

April 7. Strength Bestowed

J.R. Miller:

"Jesus said to the paralytic: Stand up, pick up your mat, and go home! He got up, took his mat and walked out in full view of them all." Mark 2:10-12

That was surely a very strange command to give to a paralyzed man. He could not get up. He could not take up his mat. He could not walk a step. He was as helpless as a corpse! Why did Jesus require such an impossibility of him?

But as we look on the helpless form we see that it at once gets up. The limbs move, the man rises, takes up his bed, and walks away in the presence of all the people. As we watch him going his way we learn that when Christ gives any command which seems impossible He always gives strength to perform it. As the man began to obey Christ's bidding power came back into his long-paralyzed body, and he was able to rise up and walk.

It is the same in spiritual life. We have no power in ourselves to do Christ's will but as we begin to obey, the needed grace is given. Young people often say that they are afraid to enter upon a Christian life, because they cannot do what will be required. In their own strength, they cannot. It would be as easy for them to climb to the stars unaided by God, as to live a noble and lovely Christian life. Human strength in itself, is inadequate to life's sore needs. But the young Christian who sets out in obedience to Christ, depending upon Him to open the path of duty will never fail of needed help at the moment of need.

Older Christians also often shrink from duties because they have not the ability to perform them. But for them, and for all who attempt any work or service in obedience to Christ, it is true that the effort to obey will always bring with it the strength to obey.

We should notice too that the strength will not come until we try to obey. If we will not attempt to do our duty we shall forever remain poor paralytics! But as we put forth the exertion God's strength will flow into our souls, and we shall be strong.