Spirituality
Pencil Preaching



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"Which is easier, to say, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Rise and walk’?" (Luke 5:22).

Is 35:1-10; *Luke 5:17-26*

As we continue through Advent, the gospel today reminds us that Jesus came not just to improve our material or physical existence, but also to transform our inner lives.

The story of the paralyzed man who is lowered through the roof to Jesus turns into a confrontation between religious leaders and Jesus over his claim to be able to forgive sins. To show that he has the power to forgive sins, Jesus links forgiveness from sin with the healing of the man's paralysis. He is completely restored from the inside out. He rises, picks up his sick mat and walks home.

Preparation for Christmas involves thinking about what we will give and what we might ask for from others. As we make our list of gifts, what will we ask of God? Why not complete healing? What would it mean to our bodies to be set free from some deep regret or from a hurt that severed a relationship? What if we could be freed from the paralysis of fear or anxiety? How would it change our lives to be forgiven and healed of impatience, judgmentalism or criticism of others?

Jesus has the power to do all of this. Now is the time to ask for what we need most of all.