



## The Life of Christ Series:

### The Healing Power of Forgiveness Mark 2:1-17

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Last week, we studied the Purpose of Healing according to Jesus' perspective and motive. Today, we want to study the Healing Power of Forgiveness. Turn with me in your Bibles to Mark chapter 2 starting in verse 1 and stand with us as we read the Holy and Inspired Word of God this morning. If you are unable to stand with us, please follow along in your Bible or on the screens wherever you are at. Let us read this passage together this morning.

#### Mark 2:1-12

*And when he returned to Capernaum after some days, it was reported that he was at home. 2 And many were gathered together, so that there was no more room, not even at the door. And he was preaching the word to them. 3 And they came, bringing to him a paralytic carried by four men. 4 And when they could not get near him because of the crowd, they removed the roof above him, and when they had made an opening, they let down the bed on which the paralytic lay. 5 And when Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, "Son, your sins are forgiven." 6 Now some of the scribes were sitting there, questioning in their hearts, 7 "Why does this man speak like that? He is blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone?" 8 And immediately Jesus, perceiving in his spirit that they thus questioned within themselves, said to them, "Why do you question these things in your hearts? 9 Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Rise, take up your bed and walk'? 10 But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins"—he said to the paralytic— 11 "I say to you, rise, pick up your bed, and go home." 12 And he rose and immediately picked up his bed and went out before them all, so that they were all amazed and glorified God, saying, "We never saw anything like this!"*

We saw Jesus invests time in PRAYER with His Heavenly Father before He does anything in verse 35 of chapter 1. Prayer is NECESSARY for healing, comfort, provision, and strength. In this story, Jesus gives physical healing, hope of social healing and now gives a spiritual healing. If you were in this home and noticed the roof was being

removed just enough for a man to be lowered down right above where Jesus sat, how would you have known to minister to this man? How do we know what to do in situations where we could and should serve others, love others and share with others the gospel? WHAT IS THE GOSPEL? It is this good news of the gospel, that salvation comes. It is by grace alone through faith alone, for the forgiveness of sins.

In verse 3 and 4, we see a group of men, friends perhaps bringing another man who was known as a paralytic. Since this man was lying on a bed showed the severity of his condition – most likely a quadriplegic. **What this man could not do is what defined him.** He was known as paralytic and given no other name. These men were willing to do anything just to get him to Jesus. We all need friends like this don't we? We need to bring friends to Jesus even before we bring friends to church or religion.

It was in 2008 my home church in Arkansas went on a Mission Trip near Memphis, TN. Tarah's Dad was our Pastor and we grew up doing Evangelism-based Mission Trips across the East and South side of the Country. We loved going on Mission Trips because of the Fellowship and unity that grew with every member of the Church who went and of course experiencing God do some amazing things when it comes to transforming lives, churches and towns that we would work in. On this particular trip, we were traveling in a 15-passenger van and I, along with some other teenagers at the time, were sitting in the back. Well, we were going down the interstate back to the Church where we were spending the night as a group and one of the girls got motion sickness all of a sudden. There was no of pulling over in time for her to get out and relief what was about to come out of her. She was hurting really bad and sitting right beside her, I knew I had to do something really quick. I mean, I didn't want anything to get on me but I also wanted to help her out. The only thing we could find was a brown paper bag. I grabbed that brown paper bag and held it up for her to take it but up came her lunch and guess who was left holding the paper bag? ME! She didn't bother taking it from my hands, but instead gave me the opportunity to hold it for her. Now, I felt like a million bucks partly because I had the biggest crush on this girl and I was the greatest friend that she could ever ask for. Guys, sometimes its worth taking the risk for the girl and showing how true your friendship really is. It definitely paid off because that girl turned out to be my wife and yesterday was our 6<sup>th</sup> year Wedding Anniversary!

We need good friends to take care of us, but we definitely need good friends to take us to Jesus! The first point I noticed in this text that we can learn about is that **the persistent EFFORT of FRIENDS reveals visible EVIDENCE of their FAITH in Christ's healing.** We read about these men who brought this paralytic man to Jesus and they could not enter through the door of the house because there were so many people gathered. The only place was the roof!

This roof was typically flat, made of branches and dried clay supported by wooden beams. It was not uncommon to relax on top of an Israeli home in the cool of the day. Here, these men dug out the top coat of clay and lowered him down into Jesus' presence willing to overcome any barriers or obstacles. It was the community that this man was completely dependent upon and it was the community of faith that led to this forgiveness.

In verse 5, **Jesus' extraordinary RESPONSE reveals a profound ILLNESS of sin and a RADICAL healing of forgiveness.** Many Jews in that day believed that all disease and affliction was a direct result of one's sins. This paralytic may have believed that as well; thus, he would have welcomed forgiveness of his sins before healing. This is called the **Retribution Principle: The righteous will prosper and the wicked will suffer.**

Job was suffering; therefore, he must have sinned. However, the book goes out of the way to confirm that this teaching is incorrect, and that Job was in the hands of God's sovereignty all along. Just because this man was suffering, or you and I may suffer does not mean that God is punishing us or that we have sinned. This can also be known as "Karma" or "Superstition" that really isn't faith at all meaning. So, if something bad happens to us then we may believe in God's power of forgiveness but not God's power to free us from guilt. Jesus takes care of both!

In the next verses of 6 through 12, **Jesus claims for HIMSELF the power to FORGIVE sins and FREES us from the guilt of sins.** The teachers of the law immediately accuse Jesus of "blaspheming", a proper conclusion if He were a mere man. They were arguing theology instead of celebrating a person coming to faith. While the Scribes were trying to understand what just happened, we too can look at this and highlight some key truths about what only God can do. As they were "reasoning in their hearts", truth was recognized that **Only GOD can forgive sins.** However, these scribes were doubtful and was incorrect when they said that Jesus was a blasphemer. Jesus can forgive sins because He is God. Only God can forgive sins because it says **Isaiah 43:25**, "I, even I, am He who blots out your transgressions for My own sake; And I will not remember your sins." Secondly, **Only GOD knows the intent of the heart.** Jesus, being God and knowing all things, knew what these men were thinking. No other human can truly know if your sins have truly been forgiven by God since it occurs between God and that person's heart. Thirdly, in verses 10-11, **Only GOD can convince us He is GOD.** And lastly for number four, **Only GOD helps us walk away from sin.** This man was no longer named 'paralytic' but give a new name: "My Son". Don't miss the point: The purpose was to bring forgiveness for this man and celebrate his becoming.

Jesus changed this man's life along with his friends and possibly others that were eye-witnesses to this great miracle. Forgiveness is powerful, and Jesus is just

beginning this ministry of preaching this gospel to all those He encounters. In verse 13, Jesus approaches Levi, the son of Alphaeus was one of the 12, more commonly known as Matthew.

### **Mark 2:13-17**

*He went out again beside the sea, and all the crowd was coming to him, and he was teaching them. **14** And as he passed by, he saw Levi the son of Alphaeus sitting at the tax booth, and he said to him, "Follow me." And he rose and followed him. **15** And as he reclined at table in his house, many tax collectors and sinners were reclining with Jesus and his disciples, for there were many who followed him. **16** And the scribes of the Pharisees, when they saw that he was eating with sinners and tax collectors, said to his disciples, "Why does he eat with tax collectors and sinners?" **17** And when Jesus heard it, he said to them, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners."*

Matthew was a publican, a tax collector, a despised profession in Palestine because such men were viewed as traitors. These Jews would buy tax franchises from the Roman government and any amount they collected over what Rome required they could keep. So, Matthew became wealthy at the expense of his own people. Don't you think a man like Matthew needed forgiveness? Do you think the people who despised and hated him also needed forgiveness? The only one who could do it was JESUS! Verse 14 gives us in detail Matthew's response being so immediate, it is likely that Matthew was already convicted of his sin and was now convinced that Jesus is the one to forgive.

How long has it been for you? If there is guilt or shame that has overwhelmed you, flooded your thoughts or dreams even from sins years ago; Jesus has the power to forgive you and gives you the power to forgive others. This is what the Bible teaches us, and this is what the Bible commands us to do. This is radical living in verse 15 through 17 for the Christian. We must recognize your sin and your need of a Savior. Don't be like the righteous and overlook this forgiveness! Consider that Christ came to seek and save the lost; those that are sinners who are willing to trust in a Savior. Make today a commitment day to turn away from any sin, to give your life to the Lord and let Him help you with your struggles and especially your sin. We want you to experience how glorious true freedom can be from the grace and mercy of Christ Jesus who is able to cleanse you from all unrighteousness and forgive you of your sins. Lastly, Jesus is calling for us to forgive others just as we have been forgiven. You will find freedom in Christ

when you forgive others just like Christ who has forgiven you! And we want to celebrate your becoming!