

Mark 2:1-12

Jesus Forgives

Good morning church. So very good to be with you today as we continue our time of worship through the word of God this morning. Last week we kicked off a study through the Gospel of Mark, which we'll be in for several months.

And again, as I shared last week, I'd encourage each of us to journal through the Gospel of Mark, and the plan that I'd suggest is read 2 chapters each week – the chapter we just worked through and the chapter where we're heading next. And by the end of our time, each of us will have read the entire Gospel of Mark twice through. So for this week, read and journal through chapter 2 and 3.

This morning's message is from Mark 2:1-12 – if you have a Bible, go ahead and turn to Mark 2 and I'll read from verse 1 through verse 12.

READ:

When he entered Capernaum again after some days, it was reported that he was at home. ² So many people gathered together that there was no more room, not even in the doorway, and he was speaking the word to them. ³ They came to him bringing a paralytic, carried by four of them. ⁴ Since they were not able to bring him to^[a] Jesus because of the crowd, they removed the roof above him, and after digging through it, they lowered the mat on which the paralytic was lying.

⁵ Seeing their faith, Jesus told the paralytic, "Son, your sins are forgiven."

⁶ But some of the scribes were sitting there, questioning in their hearts: ⁷ "Why does he speak like this? He's blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone?"

⁸ Right away Jesus perceived in his spirit that they were thinking like this within themselves and said to them, "Why are you thinking these things in your hearts? ⁹ Which is easier: to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up, take your mat, and walk'? ¹⁰ But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins" — he told the paralytic— ¹¹ "I tell you: get up, take your mat, and go home."

¹² Immediately he got up, took the mat, and went out in front of everyone. As a result, they were all astounded and gave glory to God, saying, "We have never seen anything like this!"

PRAY

Chapter 2 in **Mark's Gospel starts a series of interaction that Jesus has with the religious leaders** of the day. This series of interactions that starts here, and ends at 3:6 (where we'll be next week) showing how threatened the religious dudes were by Jesus. Instead of thanking God for sending Jesus, they resented him.

The story (trues story by the way) that we read today – absolutely incredible – about a paralyzed man first being forgiven, then being healed. If you remember from last week, Mark's Gospel – his desire in writing – is to show us who Jesus is, and show us how we should respond. And again, from last week, it's interesting that really only 2 groups of people responded in a way that was expected – the desperate and the demon possessed.

And I think what we see in this incredible true story – is a picture of a desperate guy, getting help from his friends.

THE SETTING:

The setting that we have here is Jesus' reputation is growing. People are talking. He'd done some incredible things already and word is out that something's happening. He comes back to Capernaum and the word gets out that he's home and a crowd of people gather at the house.

And notice what he was doing – he was **speaking the word to them.** Remember the message that he preached earlier in Mark 1 – The Kingdom of God is here. Repent and believe the good news. And then later in Mark 1:38 This (meaning the preaching of the Kingdom) is why I have come.

So crowds gather – maybe a few believers, but mostly just curious or fascinated – and Jesus gives them the word. **They're looking for a show, Jesus gives them the Word.** Illustration: Bill offering as a complement “good show tonight”.

A PERSISTENT GROUP OF GUYS

Up comes 4 dudes, carrying their crippled and paralyzed friend. But there are so many people, that there's no room.

Now, if it was me, I'd have been like “Well bro, we tried but I'm tired and there's too many people out here. So we're going to take you home.”

Not these guys those. They're persistent. Jesus has something they need, and something their friend needs, so they're not going to give up. They climb up on the roof, and dig a hole in the roof and lower their friend down.

What an amazing site. They would've had to work hard to get through the roof, and they did.

SEEING THEIR FAITH...

And Jesus, knowing their hearts of these guys. Knowing their faith, Jesus looks at the guy on the mat and forgives his sins.

Probably not what any of them had in mind. They had brought their friend in for physical healing – but Jesus goes way deeper to this guy's single greatest need – to be forgiven of his sins.

EVERY PERSON'S GREATEST NEED

And every single person that has ever lived – other than Jesus – your and my single greatest need is the forgiveness that only Jesus can offer. In this cultural moment, even saying that we all have sin and brokenness in our lives that we need to be saved from – today this is considered hateful. In a culture that talks about your truth and my truth – rather than THE TRUTH – even saying that a certain attitude or action is sinful is looked at as hateful.

But Jesus saw this guy's faith, a belief in who He was, and forgave him of his sin.

THE ANGRY RELIGIOUS GUYS

Well, this didn't sit well with the angry religious dudes. They were thinking that Jesus was committing blasphemy – which by the way was punishable by death. There was like this gradation of levels of blasphemy

- Speaking evil of the law
- Speaking evil of God
- Claiming to be God

In the minds of these angry religious guys – Jesus was claiming to be God. V7B “Who can forgive sins but God alone?”

BUT JESUS KNOWS WHAT THEY'RE THINKING

But Jesus knows what they're thinking – he knows everything. It's what we call being omniscient (all knowing). He knows the wickedness of their hearts. The guys who hated Jesus the most were the super religious guys (the people you'd have expected to be the MOST excited and thankful for Jesus were the ones that felt most threatened by him).

A RHETORICAL QUESTION

Well Jesus gives them this rhetorical question – which is easier. From a worldly standpoint, it's WAY easier to say you're forgiven, because there's no immediate external validation of that statement. But to say pickup your mat and walk. If Jesus was a fraudster – that's the last thing he would say – because there's an immediate external validation. Either the dude is walking or he's still paralyzed. They could always wonder whether or not the guy had been forgiven, but if Jesus tells him to stand up and walk, and he does – from that moment forward – should have changed everything.

V12 – Says immediately he got up, took the mat, and went out in front of everyone. Just reading this, and then typing it, makes me smile. Because I know it happened, and I know WHO Jesus is, and I know how he's saved me.

Undeniable what happened in this story. And as a result, the people were amazed and glorified God.

APPLICATION POINTS:

So what do we take from this story? Like, this story isn't about us – it's about Jesus and who Jesus was and is, and how people must respond. This story is about Jesus – but there are things we can and should take from it.

And 1 overarching principle is the relationship between faith and action!

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FAITH AND ACTION

They believed so much in the possibility of what Jesus could do – that 4 guys carried their friend to see Jesus. And when it was packed and they couldn't see Jesus – they kept at it. They dug a hole in a roof and lowered their friend through it. They had faith, and they acted on it.

What might that look like for you and me? In context of what we've been trying to establish as a church – I believe (have faith) that God is drawing people to himself. I also believe that apart from Jesus, people will spend eternity in hell and it will be horrifying. And so I pray and ACT. I pray that God would do what only he can do and save my friends, and family and neighbors. And then I ACT by building relationships and sharing Jesus with them – actively looking for ways to share Jesus with them.

REMEMBERING THE GRACE AND MERCY THAT GOD HAS SHOWN YOU

I wonder how often the previously paralyzed guy and his friends replayed this event in their own minds. Like every time this brother stood up and walked through town was he thanking God for the gift of forgiveness and healing that he experienced?

I've never been paralyzed and then miraculously healed by God. BUT, I've experienced a miracle in my own life that's just as incredible – as Jesus took this selfish, arrogant, proud, and greedy guy and radically transformed my life. And just like this paralyzed guy – I experienced the forgiveness that can only come from and through Jesus.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS – NOT JUST WHAT HE DOES

These crowds gathered, most of them anyway, because they were interested in the Jesus Miracle Tour. Might have even been some thinking about printing up some T-shirts "Jesus Miracle Tour '01" or something.

What's the difference? It's huge. See, I love Victoria. I also love how she mothers our 4 kids – we share in the cooking. She cares for our daughters in that way that only mothers can. She cares for our boys in the way that only mothers can. I love how she works hard at her job. I love that she works hard in her roles at our church. But more than I love what she DOES, I love WHO SHE IS. Who God is shaping her to be.

And I think, if we're not careful, we can focus on what God does, rather than Who God IS! We can be like the guys selling the Jesus Miracle Tour '01 shirts – more focused on the show, and lose sight that the God of the universe desires a relationship with each of us through Christ.

TRUST THAT GOD IS CONCERNED FOR ALL OF YOU

There is no detail of your life that the Lord isn't concerned with. Every area of your life he desires to shape and direct. I have no doubt that this brother desperately wanted to walk. But Jesus tended first to his greatest need – to be forgiven of his sin.

CONCLUSION – INVITATION – CALL TO ACTION