



■ † **Sunday of the Paralytic**

**“The illnesses of the body
always stem from sin”***

Epistle

(Acts 9:32-42)

In those days, as Peter was passing throughout all quarters, he came down also to the saints who dwelt at Lydda. And there he found a certain man named Aeneas, who had kept to his bed for eight years and was sick with the palsy. And Peter said unto him, “Aeneas, Jesus Christ maketh thee whole: arise, and make thy bed.” And he arose immediately. And all who dwelt in Lydda and Sharon saw him, and turned to the Lord. Now there was at Joppa a certain disciple named Tabitha (which interpreted is called Dorcas). This woman was full of good works and almsdeeds which she did. And it came to pass in those days that she was sick and died; and when they had washed her, they laid her in an upper chamber. And inasmuch as Lydda was nigh to Joppa and the disciples had heard that Peter was there, they sent unto him two men, desiring him that he should not delay to come to them. Then Peter arose and went with them. And when he had come, they brought him into the upper chamber; and all the widows stood by him weeping, and showing the coats and garments which Dorcas made while she was with them. But Peter put them all outside and kneeled down and prayed, and turning to the body, he said, “Tabitha, arise.” And she opened her eyes, and when she saw Peter she sat up. And he gave her his hand and lifted her up; and calling in the saints and widows, he presented her alive. And it became known throughout all Joppa, and many believed in the Lord.

At that time, Jesus went up to Jerusalem. Now there is in Jerusalem by the sheep market a pool, which is called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda, having five porches. In these lay a great multitude of invalid folk — blind, halt, withered — waiting for the moving of the water. For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool and troubled the water. Whosoever then first stepped in, after the troubling of the water, was made whole of whatsoever disease he had. And a certain man was there who had an infirmity for thirty and eight years. When Jesus saw him lying there, and knew that he had been in that state a long time, He said unto him, “Wilt thou be made whole?” The infirm man answered Him, “Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool; but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me.” Jesus said unto him, “Rise, take up thy bed, and walk.” And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed and walked. Now it was the Sabbath on that day. The Jews therefore said unto him that was cured, “It is the Sabbath day; it is not lawful for thee to carry thy bed.” He answered them, “He that made me whole said unto me, ‘Take up thy bed and walk.’” Then they asked him, “What man is that who said unto thee, ‘Take up thy bed and walk?’” And he that was healed knew not who it was, for Jesus had removed Himself away, a multitude being in that place. Afterward Jesus found him in the temple and said unto him, “Behold, thou art made whole. Sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee.” The man departed, and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him whole.

Behold, thou art made whole; sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee” (St. John 5:14). Sin does not harm only the soul, but the body as well. In some cases this is perfectly clear; in other cases, even when it is not so obvious, the truth remains that bodily illnesses always stem from sin.



A sin is committed in the soul and directly makes it sick; but since the life of the body comes from the soul, then the life coming from a sick soul is, of course, not healthy. The mere fact that sin brings darkness and sorrow must act adversely on bodily health.

When one recalls that sin separates man from God, the Source of life, and places him in disharmony with all the laws acting in himself and in nature, then one must marvel how a sinner remains alive after sinning. Such is the mercy of God, Who ever awaits our repentance and conversion.

Hence, a sick person must first of all hasten to be cleansed of his sins and be reconciled with God in his conscience. This paves the way for the beneficial effect of medicine. They say that there was a certain eminent doctor who would not begin treatment until the patient had confessed and received the Holy Mysteries; and the more serious the disease, the more urgently he insisted upon this. □

(*) St. Theophan the Recluse, *Thoughts for Each Day of the Year According to the Daily Church Readings from the Word of God*.