

Some time ago I needed Junk Removal- went the cheapest route- a thin man with a rusty truck showed up

"I don't think he's going to be able to pull this off"....and then he did.

Ever look at someone and think, "I don't know if they are going to be able to pull that off?"

This is a question that keeps coming up with Jesus, regarding his, willingness, authority & ability. All 3 will be addressed here.

Framework:

- A Caution (V.1-2)
- A Comfort (V.3-5)
- A Consideration (V.6-8)
- A Charge (V.9-12)

Mark 2:1-2 When he entered Capernaum again after some days, it was reported that he was at home.

²So many people gathered together that there was no more room, not even in the doorway, and he was speaking the word to them.

CONTEXT-

No city in Galilee enjoyed so much of Jesus's presence during his earthly ministry, as did Capernaum.

It's sad that nothing that Jesus said or did seems to have had any lasting effect on their hearts.

Yes, they were amazed. Yes, they were astonished. They were filled with wonder at His miracles.

But they were never transformed. They saw the very hand of heaven at work in their midst, and yet their hearts remained hard. This is why they got some of the harshest words from Jesus-

Matthew 11:23-24 And you, Capernaum, will you be exalted to heaven? No, you will go down to Hades. For if the miracles that were done in you had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until today. ²⁴But I tell you, it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom on the day of judgment than for you."

JC Ryles writes- *"The Capernaimites heard the most faultless preaching, and saw it confirmed by the most surprising miracles, and yet remained dead in trespasses and sins. We need reminding that the same gospel which is the savor of life to some is the savor of death to others, and that the same fire which softens the wax will also harden the clay. Nothing, in fact, seems to harden man's hearts so much as to hear the gospel regularly and yet deliberately prefer the service of sin and the world."*

APPLICATION- here's what that means for you and I:

A Caution: The trap set for regular church goers is attendance void of surrender

Presence short of transcendence; doing the work but not abiding in the Spirit;

being involved but not indwelt; going to church and never becoming the church. May that not be us.

Mark 2:3-5 They came to him bringing a paralytic, carried by four of them. ⁴Since they were not able to bring him to 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. ⁵Seeing their faith, Jesus told the paralytic, "Son, your sins are forgiven."

CONTEXT- because our 1st thought is likely "property damage!"

The roofs in 1st century Capernaum were made of wood beams cross laid with branches packed with a thick layer of grass, mud and clay. You could easily walk on it. And conveniently, you could also dig through it (and it was easily repairable). The men literally "unroofed" the roof. Picture it- showering those below with dirt and sticks.

Why did his friends go through all this trouble to bring him? So Jesus could make him walk; but Jesus gives his sin?

That seems a bit rude, doesn't it?It's actually beautiful-

Daniel L Akin- *"He and his friends believed Jesus could meet their deepest needs. They were simply wrong on what was really needed."*

They lowered him down to Jesus, Jesus lifts the load of sin off him

Don't miss how stunning this verse (5) is- Jesus forgives the man's sin...

WHAT IS SIN? It is an offense against God himself!

Jesus intimately knew this man's specific sins. And his response?

Not only *"I forgive you"*, but even more stunning, *"I welcome you into my family. I adopt you"*.

The one who had offended Jesus, the one for whom Jesus will ultimately bleed out on a cross for, to him Jesus says not only **"you are no longer guilty & you are free to go now"**, he says **"you are adopted & you are free to stay here forever" !**

Jesus is vanquishing all the things that in the Old Testament prevented someone from coming into the presence of God. Whether it be unclean spirits or an unclean disease. Sin or paralysis. Jesus opens up the way that all may be able to draw near to God. Even you-

APPLICATION-

A Comfort: **Jesus' heart is to not count against us, our offenses against Him**

Sin shatters relationships. Sin causes us to think foolishly sin leads us to make terrible choices and sin moves us to act in evil and destructive ways, and sin sets us against God... Yet His reaction is not what one would expect.

William Barclay- *"The whole essence of Jesus's life is that in Him we see clearly displayed that attitude of God to men. Now that attitude was the very reverse of what men had thought God's attitude to be. It was not an attitude of stern, severe, austere justice, not an attitude of continual demand. It was an attitude of perfect love, of a heart yearning with love and eager to forgive."*

Here's why that matters: **If through Jesus, sin cannot separate us from God, nothing can!**

Let me bring it closer: Depression can't; Abandonment can't; Anxiety can't; Stupidity can't; etc.

Now, for the 5 there was an obvious need- For Jesus there was also an ultimate need.

Paralysis will not send this man to hell; sin will.

We often cry out to God about our **obvious need** (finances, relationships, health) ;we feel as if God is hesitating, procrastinating or simply spectating; all the while He is at work in our **ultimate need**.

Worthy to note that for the 4 friends- no obstacle would impede them from bringing their friend to Jesus.

We should heed their example; we are not Jesus; we cannot save or make anyone whole.

But we can do everything in our power to bring them to see Jesus.

Against all resistance and hindrance, bring your children to Jesus;

against all resistance and hindrance, bring your spouse to Jesus;

against all resistance and hindrance bring your siblings, your parents, your friends, your coworkers, your neighbors, the lady in line at the grocery store- bring them as close to Jesus as you are able,

then let him deal with them. **May we be unroofers of roofs.**

What are you willing to do for those who are unable to get near to Jesus?

Mark 2:6-8 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?”

CONTEXT-

5 faith-filled men are a stark contrast to the skeptical Scribes. We ought to have some grace on them though-

To the ancient Jews, the Messiah himself could not even forgive sins, only God could.

Perhaps this is why Jesus doesn’t refer to himself as Messiah (He is not the Messiah they have in mind) but as Son of Man; a title which in the Old Testament commonly just meant Human, but also-

Daniel 7:13-14 I continued watching in the night visions, and suddenly one like a son of man was coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was escorted before him. ¹⁴ He was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, so that those of every people, nation, and language should serve him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will not be destroyed.

The implication is simple: **If God alone forgives sin, and God alone heals disease, whoever can do both must be God**

They got the question right (who can forgive sins but God alone?) but they got the conclusion wrong (blasphemy).

Ironically, if Jesus is God, they are the ones committing blasphemy

APPLICATION- Jesus brings into the light what they had only been whispering in the shadows of their souls-

A Consideration: **For better or worse, God sees hearts as we see faces**

1 Samuel 16:7 But the Lord said to Samuel, “Do not look at his appearance or his stature because I have rejected him. Humans do not see what the Lord sees, for humans see what is visible, **but the Lord sees the heart.**”

1 Chronicles 28:9 “As for you, Solomon my son, know the God of your father, and serve him wholeheartedly and with a willing mind, **for the Lord searches every heart and understands the intention of every thought.** If you seek him, he will be found by you, but if you abandon him, he will reject you forever.

Psalms 139:1-2 Lord, you have searched me and known me. ² You know when I sit down and when I stand up; **you understand my thoughts from far away.**

Jeremiah 17:10 I, the Lord, **examine the mind, I test the heart** to give to each according to his way, according to what his actions deserve.

Luke 16:15 And he told them, “You are the ones who justify yourselves in the sight of others, but **God knows your hearts.** For what is highly admired by people is revolting in God’s sight.

That ought to have 2 effects on us:

- It should **humble** us because we stand completely exposed before God.
- It should **liberate** us from having to fake the façade of being better than we actually are.

“Lord I give you my heart”....my broken heart; my bitter heart; my wounded heart; my doubting heart; my wicked heart

Mark 2:9-12 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!”

CONTEXT-

The whole time Jesus and the scribes are debating, this man is still just laying there, friends looking down...

Jesus proves that He indeed has authority to forgive sins, by showing them His authority to heal disease.

V12-astounded- literally “out of their minds” at seeing Jesus perform miracles

Miracles are not the point- Miracles are the *pointers*.

The miracles point to the message: “Your God has come; Your God is here”

Leonard Sweet- *“Medical healing is the knowledge of God manifested through science. Spiritual healing is the knowledge of God manifested through faith. It is the same knowledge. It is the same God.”*

The greater miracle was not that the man walked, but that he walked out free of sin

The paralytic man left carrying his mat, but no longer carrying the weight of his sin.

APPLICATION-

Jesus commands this man, in front of a large crowd, to do what he is not able to do!! What kind of cruel joke is that? Unless... unless Jesus doesn’t just command, He makes it possible to obey.

You and I may feel we have no power to defeat sin in our life, to leave it behind. To be holy.

To be better dads/moms, to be better husbands/wives, to be better friends, etc.

It is the power of God at work in us that makes it possible to live the lives He’s calling us to live.

Makes it possible to be whole, to abandon resentment, to forgive, to love, to fight.

A Charge: **Every sickness, sorrow, and unconquered sin is a gracious message from God, calling us to draw nearer to Him.**

Jesus used what they *could* see to prove what they *could not* see.

Isn't it peculiar that this man's paralysis was, a blessing in waiting.

And the same is true for many of our afflictions. By them, we learn wisdom. Our trials proved to be mercies. In the Kingdom, losses proved to be gains. Sickness leads us to the Great Physician.

Psalm 119:71 *It was good for me to be afflicted so that I could learn your statutes.*

You may have to summon some friends to carry you; you may have to unroof some roofs...

Throughout the entire text, the main question being emphasized is-

Does Jesus have the authority and ability to forgive sins?

What Mark is showing us here is that-

Our sin is the most detrimental thing in our relationship with God and with others, but Jesus has the willingness, the authority, and the ability, to forgive our sins

that ought to ignite hope within us despite what may be against us

In the Gospels, Jesus’ miracles are the foreshadowing of everything that will be true, they are glimpses of a world and a people restored to wholeness in God’s presence.

William L Lane- *“Healing is a gracious movement of God into the sphere of withering and decay, which are the tokens of death at work in a man's life. It was not God's intention that man should live with the pressure of death upon him... Consequently, every healing is a driving back of death and an invasion of the*

providence of sin... Jesus' pronouncement of pardon is the recognition that man can be genuinely whole only when the breach occasioned by sin has been healed through God's forgiveness of sins."

1 Samuel 2:4 The bows of the warriors are broken, but the feeble are clothed with strength.

Call to Action:

- **By any means necessary (short of sin) bring others near Jesus**
- **Let your 'mat' be your testimony**

I wonder what that walk home must have been like???

PRAY

*****Shea's Sendoff**

****Worship Team Come up during the prayers**

BULPEN-

Helpers, health, and holiness

Both here and in the previous chapter Jesus is interrupted while preaching, and his authority (or its source) comes under question; Jesus will show them all that His authority stands to the test of scrutiny

V5- in a sense its as if Jesus is telling this man, “Child, God is not angry with you.”

Faith that laughs at barriers

The group came believing Jesus had the power to heal, but they left astonished that he had the power to forgive

We need faithful friends

William Barclay- “To the Jews a sick man was a man with whom God was angry. It is true that a great many illnesses are due to sin. It is still true that time and time again they are due not to the sin of the ill man, but to the sin of others.”

Isaiah 33:22, 24 For the Lord is our Judge, the Lord is our Lawgiver, the Lord is our King. He will save us.

²⁴ and none there will say, “I am sick. “The people who dwell there will be forgiven their iniquity.

Daniel 7:13-14 I continued watching in the night visions, and suddenly one like a son of man was coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was escorted before him.

¹⁴He was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, so that those of every people, nation, and language should serve him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will not be destroyed.

Here is the first time in Mark that Jesus will use this title- meant to evoke the idea of authority