



sunday 9th august 2009

study 2 about forgiveness

Luke 5:17-26

Luke 2:49 "Which is easier: to say, 'Your sins are forgiven', or to say, 'get up and walk'?"

Last week we introduced the series looking at the boy Jesus saying he "had" to be in his Father's house, the temple. This week we move into Luke's narrative of Jesus' ministry and we find him doing very temple-like things. I.e. what is shocking about this passage is not just WHAT Jesus is doing (forgiving sins) but WHERE he is (or more importantly *isn't* doing it)... not at the temple. Jesus is God's temple on two legs moving around Palestine not just fixing legs (walk) but souls (forgiven). This episode anticipates how Jesus will deliver this forgiveness—when his own legs are immobilized on a cross ... and the temple curtain rips.. And the forgiveness this man experienced is not only delivered upon, but made available to all. We might be more impressed with the healing but Jesus' question makes clear that the far more impressive and astounding thing is forgiveness—and much harder too—that would take his sacrificial death on the cross to achieve.

SOME NOTES ON QUESTIONS

- Q1. The teachers of the law had been amazed by the boy Jesus in the temple. But they are offended by the man Jesus claiming temple-like (God-like) authority. The theme of their opposition towards Jesus grows and dominates Luke's account until we reach the cross... and beyond.
- Q2. Perhaps everyone looked back at Jesus including the man and said, "er thanks ... but that's not quite what we came for".
- Q3. See notes above. Luke sets the start and end of his gospel at the temple, but it's never far from view in between, in terms of what Jesus is doing and the authority he is claiming.
- Q4. They're right of course—in what they say about who can forgive sins at least. All sin is against God so a third party can't forgive it—only God himself. But their problem is not realising Jesus' identity and his right claim to his authority.
- Q5. Jesus doesn't ask questions to draw out what he doesn't know but what we don't know... about ourselves... about him.. About sin... about our greatest need... about how he meets it.
- Q6. Unfortunately people tended to be 'blinded by' even the restoration of sight ... and restoring legs became 'stumbling blocks'... to people seeing and running for the healing—of hearts forgiven of sin. We find this passage confusing 'cause in our eyes getting the bloke to walk is very impressive. Jesus thinks it's not nearly as impressive as what his death will achieve for the man—much harder by far—but much more valuable.
- Q7. We need to see what he rules: not just bodies but hearts and lives... and his kingship opposes sin.
- Q8. Even our prayers for each other as brothers and sisters in Christ can be dominated by lesser temporary concerns ... how much more is praying for the lost a matter of priority. This passage is about valuing forgiveness of sins and our prayers should reflect that.
- Q9. Gratitude... transformation... witness... hope... love... and so much more!