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A Prayer Meeting Address by Mr. J. Delves at "Ebenezer" Clapham
on 12th. November, 1951

Reading: Luke 5

The Gospels give a very striking instance of the remarkable power of faith in certain individual persons in time of need and distress and it can be very confirming to read those instances as in the case of those here who brought the man with the palsy and let him down through the tiling of the roof in the midst before Jesus. "When he saw their faith, he said unto him, Man, thy sins are forgiven thee". The poor man received a double blessing; in order to testify before these Pharisees that He had power to forgive sins Jesus healed his body of all his sickness.

The verses I have read this evening prove to us the power of Christ in three particulars. They record His power to provide in a miraculous way by the wonderful draught of fishes that were caught when the net was let down at the word of Christ. How it shows us our dependence upon Him and how that all temporal matters are under His divine control. He could withhold the fishes or provide them; He could change their course, He could keep them away from the disciples' nets all through the night, He could cause them to fall into their nets. They, feeling very discouraged and troubled, very weary, said to Him, "Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing: nevertheless at Thy word I will let down the net". This may show that, however discouraged we may feel to be in certain things of a temporal nature, if the Lord's voice or direction be heard it will be our wisdom to follow it, depending upon Him. In this case you see the result was very striking. In the case of Peter, he appears to have got such a view of the Saviour's divinity that it made him feel utterly unfit to be in His company, so that he said, "Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord." Some of you may understand Peter's feelings. It was not because he wanted the Lord to depart, but was a way of expressing his utter unfitness and unworthiness to be in His company. There is then the Lord's power to provide.

Not only have we here His power to provide but also His power to heal. A leper came to Him, not just slightly affected with the disease, with some signs of its approach, but "a man full of leprosy",

and the language is very sweet here; this poor leper "seeing Jesus fell on his face, and besought Him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, [not if thou canst] thou canst make me clean. And He put forth His hand, and touched him, saying, I will: be thou clean. And immediately the leprosy departed from him." It was not a case of gradually getting better; no, he was clean at once. How wonderful it is when it is felt that Christ is as willing as He is able.

Not only have we His power to heal manifested but also His power to forgive, which is actually of greater importance than all the other reasons to demonstrate His divinity, in the case of this man sick of the palsy. By directing him to take up his couch and go into his house He proved that He had power to cure him of his disease and particularly that He had divine authority and power to forgive his sins. It may have seemed a strange thing for Him to say after all their difficulty of getting the tiles from the roof. They let the poor man down in his helpless state in the midst before Jesus, who said, "Man, thy sins are forgiven thee". But the Lord had a reason for that which was later demonstrated, and so we read the people were all amazed and glorified God, saying, we have seen strange things today - things they had never seen before, had never expected to see either. So I hope it may be with some of us. "Strange things" here are unlooked for, remarkable things that they had never expected to see. Their witness is nothing is too hard for the Lord and it may be some of you, like myself, understand and say, O woe is me because of the lack, feelingly, of this remarkable grace. If we have faith as a grain of mustard seed we could say to this mountain, be thou removed to yonder place, or be thou cast into the sea.

Now in this meeting we need this grace to pray because without faith prayer cannot be acceptable; without faith it is impossible to please God. O then may the Lord help us to wait upon Him. Fresh afflictions are upon us, our friends and members. Things continually come to try faith but we can believe that the Lord does, and will, design even these things to be for our good. Amen

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