

The Paralytic's Amazing Friends



Ponderings & Reflections

Chapter Six — Forgiven? Jesus, You Can't Do That!

1. Have you ever thought about what's taking place at 5,000 feet in the Gospel passages at the same time you're immersing your-selves in the ground level contextual specifics of a passage? Having awareness of those elevated themes being intentionally developed overhead is a good way to increase the probability that we are "rightly handling the word of truth" at ground level. It's a safety net keeping us from 1) missing the main point, 2) getting stuck in a interpretive culdesac, or 3) gravitating toward a ditch on either side of the interpretive road.
2. Are you seeing a confrontational Jesus at work in the passage when it comes to the Scribes and Pharisees? He is deliberately pro-voking them. When it comes to the religious establishment, no gentle Jesus, meek and mild here!
3. Even though no one had yet realized it, Jesus had just rendered the Temple sacrificial system obsolete.
4. To the extent that we take our forgiveness for granted, we dampen our joy/appreciation/thankfulness/gratitude for what Christ accomplished on the Cross. Have you been suppressing your joy and gratitude without even realizing it by taking your forgiveness for granted?
5. Like the Pharisees, might we also be "prisoners of our paradigms?" Prisoners of the theological "system" we grew up in, was taught to us in seminary, have acquired from influential people in our lives? Even the best of theological systems is but a finite attempt to systematically understand and characterize an infinite God. By definition, any such "system" is therefore incomplete. How can we break out of the paradigms that we unknowingly superimpose on a passage to force it to conform to our theological framework? Having shared contextual Reflections for some time, I am particularly aware (from feedback) that there are different interpretive theological "grids" that either restrict or sometimes change what is actually unfolding in the passage to try and force it into a predetermined outcome. Don't mean to get too technical, but those are some of the real issues we face in trying to "accurately handle the word of truth" (2 Timothy 2:15). We have to be careful that we don't force the passage to conform to our theology, but rather let the original (integrated contextual) meaning of the passage form or reform our theology!
6. What speaks to you in this Reflection?