

#21 - Jesus heals the paralytic - Mark 2:1-12

Engage:

In the past three stories we have seen the birth of Jesus, the beginning of His ministry and the choosing of His disciples. Now it is time to see what His ministry to people looked like.

This story of the healing and forgiveness of the paralytic who was brought to Jesus comes from the gospel of Mark. This gospel portrays Jesus as a servant (Mark 10:45). (Note: The other gospels picture Jesus as a king in Matthew (6:10); as the savior in Luke (19:10); and as one in whom we can believe in John (20:31). Jesus is revealed by His works and His words. Miracles are a very important part of the method He used to communicate His message. (Note: Over half of the 35 miracles of Jesus are found in Mark.) The purpose of these miracles is to reveal the power behind the ministry of Jesus. In doing so, Jesus is making the bold claim that He is the Messiah!

Man's response is shown to be faith. There can be no evidence of faith without obedience.

Thoughts about the story:

Mark 2:1-2 – The story begins with Jesus preaching to a crowd of people that overflowed a home in Capernaum. (Tradition has said that the home may have belonged to Peter - see 1:29).

Mark 2:3-4 – The preaching of Jesus is interrupted by four men who brought a paralytic to Jesus to be healed. They accomplished this by going to the roof of the home and creating a hole big enough to lower the man down to where Jesus was speaking. They did not let the circumstances created by the overflow crowd keep them from getting close to Jesus. (Note: Homes typically had a roof made of wood covered with mud or clay which became hard from the heat of the sun. This home probably had an outside stairway leading up to the roof. This was very common.) These men had to be very bold to have interrupted Jesus by creating such a mess in a crowded room below!

Mark 2:5 – Jesus proclaimed to the paralytic that his sins were forgiven. It seems that Jesus recognized that the four friends and the paralytic had great faith, or they would not have done what they did. The act of proclaiming forgiveness created a conflict with the Jewish leaders who were present. For Jesus to do this presented Him to be God (which He was).

Scripture teaches that sin can bring sickness, death, or disaster (2 Chronicles 7:13-14; Psalm 41:3-4; 103:3; Isaiah 19:22; 38:16-17), but not in every case (John 9:1-3).

Mark 2:6-7 – There were some teachers of the law who were present. Because they recognized Jesus as a threat, they wanted to know what He was doing and saying. They were quickly offended by what Jesus was doing. They believed that Jesus was doing only what God could do (see Exodus 34:6-9; Psalms 103:3; 130:4; Isaiah 43:25; 44:22; 48:11; Daniel 9:9). Such an offense was punishable by death from stoning (Leviticus 24:15-16). Note: This was the charge that was eventually hung on Jesus to try to get Him crucified (Mark 14:61-64).

Mark 2:8-9 – “Immediately” - This is a prominent and strong word that was used 41x in Mark. (This word is found less than 20x in the rest of the New Testament). Here, this word is used to describe how quickly Jesus was able to assess the situation. Jesus demonstrated that He was God by knowing what the Jewish religious leaders were thinking. In this case, healing and forgiveness went together.

Mark 2:10 – Jesus came to reveal Himself as the promised Messiah. Earlier, John the Baptist had announced Jesus as the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world (John 1: 29). One of the key ways of doing this was to offer forgiveness of sins. This was a way for people to “know” (Greek - *oida* - to know for a fact, not primarily from experience) that Jesus is the Son of Man. (Note: The phrase “Son of Man” is found 14x in Mark and the Jews would have interpreted it to mean this was the Messiah (see Daniel 7:13-14).

2:11-12 – Jesus then told the paralytic man to get up - and he did. This man’s faith caused him to be obedient. When you have faith, you will be obedient to what God says. This was done in the presence of the all who were in the crowd - including the Jewish religious leaders. We are told that “everyone” was “amazed” (Greek “*existasthai*” - a strong word which means they were excited – “out of their minds”)! The result was that together they all praised God.

Point: We must not miss the fact that sin is pictured as a sickness and forgiveness is like being healed or restored to health.

Note: Amazement is another key theme in Mark (see Mark 1:22; 5:20, 42; 6:2, 51; 7:37; 11:18).

Discussion Questions:

- What specific steps can you take to show faith in Jesus?
- What broken area of your life will you ask God to heal?
- Following the example of the paralytic man’s friends, how could you go out of your way to help another believe who is experiencing pain or suffering?