

2026-03-22: Paralytic Man

Sunday

Background

The Great Fast takes us on a journey of repentance. Of course, repentance is part of our life as Christians throughout the whole year, but the Great Fast is a chance to focus more on repentance. So what does this journey of repentance look like?

1. **Treasures:** Life of Repentance to inherit the treasures in heaven. Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things on earth will be added to you.
2. **Temptation:** Satan, while we are on this journey, will tempt us with the three things: The Lust of the Eyes, the Lust of the Flesh, the Pride of Life. He wants us to fall into sin - but the message is that as the Lord Jesus overcame, so we, too, can defeat and overcome him in Christ.
3. Then, the next three weeks show us three examples of repentance, and three steps of repentance
 - **Type of Sin**
 - **Prodigal Son:** Lust of the Eyes
 - **Samaritan Woman:** Lust of the Flesh
 - **Paralytic Man:** Pride of Life
 - **Severity**
 - **Prodigal Son:** Fell once and returned and was accepted
 - **Samaritan Woman:** Fell six times and returned and was accepted
 - **Paralytic Man:** Lying in his sin for 38 years... for his whole life... and was accepted.
 - **Response**
 - **Prodigal Son:** Coming to yourself and returning to God
 - **Samaritan Woman:** Confession
 - **Paralytic Man:** Walking with God
4. **Man Born Blind:** Finally, next week we will see in the Sunday of Illumination, which is the fruit of repentance and baptism - that we who were in darkness will come to light.

Introduction

In this gospel, the Lord Jesus said three statements: He asked the paralytic: "Do you want to be made well?" and then He told him "Rise, take up your bed and walk" and then when He found him in the temple He said "See, you have been made well. Sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon you."

We will very briefly take these three statements

Do you want to be made well?

We might think this is obvious... of course he wants to be made well! But unfortunately, if I take this question to myself - I might be surprised with the answer.

The Lord is asking me this question every day - do you want to be made well?

Whenever someone asks "how do I overcome this sin" the answer is always the same... fasting, prayer, reading the Bible, attend the Liturgy, do prostrations, participate in the Midnight Praises, confess. And sometimes, I am like the rich young ruler who heard what the Lord told him "if you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor" and he went away sorrowful.

Sometimes, I don't want to be made well. I don't say no, but I make excuses...

Comfort and Habits

- I don't have time to pray before bed... but I can scroll on my phone for an hour as I fall asleep
- I don't have time to read the Scripture... but I am finishing shows every other week
- Purity is nice... but I like the movies and shows that I am watching
- Vespers on Saturday night? That's when we hang out with our friends
- Fasting on Wednesday and Friday? I need protein
- I am too comfortable in this job that is taking me to the places of sin... it's a secure job and it makes a lot of money
- Yes, I want to be made well... but not at the expense of my comfort, not at the expense of my habits!

Relationships

- Sure, I could be better... but I am satisfied with these friends. I can't give up my friends!
- I know this relationship is unhealthy... but I won't let go

Laziness

- I would love to pray... but I cannot wake up early in the morning, I need my sleep
- I am coming to liturgy... but my mind is somewhere else
- Liturgy on Sunday? But Sunday is my only day off!
- Yes, I want to be made well... but I don't want to put any effort!

Excuses

- Life is too hectic right now... when it slows down.
- I am too busy right now... I will come when I am less busy.
- I can't change, this is how I am
- I can't repent, temptation is too strong
- Yes, I want to be made well... but it's not up to me!

To be made well, I need to first have the desire to be made well and to be healed. And I need to understand that I will have to let go of some things... I will have to put effort, I will have to be uncomfortable!

I don't think any of us would say "no" to Christ... but sometimes we say "not yet" or "not like that" or "not that much."

Rise, take up your bed and walk

But when I say yes! Yes, Lord, I want to be made well. Then I hear the next statement: Rise, Take up your bed, walk. And these are three commands:

Rise

- St Augustine says that when the Lord said Rise, this was the healing command. At this word, the paralytic was healed... and then the other two commands were for the man.
 - Rise from death. Rise from darkness. Rise from sin.
 - "Awake, you who sleep, arise from the dead, and Christ will give you life." (Ephesians 5:14)
 - Let go of the sin. Let go of the habits. Let go of the laziness.
 - Trust in God's grace - the Lord is saying to you "Rise." You can overcome.
- The hardest moment in sin is not after it, it's not during it, but it's that moment right before it. When the flesh wills it and the spirit does not, and that's the moment of war between the flesh and the spirit. Focus on that moment...
 - "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." (Philippians 4:13)
 - When the phone is pulling me to it... put it down
 - When a thought comes... reject it
 - When anger is rising... take a moment in silence before speaking
 - When I hear in my mind the word "later..." start immediately!
 - "Resist the devil and he will flee from you." (James 4:7)
- And in that moment, trust in the name of the Lord and call upon His name... My Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner.
- When the Lord said "Rise" it was immediate... so let me act with immediacy.

Take up your bed

- Get out of your comfort zone. The bed is the comfort zone... I could lay in bed all day and I would be comfortable. No, take up your bed.
 - Take away those things that you are comfortable with.
 - Take away those things that have become habits.
 - Take away the sources of sin...
 - Uninstall the app
 - Unsubscribe
 - Set screen time limits
 - Make a commitment - no phone in the bedroom
 - Find new friends
 - Throw away the vape

- "If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out" (Matthew 5:29)
- "Make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts" (Romans 13:14)
- "Lay aside every weight and the sin which so easily ensnares us." (Hebrews 12:1)
 - The bed is a weight... when I wake up in the morning and I feel heavy and I feel I can't get up, this is a weight. Lay aside this weight and the sin which ensnares us.

Walk

- The Life of Repentance is not a moment or an action... it's a life of moments and actions. It's a way of life. It's a walk
- Every morning we pray "I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called." - The Church starts every morning with this reminder... we are called to walk.
- "We also should walk in newness of life." (Romans 6:4)
- "If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit." (Galatians 5:25)
 - Bear the fruit of the Spirit - love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control
- Walk in the Spiritual Life
 - Read the Scripture
 - Stand in prayer
 - Be attentive in the Liturgy
- Walk behind someone... in discipleship
 - Your Father of Confession will advise you

Sin No More

- Don't go back! Don't return to the place that Christ delivered you from
- St Peter in his epistle writes that when we do that, we are like "A dog returns to his own vomit"
- And sin no more is not a matter of will - I can't just decide "okay I will sin no more." But it requires taking action... Let me give myself the best chance to sin no more
- If I removed bad habits, I need to replace them with good habits or else I will fall again
 - Someone who is trying to overcome smoking, cannot just stop and that's it... but for example, they might use sour candy to try and curb the desire when it comes.
 - Pick up a hobby - sinless leisure activity
 - Parents - support your children in this. Give them alternatives to screen time and scrolling and games... play with them. Take them to the park. Do activities and crafts with them. Give them a chance to play sports.
- Let me persist in the life of repentance and confession...
 - Someone says "Whenever I confess this sin, I go about one week without doing it again, and then I fall."
 - Okay... so confess more often!
 - Maybe you will confess and you will go about one week. Then confess again and you will go eight days. Confess again and you will go nine days.
 - This is growth! This is "Sin no more."

- It doesn't mean that I will never sin again, but it means I will persist in my life of repentance and confession
- “The righteous falls seven times and rises again.” (Proverbs 24:16)

Conclusion

Do you want to be made well? This is your will.

Rise, take up your bed and walk. This is your action.

Sin no more. This is your life.

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