

## Arise, Take Up Thy Bed and Walk

We have assembled for the last time this year under the tabernacle at Hye. The cloud is about to go up and we will leave this place after taking counsel together from the Word of God. Essentially, we, as a body, represent part of the company of the saints from the six-thousand-year period of wandering and selection and taking out the exhortations and the comforts which we have received this week are typical of the exhortations and comfort which have gone forth during the long period from the precincts of the garden of Eden to our own time. Thankfully many have been recorded in the Word; illustrations in a historical manner, illustrations in typical manners, exhortations in straight forward discussion such as we have had from the prophet Jeremiah 28 this morning. Higher lessons from the words of the prophets tell us in symbols and signs things which had to come to pass, which have come to pass, and are yet to come to pass.

It is with this thought, that we turn to the words of Mark this morning. We have begun a new journey through the record. It is through the shortest of the four gospels. Mark opens his message pointing to John the Baptist. John begins with the voice of the spirit from the prophet Isaiah — *"Prepare ye the way of the Lord;"* to introduce himself to the world and to announce His purpose—

*"Go ye into all the world and preach the word. He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved."*

He spake with clarity and unmistakably, as the companies from Jerusalem, Judah and Galilee assembled before him at his baptismal scene on the Jordan. He spake as the voice of one crying in the wilderness and all went out to hear the message. He spake with authority. He came in the spirit and power of Elias. The common people heard him gladly, but the self-righteous leaders, the priests, and scribes, refused the invitation to their own condemnation. To them he said:

*"Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance."*

And don't begin to say within yourselves, "we have Abraham to our father; we don't have to worry because we are the racial descendants of Abraham." Let that not enter your mind, for the flesh profits nothing in Yahweh's purpose. Prepare yourselves with works to illustrate repentance.

As in the lives of Jonathan and David there had to be a change in the picture. Christ had now come on the scene and was baptized of John *"to fulfil all righteousness."* John's work of presenting Christ to the world as the Lamb of God was finished. We must all recognize this in our own lives, that there is a change of guard, a change in the constant coming and going of human nature. Because we are yet compassed with infirmity, we tend toward the grave, as we now experience the nature we bear. Generation after generation silently repeats this lesson—

*"All flesh is grass — but the word of the Lord endureth forever"* (1 Pet. 1:25).

Brethren and sisters the token of salvation is enwrapped in what we do at the present time in the memorials. Not only do they speak of the death of Christ but of the hope through his resurrection—

*"If Christ be not risen —your faith is vain".*

They speak of hope, of glory yet to be revealed in the sons of God, the sons of Abraham in the truest sense.

Mark extends his first chapter by telling us that the break in the activities between John the Baptist and Christ takes place by John being cast into prison. The long period of 4000 years from the beginning of the seed of the woman to the bruising in the heel is now drawing to a close. The Master stood alone. Single-handedly he shouldered the task of removing the condition that we bear. And he finished his work by saying—

*"Father, if it be possible let this cup pass from me, nevertheless, not my will but thine be done."*

And finally, "It is done." That was the whole tenor of his life of 3 1/2 years. Mark proceeds to show the workings of this single-handed exponent of the power and authority of God as he healed both physically and spiritually the faithful of the nation, and preached that the Kingdom of God was at hand.

*"Prepare yourselves for the coming of the Lord." "Be ye followers of me".*

Mark records the healing of the demoniac in the synagogue. Though he was the son of God, though he had the spirit of God we should note how he got his strength. At every opportunity, he withdrew himself to the desolate places in private and opened his heart, in need of strength from the Father in Heaven. How necessary brethren and sisters for us who are weak, mortal, faltering creatures to seek that source of energy and strength moment by moment. The master lived in the presence of the Father—

*"The words that I speak unto you are not my words, but the words of him that sent me."*

That should be our position. How frequently we fall into the weakness common to the flesh of speaking frivolously. Every one of us fall into this category. Not once did the master in that long period of time fail.

*"Which of you convinceth me of sin?"*

Our weaknesses and failings will only be covered by his glorious righteousness, if we seek this covering in sincerity daily. This is now our moment (short as it is) upon the vast panorama of the Divine purpose, to walk with him. Our part is defined in his words, his example, his shadow.

The Master takes his circuit throughout Galilee. And many became his followers. By this time the authorities were very suspicious of his activities. He is about one year into his ministry as Mark 2 begins. We find him in this chapter coming once more to Capernaum on the Sea of Galilee, where he apparently made his residence in that area.

*"Again he entered into Capernaum . . . and it was reported that he was in the house" (Mark 2:1).*

It appears to have been the house of Peter and Andrew. It must have been a large house. A numerous assembly had already gathered, due to the wonderful manifestation of divine power in their midst and a great crowd had also blocked any further entrance into the house. They were to become witnesses of a powerful display of God's control of our lives, and of His principles of salvation. They were gathered together to hear the Word of God, to learn of the way of life. This morning we have assembled as part of the House of Yahweh, to hear the same message at the mouth of him we would like to hear personally. Yet brethren and sisters we do hear it, if we read his word with attention and meditation. They are not Christ's words, but the words of the Father.

We note that the adversaries also had joined this assembly. They sat in the midst, closely attentive to the Master, to find occasion against his work. From the record in Luke 5:17, we find Doctors of Law and the Scribes and Pharisees, are specifically included, pressing closely into the eager audience.

At this point, we begin as it were, a little parable. It is a real literal incident but it speaks so much. Four men carry a man with the palsy.

*"A man with the palsy."*

Brethren and sisters, that is US on the stretcher. That is the body of humanity from Adam to the present who have a mind and a heart to seek God. 'Palsy' — we experience it today by the constriction of the nerves and the muscles in the incapacity of the body to function as the mind would want it to function. The desire to do things is impeded because of the weaknesses and failings in the physical makeup.

When we are young we stride out with confidence; we come here with assurance as we drive our cars, or various other modes of travel. We rejoice and are thankful that we by Yahweh's mercy are able to come. But the time comes, brethren and sisters, when we are not able. The time comes when the limitations of the flesh press in upon us. We have seen many who have assembled here, stricken in one way or another by the frailties common to the Adamic nature. And they have earnestly desired to come but their hopes and aspirations have failed. And now some of them have gone to their rest, those who desired to return. We know not the day nor the hour. This is a serious thought.

Therefore, let us take to heart the exhortations which we have received this week. They have been many, and have been diversified, but they have gone directly to the heart to tell us of ourselves, what we are made of, what we need to have fixed up.

These men came with a desire to enter the presence of the Lord, just as we have come this morning to enter into the presence of the Lord. And when they got there they couldn't get at the Master! The crowd was around the place. There was no access into the Master's presence. They manifested an urgent desire to have the healing power of the Master extended as a corrective of the physical condition which was portrayed by that man lying on the stretcher.

Who were the four men that carried the paralytic? It is an interesting question. They all showed faith and confidence and assurance by their combined actions. As we trace the wonderful plan of redemption back to the confines of the Garden of Eden we find the four cherubic faces appear right in the inception of the plan of redemption. Bro. Thomas elaborated on this in *Elpis Israel* 140 years ago. In this beautiful illustration he carries those four faces into the Mosaic economy.

Then he carries our minds to the first and tenth chapters of Ezekiel, and there speaks of the glorious cherubic manifestations. And he further carries us to the last chapters of Ezekiel to the pictorial details of the cherubim in that

temple to be established in the future. And finally, the Apostle John reveals the same cherubim in the Revelation (the Apocalypse) as he speaks of the four living creatures (four living ones); the manifestations of the power of God, revealed step by step all the way through the Word.

All this is designed to lead or carry us toward Christ, to the very presence of him who is *"the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world"*. These four cherubic faces are focalized in the four gospels which draw us so closely into the presence of the Saviour. These four records in construction illustrate the aspects of the Cherubic faces Matthew (Lion), Mark (Ox), Luke (Man) and John (Eagle). They combine to present the plan of redemption of man through the seed of the woman, Yahweh's beloved son.

Truly, this son had to be of the condemned, disease-ridden, sin-cursed nature of all the race. But salvation for that nature could only be attained by the manifestation of the Yahweh spirit in the son of Mary's womb, as bro. Thomas beautifully describes in "Catechesis". The 4 cherubim in the fulness of their meaning comprehend the saints in all ages who truly manifest the saving covering, faith.

As we combine the record in Matthew, Mark and Luke, we find these four men carry the paralytic up a flight of steps on the outside of the building. They are carrying this Adamic nature up above all those assembled around that house. All would see the manifestation of their faith. How necessary, if we desire to be incorporated in the cherubic symbol, that we let our faith shine clearly that all may see. It thus becomes a light on a lampstand, or as a house set on a hill that cannot be hid. Faithfully they carried their charge to the top of the house. What purpose was there in recording this public display? It would be a manifestation to all present, and to all generations, as a witness of the basic principle of salvation carrying throughout the divine record. It speaks of our own salvation.

Having attained the top of the house in faith, they immediately set to work. They broke up the roof. Luke tells us, *"the tiling"* (Luke 5:19), which is a preparation of clay. Here we have the body being torn apart to accomplish the purpose they intended. There had to be a change. There had to be a removal of the flesh. Literally by this incident we are being taught that faith was, in the Father's plan, to be the means of removal of that which stood in the way of eternal salvation.

A large gaping hole in the roof is effected, an aperture sufficient to let down a man of good size into the presence of the Master, a paralytic prone on a stretcher. While this was being accomplished we may be sure that below them all the debris had fallen in. The scribes, Pharisees and doctors of the law would be amazed. Mentally they would be observing and coming to the conclusion about the Master in all that was occurring. "Why does the Great Master not stop these extremists and disturbers of his teachings, and breaking of their concentrations? Yet here he sits complacently in obvious satisfactory acceptance of these intruders."

The Master indeed did know these faithful five men were near, and could not enter. He knew of the effort to get to the roof, and of the labour to break up the roof, to tear apart the clay. Gently the paralytic is let down into his presence, the very sanctuary of the manifestation of Yahweh in Israel's midst. Why should not the Master be pleased with these events? But the hardness of Pharisaic hearts blinded their eyes to the truth of the Word.

This parable, literally enacted, is speaking to us of faith and baptism.

*"He that cometh unto God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him"*  
(Heb. 11:6).

Their petition silently presented was, *"If thou wilt thou canst make me clean, or whole."* And as Jesus declared upon another such open confession, *"According to your faith, be it unto you."* However, in the incident something more fundamental was to be taught the witnesses, though the objects of salvation already knew this. The divine formula for salvation was now set forth in clear focus, and has become the invitation of all who come unto Yahweh in hope of life.

*"Son, thy sins be forgiven thee."* (Mark 2:5).

*"Son, be of good cheer, thy sins be forgiven thee"* (Matt. 9:2).

*"Man, thy sins be forgiven thee"* (Luke 5:20).

Is this all that the paralytic was to receive? This was only the first step. It was the beginning of a far greater work. But it was essentially set out and emphasized in that order to teach the fundamental reason for all man's problems. The Pharisaic mentality only could reason, "What blasphemy, that this imposter should lay claim to power belonging to Yahweh only, the authority to 'forgive sins'." This very mental process is exactly what Christ desired to develop in all who heard him.

*"The works that I do are not mine (or of myself), but of Him that sent me."*

All must come to see that the root cause of all our problems is "sin". Sin is brought about by the condition we each inherit from our first parents; all our frailties, weaknesses, sicknesses and finally death and corruption.

It all emanates from the nature we bear.

"Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean, not one" (Job. 14:4).

"Every living creature after his kind." The Edenic law stated, "*in the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die*, (or dying thou shalt die). "

The process of dissolution and return to the dust, from which Adam came, was permitted to take its course. After 930 years Adam died. Death came, and corruption followed, resolution to the original elements takes place. Yahweh's law is fulfilled. His word is proven true. His righteousness is declared, and is proclaimed.

That which is now enacted in Capernaum is a new beginning, a new approach to the way to the Tree of Life, though declared from Eden's gates. This is the hope that is set before us as we go through baptism. The paralytic portrayed this as he was let down through the broken clay roof, into the presence of the Master. As so repeatedly declared by Paul, "*as many of you as have been baptised into Christ have put on Christ*." This man lying before the Master is a declaration of this truth, that baptism brings us nigh, from the alienated condition we are in because of our transgressions, which transgressions emanate from the sin-cursed constitution we all unfortunately inherit from Adam.

Nor could the paralysed man bring himself into the presence, or into Christ, by his own efforts. He had to be assisted, he had to be carried, the reality of salvation in Christ (Deity manifested in flesh) had to be prepared. And this gives us the message contained in all the Gospel records, the fulfillment of Gen. 3:18—the seed of the woman and the words of Gen 22:

"*God will provide Himself a lamb for a burnt offering*."

The Master reading the minds of the leaders of the Nation who sat before him, with the subject of the incident lying before them, asked the question, in answer to their mental conclusions:

"*Why doth this man thus speak blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God only*" (Mark 2:7).

"*Why reason ye these things in your hearts?*"

What a revelation to them! They had not said a word, yet this rabbi was able to tell them the inner workings of their minds.

"*Thou knowest my thought afar off. . . there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O Yahweh thou knowest it altogether*" (Psa. 139:2-4).

If they had known the scriptures as they claimed, they should have immediately realized that they were in the presence of one very closely related to Yahweh. Candour should have caused them to declare, "*God is in you of a truth*" (1 Cor. 14:25), and thus have confessed by what authority he was able to say to the paralytic, "*thy sins be forgiven thee*." But they were oblivious to the power which was now to be manifested before them.

These same leaders a short while before had rejected the "*voice crying in the wilderness*," as all the nation went out to be baptised at the preaching of John the Baptist. They confronted the Master with the question, "*By what authority doest thou these things?*" to which Jesus replied, "*The baptism of John, was it from God or of men?*" If they would answer this question, they would have the solution to their present question. But they refused to provide the answer, and thus were rebuffed of Jesus.

"*Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things*" (Mark 11:33).

Where the leaders would not confess or admit that God's power was working in Jesus, the paralytic had come with his frailty and incapacity and desired to be a witness of this power to heal, and to give him perfect soundness in the presence of all men.

Turning to the leaders the Master drives home his point.

"*Is it easier to say, thy sins be forgiven thee, than to say, arise and walk?*"

Certainly no one in his audience would know if he ever forgave sins. But to illustrate the proper order in the divine prerogative of extending salvation it was most essential that all who came to Him admit this necessity. In the decorum of divine redemption through Jesus Christ it had to be proclaimed that he could "forgive sins" and that it was by divine authority. Further there can be no physical healing on a permanent basis without the forgiveness of sins. This is why the scriptural formula is clearly set out in relation to baptism, as the avenue, "*Baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit for the remission of their sins*."

There is a complete change of relationship of those so inducted into "the name". They are in Christ, they are his brethren and sisters, they are through perfect faith and acceptance covered by the righteousness, the spotlessness of Christ, his perfect service to Yahweh. They have begun a process which (if followed faithfully) leads to ultimate physical cleansing from the sin-cursed nature, all Adam's descendants bear. Potentially they are released from this by baptism, inasmuch as without baptism there is absolutely no possibility for release from mortality at the judgment seat. Therefore baptism (an identity with the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ) is the door, the gateway, the avenue, the hole through the roof, by which we enter the race toward eternal life.

Our faith in what has been effected literally by Christ's perfect life, death and resurrection, is the covering means whereby we may approach Yahweh acceptably. "Christ is a cover and a cleansing for his people. These are related concepts, but cleansing seems to be the deeper one. Christ's covering of his people is essential, and will always be a historical fact of their salvation, and in some sense always a present needed reality, even in glorification, but the cleansing of them with that glorification seems more fundamental" (GVG — Berean 1977, pg. 309).

*"Arise, take up thy bed and walk".*

The first command illustrates acceptable approach to Yahweh based on faith; the second command shows the final results attainable. These two elements are the only means of life eternal. This enacted parable speaks volumes in simple terms to the children of God. "Arise", what a wonderful sound to the sensibilities of a completely helpless, paralysed person.

From complete incapacity, from disease, from death, as many will have been who appear at the judgment, the divine command will be a long-cherished sound, *"Arise, take up thy bed and walk."*

Mark (5:41) uses the same Greek word for "arise" (egiro) when speaking to the lifeless corpse of Jairus' daughter, *"Damsel, I say unto thee, arise"*. Jesus takes her by the hand, and by divine power she arises, and he delivers the healthy child of twelve years to her joyful parents.

We do not lose our weak, disease-ridden, sinful Adamic nature when we are baptised. Nor did the rejuvenated paralytic lose his weaknesses and common frailties by this outstanding miracle of healing which he manifested when he *"immediately arose, took up his bed, and went forth before them all"* (Mark 12:12). But he was placed in a new relationship to God, through his manifested faith and obedience. He had his sins forgiven. He arose before all as a witness of the power of Yahweh, of what is in store for all the righteous (faithful) through Jesus Christ. This is the hope of all who press unto the mark for the prize of the high calling in Christ Jesus, *"Take up thy bed and walk"*; unfettered by sin and its consequences, death and corruption; everlasting life, unending vitality.

*"They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk and not faint"* (Isa. 40:31).

Such is the prospect that is before us in this picture of Mark 2.

The Master's work is yet before us. The cloud will go up from this tabernacle today. From this parable, the Master goes forth to the sea. All the audience in the meanwhile glorify Yahweh for what they have witnessed. The Pharisees and elders chagrined would leave the house in silent rejection of the divine testimony. Honour to the Father, confession of His power and majesty was the purpose in this display. The paralytic and his four faithful companions were workers together with Yahweh to bring about this result. And this is the reason we each are called upon to His work.

At the Sea of Galilee, the Master sees a Levite (Matthew) sitting at the customs office. A simple command, *"Follow me. And he arose and followed him"* (V. 14).

Did Levi know Christ? Obviously, he had been sitting and watching, discussing the saviour with those who came unto him; and he was meditating upon what he heard. Deep conviction had entered his mind and heart. And he responded immediately. *"He left all and followed him."* To manifest his deep appreciation for the wonderful invitation he prepared a great supper for the Master, inviting the common people (his friends), possibly those with whom he had discussed the works of Yahweh they had witnessed, the publicans and so-called sinners.

Again, the scribes and Pharisees enter the picture with their protests and objections. "Why does your Master eat with publicans and sinners?" The Master's response completely exposed their hearts, a very serious and necessary exhortation for all of Yahweh's people. *"They that are whole (self-satisfied with their own presumed spiritual health), those need not a physician."* Any who recognize the principles of salvation would not say "we have no need of the physician, the healing balm of Gilead, the Word of God." But it is possible, though we may not admit it, that our very words, actions and thoughts are crying this loudly every day. The national leaders, though *"they were rich and increased in goods and had need of nothing,"* in the eyes of God, they were *"wretched, and miserable and poor and blind and naked."* They had no saving covering in Christ, and did not want such. Only those who knew they needed to be healed of their paralytic condition were those that came to hear the Master, to learn how they could be spiritually and ultimately healed.

The Master now tells us clearly of our responsibilities. A change of relationship to Yahweh, a complete new life, the old must be utterly put away as worthless. Let us not endeavour to sew a new piece of cloth (the new life) to the old garment of Adamic fleshly service. The old garment is the flesh and its ways as manifested in all the unguided propensities which it is heir to. How is it possible to sew the way of divine service to our old ways? How easy it is for us to justify our actions and speech, and to win the natural thoughts of the heart to this useless endeavour. Personal introspection will reveal that we are repeatedly trying to make such an incompatible tailoring repair. There is no strength or life in the old. Externally it may appear a beautiful piece of cloth; but it is dead, it is lifeless. The new being vital with new spiritual life, pulls at the old; there is no bonding and corruption becomes evident. Instead of a renovated garment, a gaping hole shortly appears.

The same principles are set forth in the use of old dried leathern or skin wine bottles. There is no flexibility in the old. They are dried, parched and rigidized. Here we are brought to a closer association with the principles of salvation. We are shown a slain animal, life poured out, speaking of sacrifice and offering. But it is not suitable. The Law which had led unto the Master was powerless to bring life. The new way of the Gospel just was not compatible if it was placed inside the Law of Moses. Truly the Law was a shadow, but only a shadow. Therefore, new containers were necessary. Any who concluded that the Law was an adequate receptacle of Christ's teachings, who rested in the Law would early find that the power, the hydraulic force of the water or wine of the Gospel would burst the rigidized seams of the Law.

*"Touch not, taste not, handle not, which are all to perish with the using" (Col 2:21-22).*

The new wine of the Word must be encased in new bottles, new leather skins prepared for the designated purpose. Truly again there is sacrifice required. The former were waxed old and ready to vanish away. Sacrifice is required of us, we need to be tempered and moulded by the Hope of the promises, and the redemption offered mankind in the Word. Then we are ready receptacles for the new wine. And in its effects upon us, there will be some moving of itself aright, adjusting us to conform to the power of the message, and thereby the leathern skins are "preserved" (suntereo) to keep closely together, to guard against injury, to conserve from ruin.

The record in Mark carries us along chapter by chapter. Constantly the power and authority of Yahweh is challenged by the leaders; each occasion recorded is to set before us the understanding of the divine principles which are on a much higher plane. Patiently the Master, in faith and trust in His Father, continued his life of sacrifice as the divine manifestation. All his service of either life or death or resurrection, was to illustrate the righteousness of God in lovingly establishing the means to life eternal.

He takes his disciples through the grain fields on the Sabbath day. Being hungry they roll the ripe ears together and expose the kernels for food. We find that the Pharisees were looking minutely at what Christ was doing. No work was to be done on the Sabbath day. Did they comprehend that the sabbath was made for man and not man for the sabbath? Something higher was there that justified what Christ did. He was the authority of God. John had witnessed the spirit of God coming upon him in the form of a dove. He was the anointed of the Lord and that, brethren and sisters is why we have been so impressed with the character of David this week who reasoned, *"I will put not my hand against the Lord's anointed"*. And yet these Pharisees were presumptive enough to do so. Christ eating of the corn was exactly the same as David eating the shewbread. Christ, David's greater Son, was the Anointed of the Lord.

This message throughout the Gospel of Mark calls us to a changed life. It tells us to do exactly what John the Baptist said, *"Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance"*. There is still opportunity. Peter said, *"the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night"*. So, we ask why hasn't he come with all the corruption on every hand? For one reason. The Lord God is longsuffering, patient, not willing that any should perish. The door is still open. Though we may have to go to the top of the roof to get at Christ in our efforts and many things seem to stand in the way every day, *there is a way*. It is faith in God and in Christ Jesus. Let us so partake, brethren and sisters. —E.F.H.

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