Through the Roof

Bible Stories Anthology — Mark 2:1-12; Luke 5:17-26; Matthew 9:1-8

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> **Romans 15:4** *For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.*

Why These Stories Were Written — Romans 15:4

Paul had just quoted a thousand-year-old psalm and applied it to Christ (Romans 15:3, quoting Psalm 69:9), and then he explained why he could: *whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning*. **Written aforetime** — the scriptures that already stood before this present age of grace opened at Pentecost: the record God gave through Moses, the prophets and the writings, along with the Gospel accounts of Christ's earthly ministry, which belong to that same time before Pentecost. (When Paul wrote these words, the scriptures he had in hand were the Hebrew scriptures; the Gospels had not yet been written down.) **Written for our learning** — "learning" is the Greek word for *teaching*, the very word rendered "doctrine" in 2 Timothy 3:16. These are not quaint tales; they are doctrine in narrative form. Adam, Ruth and David never knew us, but God did, and He had their lives recorded with us in mind — written *for* us, though not all of it written *to* us, which is why we read Israel's history as our instruction and not as our marching orders. **Through patience and comfort of the scriptures** — "patience" is literally *remaining under*, the staying power we gain from watching men and women stay under a load; "comfort" is a *calling alongside*, the strength God brings when He meets them there, which is why Paul calls Him "the God of patience and consolation" in the very next verse. **That we might have hope** — not a wish, but confident expectation: the return of Jesus Christ and everlasting life with Him. That is why these accounts exist, and it is how they should be read.

Four Friends and a Hole in the Roof

The house was packed. People filled every room, crowded the doorway, and pressed against the walls outside to hear. Among them sat Pharisees and teachers of the law who had come from all over Galilee and Judea, and even from Jerusalem, to see this new teacher for themselves.

Then, in the middle of his teaching, bits of dried mud and straw began to fall from the ceiling.

Above their heads someone was digging. A patch of daylight appeared, then a larger hole, and through it four faces looked down. Then, slowly, on ropes, a man came down on his mat — a man who could not walk — and was laid right at Jesus' feet.

Everyone waited to see what Jesus would do. He looked up at the four men on the roof, and then down at the man on the mat, and he said something no one expected: *Son, thy sins be forgiven thee.*

The teachers of the law were outraged. *Who can forgive sins but God only?*

What happened next answered them — and showed who had given this man such authority.

This is the story of the man let down through the roof.

The Setting

When. Early in Jesus' ministry in Galilee, about A.D. 28 by the reckoning this series uses. Jesus had just come back from a preaching tour through the towns of Galilee (Mark 1:38-39). On that tour he had healed a leper, who then told everyone, **"insomuch that Jesus could no more openly enter into the city"** (Mark 1:45). Now, **"after some days,"** he was back in Capernaum.

Where. Capernaum, a fishing town on the north-west shore of the Sea of Galilee, about two and a half miles west of where the Jordan flows into the lake. Jesus made it his home base: Matthew calls it **"his own city"** (Matthew 9:1). The house was very likely Peter's. Mark says Jesus **"was in the house"** (Mark 2:1), and the last house Mark named in Capernaum was **"the house of Simon and Andrew"** (Mark 1:29). Archaeologists have uncovered the ruins of first-century Capernaum: houses of black basalt stone, built in clusters around shared courtyards. One of these houses was set apart and honoured by Christians from early times; a church was built over it in the fifth century, and a modern church now stands above it. Many believe it was Peter's house. That cannot be proved, but it fits the record.

The accounts. The story is told in three Gospels: **Mark 2:1-12**, **Luke 5:17-26** and **Matthew 9:1-8**. Mark gives the most detail; Luke tells us who was in the crowd; Matthew gives the crowd's final words, which are the key to the whole story.

Who.

- **Jesus**, teaching in the house.
- **A man sick of the palsy** — paralysed, unable to walk.
- **Four men** who carried him.
- **Scribes and Pharisees**, teachers of the law, some from Jerusalem.
- **The crowd.**

The administration. The **Christ administration**, under the Law of Moses.

The Story, Told Faithfully

No Room, Not Even at the Door

> **Mark 2:1** *And again he entered into Capernaum after some days; and it was noised that he was in the house.*
> **Mark 2:2** *And straightway many were gathered together, insomuch that there was no room to receive them, no, not so much as about the door: and he preached the word unto them.*

"It was noised that he was in the house." "Noised" means *reported*, *spread about*. In a small town word travels fast. Within minutes of his return, everyone knew where he was.

"There was no room to receive them, no, not so much as about the door." A house in Capernaum was not large. The rooms opened onto a small courtyard, and the door led to the street. People filled the rooms, the courtyard, the doorway, and the street outside.

"And he preached the word unto them." Jesus was not doing miracles that day; he was teaching. **"The word"** is the word of God, the message of the kingdom. Mark's first summary of Jesus' preaching was, **"The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel"** (Mark 1:15).

Luke adds who was listening:

> **Luke 5:17** *And it came to pass on a certain day, as he was teaching, that there were Pharisees and doctors of the law sitting by, which were come out of every town of Galilee, and Judaea, and Jerusalem: and the power of the Lord was present to heal them.*

“Pharisees and doctors of the law.” “Doctors” here means *teachers*, the experts in the law of Moses, also called **scribes** (Mark 2:6). They had come from every town in Galilee, and from Judea and Jerusalem — some had walked for days. Word of Jesus had reached the religious leaders in the capital, and they had come to investigate. They were **“sitting by”** — probably given places of honour inside, near the teacher.

“And the power of the Lord was present to heal them.” Luke tells us where the healing power came from: *the power of the Lord*, God’s power, was there. Peter later said **“God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him”** (Acts 10:38). Jesus himself said, **“the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works”** (John 14:10).

Borne of Four

> **Mark 2:3** *And they come unto him, bringing one sick of the palsy, which was borne of four.*

“One sick of the palsy.” “Palsy” is old English for *paralysis*. The Greek word *paralytikos* gives us our word *paralytic*. The man could not move his limbs, or at least could not walk. We are not told how long he had been this way, or what had caused it. He was completely dependent on others.

“Which was borne of four.” Four men carried him, one at each corner of his mat. Who were they? Friends, brothers, neighbours — the text does not say. But they believed that if they could get him to Jesus, he would be healed. And they were willing to carry him through the streets to do it.

In that world a man who could not work had no income. He would depend on his family, or on begging. Many paralysed men sat by the roads or at the gates of the temple asking for alms, like the lame man Peter later healed at the Beautiful gate (Acts 3:2). Someone had cared enough about this man to carry him.

They Uncovered the Roof

> **Mark 2:4** *And when they could not come nigh unto him for the press, they uncovered the roof where he was: and when they had broken it up, they let down the bed wherein the sick of the palsy lay.*

“When they could not come nigh unto him for the press.” “The press” is *the crowd*, pressing in. They could not get through the door. They could have waited. They could have come back another day. They did neither.

“They uncovered the roof where he was.” To understand this, you need to know how houses were built in Galilee.

- **The roof was flat.** It was used as an extra room — for drying flax and fruit (Joshua 2:6), for sleeping in hot weather, for prayer (Acts 10:9). The law required a low wall around it so that no one would fall off: **“When thou buildest a new house, then thou shalt make a battlement for thy roof, that thou bring not blood upon thine house, if any man fall from thence”** (Deuteronomy 22:8).
- **It was reached by outside stairs** or a ladder from the courtyard. Jesus spoke of a man **“on the housetop”** who must flee without going **“down into the house”** (Mark 13:15). The four men could carry their friend up to the roof without going through the crowd inside.

- **It was made of earth and branches.** Wooden beams were laid across the tops of the stone walls. Over the beams went smaller sticks, reeds or brushwood, then a thick layer of clay and earth mixed with straw, packed down and rolled smooth with a stone roller after each rain. In Capernaum the walls were of rough basalt stone, and the roofs were light.

So the four men climbed up, found the place above where Jesus was sitting, and began to dig through the packed earth with their hands or with tools. **"And when they had broken it up"** — the Greek word *exoryssō* means *to dig out*. They dug a hole through the roof, pulled away the branches between the beams, and made an opening large enough for a man on a mat.

Imagine being inside: the teaching interrupted, dirt and straw falling on the heads of the scribes, sunlight breaking through, and the sound of men digging overhead. Imagine the owner of the house, perhaps Peter, watching his roof being taken apart.

Luke says they let him down **"through the tiling"** (Luke 5:19). Luke wrote for readers across the Roman world, many of whom knew roofs of fired clay tiles. Some homes in the land did have tiles, laid over beams. Either way, the men opened the roof and let their friend down.

"They let down the bed wherein the sick of the palsy lay." The "bed" (*krabattos*) was a pallet or mat, a light, portable bed that a poor man could roll up. They let it down on ropes, carefully, right into the middle of the crowd. Luke says **"into the midst before Jesus"** (Luke 5:19).

Jesus Saw Their Faith

> **Mark 2:5** *When Jesus saw their faith, he said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, thy sins be forgiven thee.*

"When Jesus saw their faith." Faith is usually something unseen, in the heart. But Jesus *saw* their faith — in what they did. They had carried the man, climbed the roof, dug through it, and let him down. That was faith in action. James wrote, **"shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works"** (James 2:18).

"Their faith." Whose? Certainly the four men's. Perhaps the paralysed man's as well — he had let them carry him there and lower him through a roof. The text says *their*, and leaves it there.

"Son." The Greek word is *teknon*, *child* — a tender word, the word a father uses to his own child. Matthew adds, **"Son, be of good cheer"** (Matthew 9:2), *take courage*. The man may have been frightened, lying helpless in front of a crowd of scholars with dirt falling around him. Jesus' first word to him was kind.

"Thy sins be forgiven thee." No one expected this. The man had come to be healed, and his friends had worked hard to get him there. Why did Jesus speak of his sins first?

Many in that day believed that sickness was always the result of a person's own sin. Jesus' own disciples asked about a man born blind, **"Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?"** And Jesus answered, **"Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents"** (John 9:2-3). So it is not right to assume that this man's paralysis was caused by some sin of his own. The text does not say so.

But every man is a sinner, and the deepest need of every man is not his body, but his standing before God. **"For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God"** (Romans 3:23). The man may well have carried a heavy burden of guilt, as many sick people do. Jesus dealt first with the greater need. David

had written, **"Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases"** (Psalm 103:2-3) — forgiveness first, healing second.

"Be forgiven." The Greek is a present tense, *are forgiven* — not "will be someday," but *now*. The forgiveness was spoken and done.

"Who Can Forgive Sins but God Only?"

> **Mark 2:6** *But there were certain of the scribes sitting there, and reasoning in their hearts,*
> **Mark 2:7** *Why doth this man thus speak blasphemies? who can forgive sins but God only?*

"Certain of the scribes sitting there." The scribes were the professional teachers and copyists of the law. They knew the Scriptures well.

"Reasoning in their hearts." They did not say anything aloud. They were thinking it.

"Why doth this man thus speak blasphemies?" *Blasphemy* (*blasphēmia*) means speaking against God, insulting Him, or claiming for yourself what belongs to Him alone. Under the law, blasphemy was punishable by death: **"he that blasphemeth the name of the LORD, he shall surely be put to death"** (Leviticus 24:16). It was a very serious charge — the same charge on which the Sanhedrin would later condemn Jesus (Mark 14:64).

"Who can forgive sins but God only?" They were right that God is the one against whom all sin is committed, and God is the one who forgives. David prayed, **"Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight"** (Psalm 51:4; story 25). Isaiah wrote, **"I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake"** (Isaiah 43:25).

What the scribes did not consider was that God might *give* that authority to the one He had sent. Jesus is about to answer that very question.

Some readers today take the scribes' question as proof that Jesus must be God, since he forgave sins. But the scribes were not right about everything they thought that day, and the story itself — as the next verses and Matthew's ending show — gives a different answer. Jesus does not say, *I can forgive sins because I am God*. He says the Son of man has been given *authority* on earth to forgive sins, and the crowd glorifies God *for giving such authority to men*.

"Why Reason Ye These Things?"

> **Mark 2:8** *And immediately when Jesus perceived in his spirit that they so reasoned within themselves, he said unto them, Why reason ye these things in your hearts?*

"When Jesus perceived in his spirit." No one had said a word, but Jesus knew what they were thinking. How? God showed him. Jesus had received the spirit of God without measure: **"For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him"** (John 3:34). As God had shown Elisha what the king of Syria spoke **"in thy bedchamber"** (2 Kings 6:12; story 30), and showed Peter what Ananias and Sapphira had done in secret (Acts 5:3), so He showed Jesus the thoughts of the scribes. This series understands it as knowledge given by God, not as Jesus knowing all things by himself; Jesus said plainly that there were things he did not know, but only the Father (Mark 13:32).

“Why reason ye these things in your hearts?” He brought their hidden thoughts into the open. They had not spoken, and he answered them anyway.

Whether Is It Easier?

> **Mark 2:9** *Whether is it easier to say to the sick of the palsy, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk?*

Here is a question with a trap in it.

Which is easier *to say*? Anyone can *say*, “Your sins are forgiven.” No one can see whether it has happened. You cannot check it. But if a man says to a paralysed man, “Get up and walk,” everyone will see at once whether it is true. Saying “Thy sins be forgiven” is easy to say and impossible to disprove. Saying “Arise, and walk” is easy to say and very easy to disprove.

Yet *doing* either is impossible for any man unless God gives him the power. Jesus was about to do the one they *could* see, so that they would know he had done the one they could not.

That Ye May Know

> **Mark 2:10** *But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (he saith to the sick of the palsy,)*
> **Mark 2:11** *I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy bed, and go thy way into thine house.*

“That ye may know.” The healing was for a purpose: so that they would *know*. It was a sign, a proof they could see, pointing to something they could not.

“The Son of man.” This is the first time in Mark’s Gospel that Jesus calls himself *the Son of man*. It was his favourite name for himself. It comes from Daniel’s vision of the heavenly court: **“one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom”** (Daniel 7:13-14). The Son of man is a man — a true human being — to whom God *gives* authority and dominion. That is exactly what Jesus claims here.

“Hath power.” The Greek word is *exousia*: *authority*, the *right* to act, power that has been given or delegated. It is the word for the authority a king gives to his officers, or a master to his steward. Jesus said, **"All power** [*exousia*] **is given unto me in heaven and in earth"** (Matthew 28:18) — *given*. And **"the Father … hath given him authority** [*exousia*] **to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man"** (John 5:26-27).

“On earth.” Forgiveness had always been God’s own work, from heaven. Now God had given authority to forgive sins to a man, here, *on earth*. What God decided in heaven, the Son of man could declare on earth.

“(He saith to the sick of the palsy,).” Mark’s parenthesis shows Jesus turning in mid-sentence from the scribes to the man on the mat. The sentence to the scribes is left unfinished; the healing finishes it.

“Arise, and take up thy bed, and go thy way into thine house.” Three commands: *Get up. Pick up your mat. Go home.* For a man who had not walked, perhaps for years, each one was impossible.

“We Never Saw It on This Fashion”

> **Mark 2:12** *And immediately he arose, took up the bed, and went forth before them all; insomuch that they were all amazed, and glorified God, saying, We never saw it on this fashion.*

“And immediately he arose.” Not gradually, not after weeks of recovery — *immediately*. The muscles that had wasted, the limbs that had not moved, were made whole in an instant.

“Took up the bed.” The mat that had carried him, he now carried.

“And went forth before them all.” The crowd that had blocked the door had to make way for him to leave. The man who came in through the roof walked out through the door, in front of everyone, including the scribes. Luke adds that he went home **“glorifying God”** (Luke 5:25).

“Insomuch that they were all amazed.” The Greek word means *beside themselves*, *astonished out of their wits*.

“And glorified God.” They did not glorify the man who was healed, or even Jesus in the first place — they glorified *God*. They understood that God had done this.

“We never saw it on this fashion.” *We have never seen anything like this.*

Matthew records exactly what they said about it:

> **Matthew 9:8** *But when the multitudes saw it, they marvelled, and glorified God, which had given such power unto men.*

Here is the answer to the scribes’ question. *Who can forgive sins but God only?* God can — and God *had given* such authority to the man He had sent. The crowd saw it clearly. The authority belonged to God; God had given it; and they praised God for it. Jesus would later give his own apostles authority to declare sins forgiven in his name: **“Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them”** (John 20:23). Authority to forgive could be given, because it was God’s to give.

Luke adds that **“they were all amazed, and they glorified God, and were filled with fear, saying, We have seen strange things to day”** (Luke 5:26). The word for “strange things” is *paradoxa*, from which we get *paradox*: things beyond belief, contrary to all expectation.

Where the Story Leads

To the Messiah

The lame shall leap. Isaiah had promised what would happen when God came to save His people: **“Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart”** (Isaiah 35:5-6). When John the Baptist sent from prison to ask whether Jesus was the coming one, Jesus answered, **“Go and shew John again those things which ye do hear and see: The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk”** (Matthew 11:4-5). The paralysed man walking out of the house was a sign of the Messiah.

Forgiveness and healing together. Isaiah also wrote of the kingdom to come: **“And the inhabitant shall not say, I am sick: the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity”** (Isaiah 33:24). In this one man, in one afternoon, both promises were seen: forgiven and healed.

The Son of man given authority. In Daniel's vision, God gave the Son of man dominion and a kingdom. In Capernaum the Son of man used the authority God had given him on earth. After his death and resurrection, God gave him all authority: **"Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name"** (Philippians 2:9). **"Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins"** (Acts 5:31).

How he could forgive. The forgiveness Jesus spoke in Capernaum looked forward to the cross, where he would give his life for sins. **"In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace"** (Ephesians 1:7). By his death, resurrection and ascension, the one who declared forgiveness to a paralysed man paid for it.

Who he is. Jesus is the Son of man, the man God sent and anointed, to whom God gave authority on earth to forgive sins. The crowd's verdict stands as the plainest summary: they **"glorified God, which had given such power unto men."**

To the Grace Administration

Forgiveness is now proclaimed to all. Paul preached in the synagogue at Antioch of Pisidia: **"Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses"** (Acts 13:38-39). What one man heard in Capernaum is now offered to everyone who believes.

Forgiven completely. "And you, being dead in your sins ... hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses" (Colossians 2:13). Under grace forgiveness is not a hope but a settled fact: **"In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins"** (Colossians 1:14).

Fellowship restored. When a believer sins, the way back is open: **"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness"** (1 John 1:9).

Carry one another. Four men carried their friend to Jesus when he could not come himself. **"Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ"** (Galatians 6:2). **"Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him ... and the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him"** (James 5:14-15).

Faith that acts. The four men's faith was seen in what they did. Paul wrote of **"faith which worketh by love"** (Galatians 5:6). Faith does not stop at the crowded door.

God still heals. Among the manifestations of the spirit given to believers are **"the gifts of healing"** and **"the working of miracles"** (1 Corinthians 12:9-10). The same power of God that healed in Capernaum works through His people today.

To the Topic of Friendship and Faith

- **Some people cannot come to Jesus on their own** — they must be carried.
- **True friends carry each other** to the one who can help.
- **Faith finds a way** when the door is blocked.
- **Faith costs something** — effort, risk, a broken roof.

- **Jesus sees faith** in what people do.
- **Our deepest need is forgiveness;** God meets it first.
- **God's answer goes beyond what we ask** — the man asked for healing and received forgiveness too.

The Main Takeaway

In Capernaum, when Jesus was teaching in a house so crowded that no one could get near the door, four men carried a paralysed friend up the outside stairs, dug through the earthen roof above Jesus, and let him down on his mat into the middle of the room; seeing their faith, Jesus said, "Son, thy sins be forgiven thee"; the scribes reasoned in their hearts, "Who can forgive sins but God only?"; Jesus, perceiving their thoughts by what God showed him, asked which was easier to say, "Thy sins be forgiven," which no one could see, or "Arise, and walk," which everyone could see; and "that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins," he told the man, "Arise, and take up thy bed, and go thy way into thine house"; immediately the man rose, picked up his mat and walked out in front of them all, and the crowd was amazed and glorified God, "which had given such power unto men." God, who alone forgives sins, had given that authority to the Son of man on earth — and by his death, resurrection and ascension that forgiveness is now proclaimed to all who believe.

- **Bring people to Jesus,** even if you have to carry them.
- **Let nothing stop you** — not crowds, not walls, not roofs.
- **Faith is seen in what it does.**
- **Our greatest need is forgiveness,** and God meets it.
- **God gave His Son authority on earth to forgive sins.**
- **Glorify God** for what He has done through His Son.

For Our Learning — The People

- **Jesus.** The Son of man, teaching in Capernaum, through whom God healed and forgave.
- **The man sick of the palsy.** Paralysed, carried by four, forgiven and healed; walked home glorifying God.
- **The four men.** His friends or family, who carried him, dug through the roof and let him down.
- **The scribes and Pharisees.** Teachers of the law from Galilee, Judea and Jerusalem, who thought Jesus spoke blasphemy.
- **The crowd.** Amazed, they glorified God for giving such authority to men.
- **Simon Peter.** Very likely the owner of the house (Mark 1:29).

For Our Learning — Customs and Orientalisms

- **Flat roofs** — used as living space, with a low parapet by law (Deuteronomy 22:8).
- **Outside stairs** — leading from the courtyard to the roof.
- **Roofs of earth** — beams, branches and packed clay, rolled smooth after rain; easy to dig through and easy to repair.

- **Tiles** — fired clay roof tiles, known in some homes, the word Luke uses.
- **The pallet (krabattos)** — a light mat or bed that a poor man could roll up and carry.
- **Basalt houses** — the black volcanic stone of Capernaum, built around shared courtyards.
- **Crowds at the door** — the doorway of an Eastern house opened onto the courtyard and street.
- **Scribes and teachers of the law** — given seats of honour near a teacher.
- **Blasphemy** — speaking against God or claiming His prerogatives; punishable by death under the law (Leviticus 24:16).
- **Sickness and sin** — the common belief that sickness always came from one's own sin, which Jesus corrected (John 9:2-3).

For Our Learning — Figures of Speech

A figure of speech is a deliberate departure from the plain, ordinary way of saying something, used by God to add emphasis and feeling. These are the ones in this story:

- **Idiom** — "Son" (*teknon*, child, 2:5), a tender form of address to someone not one's own child.
- **Erotesis (questions for effect)** — "Who can forgive sins but God only?" (2:7); "Why reason ye these things in your hearts?" (2:8); "Whether is it easier …?" (2:9).
- **Antithesis (setting opposites against each other)** — "Thy sins be forgiven thee" and "Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk" (2:9): the unseen set against the seen.
- **Parenthesis (a sentence set inside another)** — "(he saith to the sick of the palsy,)" (2:10).
- **Anacoluthon (a sentence broken off)** — "But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (he saith to the sick of the palsy,) I say unto thee, Arise" (2:10-11): the sentence to the scribes is finished by the healing.
- **Polysyndeton (many "ands")** — "Arise, and take up thy bed, and go thy way" (2:11); "he arose, took up the bed, and went forth" (2:12).
- **Metonymy (one thing put for another closely related)** — "in their hearts" (2:6, 8) for their inward thoughts.
- **Hyperbole (exaggeration for emphasis)** — "We never saw it on this fashion" (2:12).

What the Bible Actually Says

- **Jesus was teaching the word** in a crowded house in Capernaum.
- **Pharisees and teachers of the law** had come from Galilee, Judea and Jerusalem.
- **The power of the Lord was present to heal** (Luke 5:17).
- **Four men carried a paralysed man** and could not get in by the door.
- **They uncovered the roof, dug through it, and let him down** on his mat.
- **Jesus saw "their faith."**
- **He said first, "Son, thy sins be forgiven thee."**
- **The Bible does not say his sickness was caused by his own sin.**
- **The scribes thought he spoke blasphemy,** since only God forgives sins.
- **Jesus perceived their unspoken thoughts.**

- **He healed the man so that they would know the Son of man had authority on earth to forgive sins.**
- **The man rose immediately, took up his mat, and walked out before them all.**
- **The crowd glorified God, "which had given such power unto men"** (Matthew 9:8).

God's Will and Intent

- **God forgives sins** — and gave His Son authority on earth to declare it.
- **God heals** — His power was present to heal.
- **God sees and honours faith** that acts.
- **God meets our deepest need first,** and then more than we ask.
- **God wants to be glorified** for what He does through His Son.
- **God made forgiveness available to all** through His Son's death, resurrection and ascension.