



## 6th Sunday of Matthew

In this week's passage, Jesus returns to his own city. As soon as he arrives, a paralytic man is brought to him to be healed. But Jesus doesn't say, "Be well." Instead, on account of their faith, he says, "Your sins are forgiven you." This, of course, upsets the scribes who think that Jesus is a blasphemer. But, to everyone's surprise, Jesus then tells the man to pick up his pallet and walk. When the man does, the crowd becomes afraid, and yet, they praised God.

**Scripture:** Matthew 9:1-8

**Bottom Line:** We are freed by Christ to walk according to his instruction.

### Discussion Questions

1. Jesus responds to the faith, or trust, of the people who brought the man to him. Why might "faith" be important for healing? What's the connection between "faith" and "sins"? How have you demonstrated, or failed to demonstrate, "faith" this past week?
2. Why would the Scribes think that Jesus is blaspheming when he forgives the man's sins? What does it mean to have the power to "forgive sins"? Where and how, in the church today, are sins forgiven? Hint: it's more than just confession.
3. Why do you think the crowd was afraid after seeing the man walk? What scares you about freedom in Christ? Notice how their fear causes them to "glorify God." Every Sunday, right before communion, the priest asks us to approach in "fear." Why is that? What might this mean? How do you live out that "fear" in your life?

### Moving Forward

The forgiveness of sins is related to redemption. And, redemption, in the ancient world, referred to the emancipation of slaves. So, when Jesus forgives the paralytic man's sins, he's freeing him from his slavery to the passions and death. But he was freed to do what? Well, in the end, Jesus tells him to get up and walk. We can understand this physically, or, if we want to dig deeper, we can understand this in a "mystical way." To walk means to "walk according to scripture." Every Sunday, at Orthros, we pray, "Blessed are you, O Lord, teach me your statutes." Now, that we've been freed by Christ and taught by the church, the hard work of "walking" begins.

### Changing Your Mind

"But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins"—he then said to the paralytic—"Stand up, take your bed and go to your home'." (Matthew 9:6)