

## Di121 Effective Communication

### *Lesson Di121-24 Demonstration: Power over Sin*

Your previous lesson talked about the message and showing God's power over sickness and disease. This lesson discusses effective communication that declares and verifies God's power over sin. Forgiveness of sins presents an even greater need than the need for healing of the physical body.

When Jesus was in Capernaum, he probably made his home at Peter's house. So when Jesus again entered Capernaum after ministry in Galilee, the people heard that he had come home. So many gathered to hear him teach, that there was no room left, not even outside the door. He preached the word to them. As he taught, a divine interruption occurred. God sent a man to Jesus with a serious need. Actually the four friends of this man carried him, because he could not walk. Based on the testimony of others, they believed Jesus could heal their paralyzed friend. Their faith caused them to bring him to Jesus. That faith caused them not to be discouraged because of the crowd.

Since they could not get him to Jesus because of the crowd, they made an opening in the roof above Jesus. They did this by digging through it and then lowering the mat the man was lying on. The determination of the four men to reach Jesus suggests that his condition was desperate. They worked together and lowered the sick man right through the roof, right in front of Jesus. The man thought his greatest need was healing. He wanted to be complete and whole like others. He saw his physical need, but Jesus saw the man's deepest need—forgiveness. This was the one Jesus met first.

When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralyzed man, "Son, your sins are forgiven."

Whose faith did Jesus see? It certainly included the faith of the four friends and the faith of the crippled one. As Jesus preached the message of the kingdom of God, here was a living illustration of what he taught. The man came seeking God's power and Jesus met his greater need for forgiveness. The word Jesus used means not just forgiveness, but also "to put away" sin. Jesus purposely spoke forgiveness to him to create a dialogue with the visiting religious leaders from Jerusalem.

Now some teachers of the law were sitting there thinking to themselves, "Why does this fellow talk like that? He's blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone?"

The Jewish leaders recognized right away that Jesus was claiming to have something belonging to God alone—deity. To them this was blasphemy, for which the Law required death by stoning. Immediately Jesus knew in his spirit that this was what they were thinking in their hearts, and he said to them, "Why are you thinking these things? Which is easier: to say to this paralyzed man, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up, take your mat and walk'?"

The religious leaders were very unhappy. They asked themselves how Jesus could make such a statement. Only God in heaven can forgive sin. Their faces surely showed their

displeasure. He answered their question with another of his own; it had two possible answers. It seemed easier to say your sins are forgiven, for there would be no visible changes. It is much harder to say get up and walk, because if that didn't happen, Jesus would be seen as a fraud. On the other hand only God can forgive sins, and only God can heal supernaturally. Both are equally impossible to men and equally easy to God.

Jesus continued, "But I want you to know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins." So he said to the man, "I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home." He got up, took his mat and walked out in full view of them all.

This amazed everyone and they praised God, saying, "We have never seen anything like this!" (Mark 2:1-12). It is clear that one purpose of his miracles was to give evidence of Christ's deity.

The crippled man came looking for healing. What he found was forgiveness of his sins. You might ask, "But how can I do this? Only Jesus can forgive sins."

In Matthew 16:19 Jesus said to the believers, "I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven." This and other Bible verses give believers the authority to announce that someone has forgiveness from God.

In a later story, the Apostle Philip spoke to the Ethiopian he had met on the desert road. When the Ethiopian confessed faith in Jesus as the Son of God, Philip told him he was forgiven of his sins and could be baptized.

The most important demonstration of God's power is the assurance that he gives believers that their sins are forgiven. The communication of this truth is most important because it has eternal consequences. Forgiveness of sins brings people into a new relationship with God. Through forgiveness we experience God as our loving heavenly Father.

This story is **important** because it demonstrates that only through the power of God can we communicate to people that their sins are forgiven. If someone comes by faith, believing in Jesus Christ as the Son of God, you can pray that they be loosed from their sins. Then declare that they are forgiven!

The **main truth** of this lesson is that the communication of God's power to forgive sin is the central message of the kingdom of God.

Let's **review** this lesson—

1. What did the four friends of the crippled man do to get him near Jesus? [Pause]
  - A. If you said, "They made an opening in the roof above Jesus and then lowered the mat the man was lying on," you answered correctly.
2. What did Jesus say to the crippled man that he did not expect to hear? [Pause]
  - A. If you answered that Jesus said, "Son, your sins are forgiven," you are correct.

3. Why is the power of God to forgive sins so important? [Pause]

A. If you said that this power is most important because it has eternal consequences, you are right.

Your **assignment** for this lesson is to memorize the story and tell it to someone who has not heard it before. Then ask this question, “What is the reason God is so concerned that people have their sins forgiven?” Answer: Belief in Jesus Christ and forgiveness of sins is the only pathway God gives people to enter heaven. Hell was not made for people, but for Satan and the angels who disobeyed and were guilty of sin.