

Sermon on the Apostolic Reading for the Sunday of the Paralytic (Acts 9:32-42) (Metropolitan of Pisidia Sotirios)

[Ξένες γλώσσες / In English](#)



Today's reading from the Acts of the Apostles tell us of the great healing of Aeneas, the paralytic man from Lydda, and the resurrection of Tabitha, who was in nearby Joppa.

The Apostle Peter used to go around the cities and villages from Jerusalem and beyond, where the first Christian communities had formed. He supported them as he could and provided guidance in the spiritual life. When he visited the Christians of Lydda (some 40 kilometers northwest of Jerusalem) he met a paralytic who had been bedridden for eight years. Naturally, St. Peter felt compassion for him and sensing Aeneas' faith, he said to him: "Aeneas, Jesus Christ heals you. Arise and make your bed. At that, Aeneas arose immediately."(verse 34-35).

With such a great miracle, what can be highlighted first? The faith of St. Peter, speaking with absolute certainty that Jesus Christ will heal the man who has been paralyzed for so many years? Or, that it happened so quickly and completely, to

where he was able to make his bed? We know that even with less serious injuries that affect mobility (such as a broken leg), there must be recovery time. After surgery a person needs to wait days before they can even try walking, and if you add physiotherapy we are looking at possibly months before they can walk normally. With that in mind, we can see how amazing it is, St. Peter telling the man to “Get up and make your bed,” being instantly healed!



Aeneas himself is also remarkable. When he heard the words “Jesus Christ heals you,” his reaction was not cynical or doubting. He did not say: “I have been paralyzed for eight years! What are you talking about? How can I get up and make my bed?!” Instead, he immediately believed that Christ healed him, and obeyed the words of the Apostle. For his faith the miracle took place, and he got up right away. This astounding event stirred those who had seen or heard about it, and believing in the power of Jesus Christ shown through His Apostle, they became Christians.

This miracle offers us the opportunity to examine ourselves: How much faith in Christ is there in my heart? If I were Aeneas, what would I have done? Would I have believed St. Peter, that Jesus Christ will heal me? Would I have tried to get up? Or would it be the opposite: Would I be skeptical? Would I question it with appeals to reason or medical science? How could this happen after so many years?

Orthodox Christians today have read and heard about miracles even greater than Aeneas’ healing, such as Tabitha being raised from the dead, which was in today’s

reading. The Gospel for today is the story of the paralytic man at Bethesda, who was also healed by Christ Himself. We have listened to these accounts of the power of God in our lives, all the way to the present. Many of us, if not all, have witnessed with our own eyes the Lord's intervention in healing people who were not expected to live, as well as His presence in other times of sorrow. If we are true Christians, then we have no excuse for our lack of faith in these moments.

It is necessary to be clear on one point: It is not human beings who perform miracles, no matter how holy they are. It is God alone, and this becomes clear when we look at the words of St. Peter, chief of the Apostles, to the paralytic: "Aeneas, Jesus Christ heals you." In the case of Tabitha also, "... he [Peter] knelt down and prayed" (verse 40). The miracle took place AFTER the prayer. In contrast, we read in the holy Gospels that miracles involving Jesus Christ Himself are done on His own power, because He is God. For example, in the case of the widow's son at Nain, who was raised from the dead, we read: "Young man, I say to you, arise", and as soon as Jesus spoke these words to the dead boy laying on the bier "he who was dead sat up and began to speak" (Luke 7: 14-15).

My brothers and sisters, the word of God testifies that "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever" (Hebrews 13:8). Just as Jesus approached every person in pain with affection and offered comfort during His years of public ministry, so too does He continue to do so through His Church. We need only come to the Church with reverence, and approach Christ in the right way. To come to Him with love in our hearts, a warm faith and absolute confidence.

It is my wish for you all that you greatly enjoy the benevolent Grace of the Lord and our God Jesus Christ, especially during difficult moments of your life. Amen.