

A Free from sin: the paralytic and his friends.

❖ **The causes of sickness.**

- This man lived a sinful life that led him to an incurable paralysis. The cause of many illnesses is the transgression of God's laws, especially those related to health.
- However, we should not be limited to this statement in relation to sickness. Sin has been causing sickness since the beginning. For example, people who have never smoked may also suffer from lung cancer. Why? Because evil is ruling our world.
- The paralytic man was suffering because of his own sin, but he found two helpers. His friends cared for him, and his Savior was always willing to give rest to those who need it.

❖ **Liberation from guilt.**

- Jesus attacked the root cause of the issue. Paralysis was just a symptom. The true cause was within. The paralytic needed to be forgiven and liberated from guilt.
- He found forgiveness and the spiritual rest that he longed for. Then, his illness would be just a bearable annoyance.
- Our Savior is always willing to give us rest in the shelter of His love, grace, and forgiveness. Even amidst our suffering.

B Free from discouragement: Elijah the Tishbite.

❖ **The causes of discouragement.**

- He panicked when Jezebel threatened him. He fled away aimlessly in fear.
- Lack of faith? No, his faith was still strong (1K. 19:10). He had been subject to strong pressure, and the death decree broke him.
- He could not think clearly in that situation. He needed rest but did not know where or how to find it. He just fled.
- There is an important lesson here. We must not judge those who get discouraged or depressed. We should encourage them and listen to them.

❖ **Desperation.**

- Elijah surrendered to negative thoughts. He reflected on the consequences of his escape and began to worry things about: "Maybe I've thrown my reformation overboard, maybe I've disappointed God, maybe... maybe I'd be better off dead."
- However, he had finally stopped fleeing and began to think more clearly. His prayer was short (1K. 19:4), but that was the opportunity for God to intervene.
- Sometimes we may not feel God, or we may think we are unworthy. Nevertheless, God is always by our side, looking at us with love and tenderness.

❖ **Get up and keep going.**

- Elijah needed physical rest (to eat and to sleep) before having spiritual rest. Then he was ready to meet God.
- God made him reflect and led him. He assigned him new tasks in the serenity of a peaceful still small voice (1K. 19:11-18).
- His life did not end under a broom tree. He would make fire rain from heaven, look for the 7,000 that were longing for a spiritual reformation in Israel, and even make new friends. His story ended with a ride straight to Heaven on a chariot of fire!
- The darker our lives seem, the more we need to come to God to find rest.