recorded, the Gospels show how they tried to get around Jesus’ perfect reasoning. Since Jesus’ miracles authenticated His claims to deity, the religious leaders attempted to discredit His miracles. Their attempts included foolishly attacking Jesus’ Sabbath healings by claiming He broke the Law, criticizing that Jesus cast out demons

through Satan's empowerment, or trying to discredit the testimony of those who had been healed. The leaders could not deny that Jesus was doing miracles and thus desperately tried to discredit those miracles. No wonder Jesus prophesied that their judgment would be worse for having seen so many miracles while continuing in their rejection of Him as their King (Matt. 11:20–24).

When those gathered around Jesus saw what had happened, "they marveled and glorified God, who had given such power to men" (Matt. 9:8). Luke 5:26 adds that the crowds "were filled with fear, saying, 'We have seen strange things today!'" The crowd was shocked. Not only could Jesus heal the body, but He could also forgive sins. They stood in awe of Jesus and were afraid to be in His presence. Their reaction was much like the disciples on the boat after Jesus calmed the storm (Matt. 8:27). Like the disciples, the crowds were shocked at this Man who was unlike anyone they had ever seen or known. The people glorified God, recognizing that God had not only given the Son of Man the authority to heal but also the authority to forgive.

Conclusion

Although the people were in awe of what they had seen and heard, it is unlikely they had yet come to the scribes' conclusion that Jesus' forgiving the man was a claim to deity. Even the disciples were still growing in their knowledge of Jesus as both the Son of Man and the Son of God. Because He is God, Jesus has the authority to forgive. No one will be forgiven who does not come to Jesus as He commanded. Anyone who is horrified by the knowledge that they have rebelled against their Creator and who is willing to repent and love God more than themselves can turn to Jesus for forgiveness. They can rejoice that Jesus will forgive all who come to Him because He was crucified and rose again. Those who have already turned to Christ for forgiveness must continue to turn to Him for forgiveness of those sins committed after salvation. They also must be humble enough to accept the forgiveness that Christ promises to those who repent.

POINT TO THE TRUTH

*"Give ear, O my people, to my law; incline your ears to the words of my mouth."
—Psalm 78:1*

This section includes questions to review last week's lesson and ideas to prepare students for this week's lesson. Choose from the following ideas to point to the truths of this lesson.



Review Questions

Why did the disciples become afraid when sailing across the lake?

The Bible says that a great storm caused the waves to sweep over the boat.

What did the disciples find Jesus doing during the storm?

The disciples found Jesus sleeping on the boat.

Why did the disciples awake Jesus?

The disciples awoke Jesus because they knew He had the power to save them. Because they were afraid of dying in the great storm they asked Jesus for help.

What did Jesus do next?

He commanded the storm to be calm.

Who did Jesus see on the other side of the lake?

Jesus met two demon-possessed men coming from the tombs.

What did the demons ask Jesus?

The demons begged Jesus to cast them into a herd of pigs and they went off a cliff into the water.



Jesus Is God

Use this object lesson to show the students that Jesus' ability to heal proved that He is God and is also able to forgive sin. Ask some of the students to name their favorite animal. After picking two or three animals, ask the students to explain how they know which animal is which. It is at this point that you can explain how animals are authenticated by what they do. One knows a rabbit is not an alligator because it hops and does not swim, just as one knows a shark from an eagle. We can tell whether or not an eagle is an eagle by whether or not it has wings, flies, etc. In the same way, Jesus' identity as God was authenticated (proven) by what He did in today's lesson. Jesus' healing the paralyzed man was proof that He was God. Because He is God, He also has the power to forgive sin.



Which Is Easier?

Ask the children a series of questions about which is easier to do. For instance, jumping on 2 feet or hopping on 1 foot; coloring with crayons or painting with paint and brush; say simple sentence or tongue-twister. Teacher may ask for volunteers to try each thing. Finally, ask children which is easier, to heal a paralyzed man or forgive his sins? That's what we'll talk about in today's lessons.



Don't Move a Muscle!

Have the students 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 students 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.



Blasphemy

To blaspheme means to speak against, to speak irreverently or disrespectfully about God. The Jews accused Jesus of this because He was claiming to forgive sins, something which only God had the right to do.



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 someone's offense 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 give or be given forgiveness 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 a sure answer.



Authority

Authority is a delegated right. To have authority is to have permission to act in a certain way and to issue certain instructions. The ultimate authority in the universe is God and certain privileges are reserved only for Him, while others He has delegated to specific people. Most children understand that God has given their parents authority over them. That means that their parents can tell them what to do and require them to obey. They cannot, however, tell their parents what to do and require them to obey since they have no authority over their parents. What are some rights and privileges which are reserved for God alone? In today's lesson we will discover one such right.



You Can See but Do You Know?

Jesus saw the faith of those who brought the paralytic to Jesus and He knew what the Pharisees were thinking. While the faith of the paralytic may have been evident to all, the thoughts of the Pharisees were certainly not. Play a game of "I spy" and have the children try and guess what you have seen. Then have them try to guess what you are thinking about. Can anybody know what we are thinking about all the time? In today's lesson we will learn about someone who knows all our thoughts.



5

Believe It or Not

A miracle may be simply understood as something which only God can do. Miracles therefore demonstrate God's power and so usually point to the word of God or the messenger of God. In today's lesson Jesus performs a miracle specifically to prove that He has the authority to forgive sins. In doing this, Jesus connects His words to His works. Either both are true or both are false. To help the children understand this you could invite a policeman, doctor, karate black-belt, etc. to class dressed in plain clothes. Have them tell the children what they do and ask the children to vote on whether they think the person is genuine or not. Then let the policeman produce his badge. That should be sufficient to convince most of them that the man is telling the truth. In today's story Jesus produces a "badge" of His own to prove to the people that He was God.



Knowing Our Thoughts

Here is a very simple game which can be used to emphasize the uniqueness of Christ. Present the children with a few small prizes they will be excited about and eager to win. Tell the children that all they need to do to win the prize is guess what you're thinking. Have the children wait as you think of a number one through ten. After you pick out the number, have the children guess until one of them guesses correctly and wins a prize. Play the game the second time by picking a letter of the alphabet. When you play the third time, have the children simply try to guess what you're thinking. Of course, the children will not be able to. When the children finally give up (or you run out of time), tell the children how people can guess what someone is thinking but only God knows what someone is thinking all the time. Tell the children that in today's lesson they are going to learn about how Jesus knew what people were thinking even when they did not say anything. (Give the one prize left to the student who was following the rules well.)



Which Is Easier?

To help the children understand Jesus' rebuke of the scribes, have the children answer which is the easier of two options. Ask them if it would be easier for you to lift a rock or a boulder, to walk a mile or a hundred miles, to swim across a river

or across an ocean. The answers should be simple. Now ask the children what would be easier for God to do: to make one man or a million men, to make a planet or a universe, to heal somebody or forgive somebody. It should be obvious to the children that since God can do anything, nothing is “easier” for God than anything else. God can do everything He wants to do. Explain that in today’s story some people wrongly thought that Jesus had the power to heal but not the power to forgive. Tell the children to listen carefully to how Jesus explains that it is easy for Him to forgive sins as it is to heal limbs.

PROCLAIM THE TRUTH

“Telling to the generation to come the praises of the LORD, and His strength and His wonderful works that He has done.” —Psalm 78:4

This section includes the Bible lesson, lesson questions, and praise and worship ideas. Song suggestions are included that you can use to proclaim your worship to God. Use the lesson questions to check the students’ understanding. This section also includes various presentation ideas to use alongside the teaching time. Read the Bible passage several times before you read these pages. All teaching should be done right from the Bible.

Bible Lesson

The book of Matthew records many of the miracles that Jesus performed to show that He is God. Only God could perform such miracles. One of the miracles was the healing of a paralytic. A paralytic is someone who can’t move his legs, and some paralytics can’t move their arms either. Even today, over two thousand years later, doctors have not been able to figure out how to help cure people who are paralyzed, but Jesus healed the man completely.

Jesus was in a house in Capernaum, probably His disciple Peter’s house, preaching to anyone who would listen. People in the city heard that He was there, so they came to the house and crowded in. The house got so full of people that no one else could squeeze through the door. Four people brought their friend, a paralytic, to see Jesus, because they had faith that Jesus could heal him and make him walk. They tried to squeeze into the house, but they just could not fit! They came up with a plan. They carried their friend up to the roof of the house. The roofs in this region were flat, so that part was easy. Then they figured out where in the house Jesus was, and they cut a big hole in the roof above Him. They tied some rope to the bed that their friend was lying on, and they lowered him down through the roof so that He was just in front of Jesus. Jesus saw that this man had great faith in Him, and so He said to him, “Son, be of good cheer; your sins are forgiven you.” (9:2) Of course, everyone would have expected Jesus to tell the man he was healed and that he could walk, but Jesus knew that the man’s soul needed to be healed more than his body.

The Pharisees that were in the house listening to Jesus preach were outraged, but they didn’t say anything. They were angry because Jesus had said that He forgave the man’s sin. They knew that the Scripture said that only God has the authority to forgive a man of his sin. They were thinking in the hearts that Jesus was blaspheming God because by saying that He forgave the man of his sin, He was claiming that He was God and had God’s authority.

Jesus knew what the Pharisees were thinking. Before they said anything, Jesus confronted them. “Why do you think evil in your hearts? For which is easier, to say

'Your sins are forgiven you,' or to say, "Arise and walk?" Jesus asked them. Both tasks, forgiving a man of his sins, and making a paralyzed man walk, are impossible for anyone but God. But the Pharisees accepted that Jesus could heal people without accepting He was God. Jesus was showing them that both tasks prove that He is God. To show that He could do both, Jesus said to the paralytic, "Arise, take up your bed, and go to your house." The man got up on his own two feet and walked to his own house.

It was unreasonable for the Pharisees to come to any other conclusion except that Jesus was God, but they did not want to put their faith in Jesus and repent of their sin. The rest of the crowd, however, were amazed at what Jesus had done. Not only had he made a paralyzed man walk, but He was offering forgiveness of sin. They praised God for what they had seen, but they were also afraid of Jesus because they knew that He had great power.



Lesson Questions

What did the friends of the paralyzed man do?

They took him to Jesus because they had faith that Jesus could heal him.

What did Jesus say to the paralyzed man?

He said, "Son, be of good cheer; your sins are forgiven you" (Matt. 9:2).

Who was Jesus claiming to be when He forgave the man's sins?

He was claiming to be God.

What did Jesus do to show that He had power to forgive sins?

He healed the paralyzed man and told him to stand up and walk.

How did the crowd respond to Jesus' miracle?

They were amazed and praised God because of what they had seen.

Presentation Ideas



A Beka Book® Flash-A-Cards®

Use appropriate A Beka Book® Flash-A-Cards® with the lesson.



Betty Lukens Flannel Graph

Use appropriate flannel graph pieces with the lesson.



Paralyzed Man

Using a prop or picture of a man lying in a bed, explain to the students that the figure on a bed is sick. He is unable to walk. Ask the children who they think can heal this man. Explain that the man disobeyed God, just like all men do, and so he became spiritually sick. Ask the children who they think can heal the man from his spiritual sickness.



The Paralytic

Some of the children may not be familiar with the term "paralytic." Explain that this is someone who can no longer walk. If possible, invite someone from your church who is paralyzed to visit your class and take a few minutes to explain to the class what it is like, what some of the difficulties are, what has caused their paralysis, etc.

This will help the children understand the historical context better. Ask your guest to give a testimony of the work that God has done in his or her heart. Help the students to understand that while Christians will have perfect bodies in heaven, the miracle we experience now is a change of heart from hating God to loving and desiring to obey Him. In today's lesson we will see the clever plan some men made to get their paralyzed friend to Jesus.

Praise and Worship

All Hail The Power Of Jesus' Name

He Is Lord

King of Kings

Lord, I Lift Your Name On High

PRACTICE THE TRUTH

"That they may set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep His commandments." —Psalm 78:7

Choose ideas from this section that review and apply the truths of the Bible lesson.



"Jesus' Miracles Prove His Words"

Materials: copies of "Jesus' Miracles Prove His Words" craft pages, scissors, one brad per student, glue, crayons

Directions: Cut out the shape on the first page of the craft along the dark lines. Fold the page in half on the dotted line, so the words are on the front. Once this is finished, you should have three flaps that can be lifted up. Cut out the pictures and verses from the second craft page and glue them under the appropriate flap. Optional: Instead of gluing on the paralyzed man, attach him with a brad so he can either be laying down or standing. Explain to the students how Jesus's miracles were evidence that He was truly God.



"Arise and Walk"

Materials: blank piece of white cardstock, two brads, scissors, crayons, paralytic and mat on cardstock

Directions: Give each child a piece of cardstock. Students should color this 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.



Picture It

Materials: a picture of Jesus, the paralytic and his mat, glue, scissors, crayons, and cardstock

After explaining the story and how there was a great multitude of people in the house to see Jesus, give the students a piece of paper to draw the scene but they

should leave Jesus and the paralytic out of the picture. Instruct students to cut out these images and glue them onto their backdrop. They can first glue the mat under the paralytic's arm (behind him) and then glue both Jesus and the paralytic standing in the middle of the room. The key verse should also be glued to the page.



MEMORY VERSE

"...the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins." — *Matthew 9:6b*

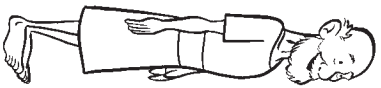
Jesus' Miracles Prove His Words

<p>Jesus' Miracles</p>	<p>Prove</p>	<p>His Words</p>
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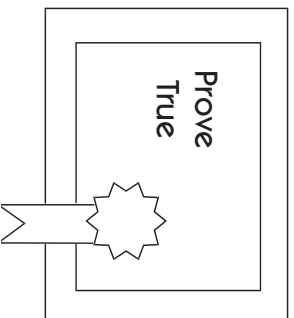
Jesus' Miracles Prove His Words



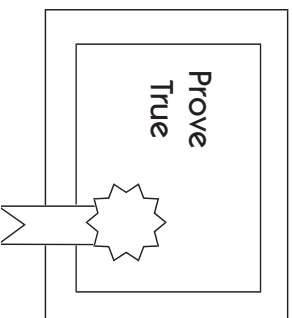
Jesus said to the paralytic, "Arise, take up your bed and go to your house." — Matthew 9:6b



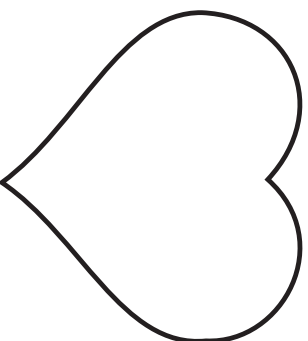
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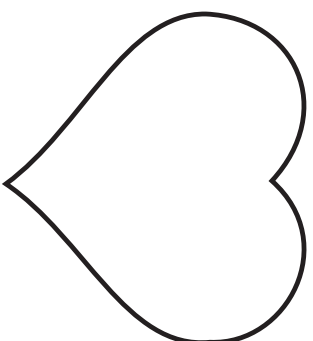
"...that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins." — Matthew 9:6a



"...that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins." — Matthew 9:6a



Jesus said, "Your sins are forgiven you." — Matthew 9:2b

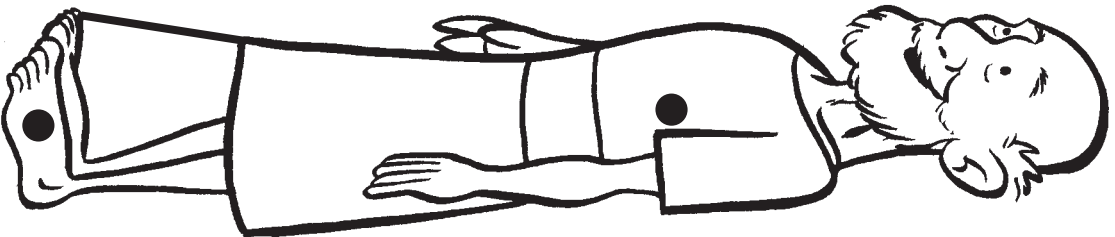
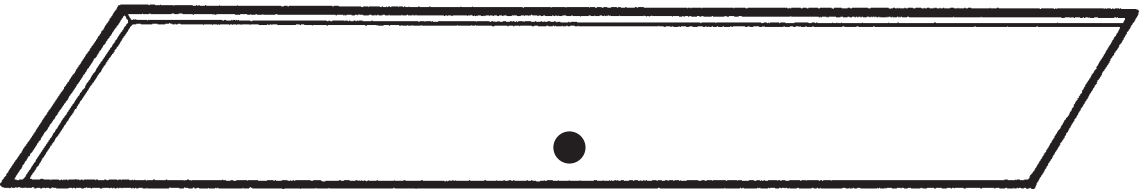
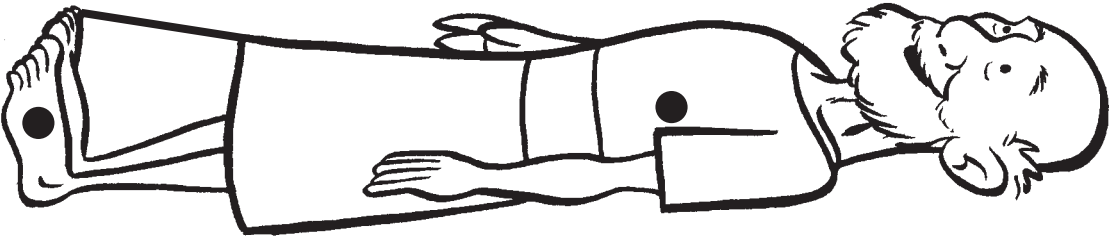
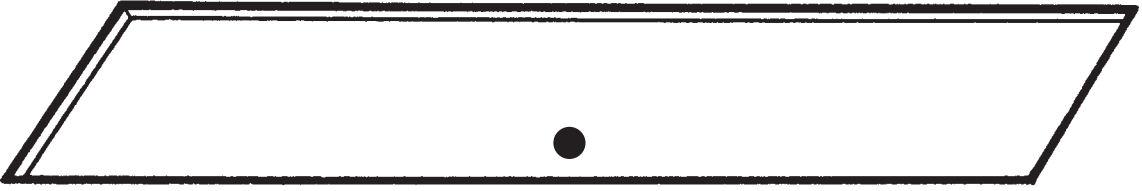


Jesus said, "Your sins are forgiven you." — Matthew 9:2b

Arise and Walk



Arise and Walk





“Then behold, they brought to Him a paralytic lying on a bed....”
—Matthew 9:2a



**“But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins’
—then He said to the paralytic, ‘Arise, take up your bed, and go to your house.’”**

—Matthew 9:6

