

# Paralyzed to Forgiven: Proving Jesus' Authority Over Sin

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[ 0 : 00 ] Well, good morning, everyone. It is just a wonderful thing whenever we can have an opportunity to preach at a different church, a fellow church that has brothers and sisters in Christ, and it is a wonderful reminder that Jesus is establishing His church all across the U.S. and the world.

And so, as we dive into Mark 2 today, I invite you to open up your Bibles. It should be on the screen behind me, but we'll be kind of following the text pretty closely today.

So if you have your Bibles, I invite you guys all to follow along. And it's a passage that we tend to overlook sometimes, a passage that is a truth that as Christians we sort of take for granted sometimes.

And so, it's my hope today that we can slow down and enjoy and smell the roses, so to speak, as we sort of go into this passage that has a wonderful truth of Jesus' identity.

Let me pray first. Dear Lord, I need your help this morning to proclaim your truth. You have spoken. We trust that you have spoken.

[ 1 : 26 ] And it's contained in this wonderful word that you have given to us. So we pray that you give me the ability to articulate my words and to articulate the message and hone in on the message that you have for us today.

We ask and trust that you have been preparing the hearts of your people up until this point and that we trust your timing of this passage. We pray that it would affect your people deep into their soul. In Jesus' name, amen. So let us read from Mark chapter 2 verses 1 through 12. Follow along with me. It says, And when he returned to Capernaum after some days, it was reported that he was at home.

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. And they came, bringing to him a paralytic carried by four men. 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.

[ 2 : 37 ] And when Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, Son, your sins are forgiven. Now some of the scribes were sitting there questioning in their hearts, Why does this man speak like that?

He's blaspheming. Who can forgive sins but God alone? And immediately Jesus, perceiving in his spirit that they thus questioned within themselves, said to them, Why do you question these things in your heart?

Which is easier to say to the paralytic? Your sins are forgiven? Or to say, Rise, take up your bed and walk. But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins, he said to the paralytic, I say to you, Rise, pick up your bed and go home.

And immediately, he rose and immediately picked up his bed and went out before them all. So they were all amazed and glorified God, saying, We never saw anything like this.

Now, I don't think I can start this sermon without first telling you that my beautiful wife gave birth to our first baby two weeks ago. And she's absolutely beautiful.

[ 3 : 51 ] Yeah, that deserves an amen. God literally knit together a human being inside my wife. So the last couple days have been stressful.

The last couple weeks have been stressful. And especially because I've also had a few other life changes. I recently just switched careers. I used to be a geologist. Now I work at the Milwaukee Rescue Mission in their drug and recovery program.

And so this is the first time that I've actually had to commute to work in probably a few years. I don't think, since my wife and I have been married since 2020, I don't think I've ever regularly commuted to work.

So there's been a lot of adjustment that's had to kind of go on. But as you can expect with all these life changes, you could also expect some tensions to arise in our household from time to time.

Take this hypothetical scenario, okay? Say this week I come home. It's been a long day. I'm a little on edge because I know that as soon as I get home, I'm going to have to start preparing a sermon for this upcoming Sunday.

[ 4 : 58 ] And I can see as soon as I walk in that the baby's crying. My wife Olivia is stressed. And the first thing that she says to me, Nick, can you please go down and grab the laundry?

And I'm thinking to myself, I just got home. I deserve a second, right? But being the loving, you know, the husband and father that I am, I do it without any question.

And then shortly after dinner, she asked me if I had remembered to call the insurance company about an upcoming appointment to make sure that we had coverage.

And at that point, I just kind of snap because, one, I think that perhaps she thinks that I've just been goofing off all day. And two, because I didn't actually do it.

And so I snap and I finally say, no, I haven't gotten around to it. I have all this other stuff to do. Stop bothering me about it. And then instantly, I... This is a hypothetical scenario, okay?

[ 5 : 59 ] Instantly, I see her face sort of deflate, her demeanor deflate. I know that I'm in the wrong, and I know that if I don't say something and go to her, we're going to be at odds with one another for the next few hours.

But for some reason, I just can't do it. It's this feeling inside me that I just can't do it. I can't get myself to do it.

Perhaps I still blame her for maybe aggravating me, that that's her fault. That's her fault. But also, perhaps there's a chance that I go to her and she could just shove it right back in my face.

She doesn't accept my apology. There's a part about asking forgiveness that actually puts your heart on the chopping block. It's vulnerable. It takes humility. So now I'm irritated that I can't even go to her.

So now I'm irritated at my own irritation. And now I don't even have any time to focus on my sermon that I so wanted to do so in the first place. So something tells me that I'm not the only one that's experienced this in this room.

[ 7 : 07 ] And it doesn't have to be a spouse. It could be a coworker. It could be a family member. But Christian, it is good news for us this morning that God has not left us to drown, right?

And so a passage like Mark 2 can actually empower us for obedience in situations like this. And so this morning we're going to learn a very important truth about this man, Jesus.

And that is that Jesus has divine authority to forgive sins as shown by his divine authority to heal the paralytic.

Jesus has divine authority to forgive sins as shown by his divine authority to heal the paralytic. So to see this this morning, we're going to sort of just walk through the story once again, slowly.

And as we do so, I'm going to be adding a few things to the story to colorize it, sort of bring it to life. And we're not just going to do this just for fun. Hopefully it is fun, right?

[ 8 : 06 ] And hopefully it sort of gets your imagination going. But the reason we're doing this is because we want to see the climax of the story. Because when we can do that, we can hone in on the main point of the passage.

And that's actually a hard thing to do from time to time. In fact, this last week, a client of mine was telling me that he read a story on this, a book on this story, on this Mark 2 passage called The Stretcher.

And he said it was focusing on the four men who carried the man to Jesus. And it was talking about how, when we're on the stretcher of life, we need to find four friends.

Well, that might be a good truth, but is that the truth of the passage? That's what we want to hone in today. So we're going to walk through the story to get a better idea of what the main emphasis is.

So let's go ahead and do that. Let's start with verse 1. It says that he returned to Capernaum, which means that this isn't the first time that he's been there.

[ 9 : 10 ] Last time he was there, it was actually in chapter 1. He preached in a synagogue with authority and demonstrated authority over unclean spirits. Chapter 1, verse 28 says that his fame

spread throughout all Galilee.

And so upon his return now, everyone has heard of him and now they want a glimpse of him, right? They want to hear him speak. There's this expectation now in the very onset of the story that Jesus is going to perform for them.

So in verse 2, it's not surprising that we read that many gathered together so that there was no more room. It says that they were packed in there like sardines, basically. It's hard to breathe. There's not a single word being said, though, because they're all trying to hear Jesus. And the people outside the door can't even see him.

Perhaps they're leaning in just trying to grasp every other word or so. That's how desperately they want to hear what Jesus is preaching. And Jesus is doing that.

[10:18] He's preaching the word with them. People are gathered to hear it. It's a teaching with authority, as it says back in chapter 1. Now, if I was directing a movie of this scene right now, at this point, I'd probably take a step back.

I'd cut to a different scene, one that's a little more quiet. There's a man, okay, who hasn't arrived on the scene yet. He, too, has heard that Jesus is in town, but there is a fundamental problem.

He's paralyzed from the waist down. He's sitting by the window. He's waiting for these other men to come and get him.

Perhaps it was an injury from birth, or perhaps it was an injury from a work-related injury that he injured his spine, and now he can't work anymore. Maybe he had people caring for him.

Maybe he was being cared for another family member. Maybe he was ostracized by the community. We don't really know. It doesn't really show us that many details. About this man. But he seems to at least have a few friends and family because there are some men who come and grab him, right?

[11:29] And he, too, has heard that Jesus has the authority to cast out unclean spirits. And one report from just a couple days ago says that he actually healed a man with leprosy.

So perhaps in his mind, he's thinking, this is my chance. This is my chance to get within just armed distance of this man.

Hopefully I can be healed. But naturally, he's late to the party, right? I mean, he needs to be carried. Everyone else has gotten there first. He's just showing up a few minutes after. And as he gets there, he can tell that he's not going to be able to push through, right?

The crowds, like we saw, are packed in there. There's no way a man on a stretcher and four others are going to kind of weave their way in between that group. And at that point, you can almost see his tears start to run down his face.

He's beginning to feel a little more desperate. Perhaps this isn't going to work out the way that he wanted. So you see in this replay, you see him raising his hand to the roof, to the people carrying him in the stretcher.

[12:31] Take me to the roof. Take me to the roof. I'm trying to imagine what the four carrying him would have been thinking. They're probably looking around. How long are we going to entertain this?

I don't know what going to the roof is really going to do. But they don't find it within themselves to sort of break his heart. So they oblige. They carry him up to the flat top roof up the stairs.

At this time, there would likely have been some stairs going up the outside of the house to the top of the roof. So the people inside at this point, they hear some footsteps above them.

But Jesus is continuing to teach. Soon enough, people are starting to look upwards. What's all the commotion above? There's a sound of some muffled voices and then all of a sudden, wham!

Wham! I mean, I have to imagine they get through the roof somehow, right? They begin pounding at the roof. Now, roofs during that time were likely made of reeds that were covered with a mud plaster.

[13:40] So it probably wasn't hard to get through, but probably wasn't easy either. So mud and dust, as you can kind of imagine it, are falling on the people inside.

Everyone's looking now, but what is going on? At this point, Jesus has stopped teaching.

Everyone's just waiting. And I'm not really an expert in ancient Israel roof break-ins, but it's going to take at least five to ten minutes, right?

Finally, sunlight breaks through. You hear the count of three in Hebrew. Echad, shenayim, shalosh, they let down the man and lower him to the ground.

And as the man reaches the ground, it's a small town. Everyone probably knows who this man is at this point. People are muttering, is Jesus going to heal this man? Everyone is waiting with anticipation.

I sort of picture it like some of those movies where the nerd kind of goes in for the kiss. He's just kind of, his lips are puckered, his eyes are closed, he's waiting for the girl to kiss him.

[14:49] I kind of think, when I think of this story, I imagine the paralyzed man, he's on the stretcher, he's waiting for the feeling to return to his feet. Everyone knows he's got a big grin on his face.

And then in verse 5, Jesus says this. He says, esteem their faith. He says, your sins are forgiven. Now, imagine the man kind of opens one eye, he's like, what?

No. You misunderstand. I'm here to be healed, right? For the modern reader, this is actually surprising as well. Everyone is expecting a miraculous healing, and instead, Jesus pronounces, his sins are forgiven.

I mean, it's obvious why the man is there, right? And so what we have here is sort of a false summit of the story. The issue of the man's paralysis is still not resolved.

So, pausing for a second, I just want to say, is it not good, church, that when we come to God with our greatest felt need, that he gives us what we truly need, right?

[15:59] It can be a hard reality at times, but I personally, I'm thankful that God knows what I need more than I do, and doesn't always give me what I think I want, because that would be bad for me, right?

But returning to the text, now we have another problem on our hands, and that is that Jesus has just pronounced that this man's sin has been forgiven.

And that's a big deal. Jesus is claiming to be God here, and blasphemy, blasphemy was punishable by death, so he better make sure that he's telling the truth here, right?

And up to this point, the Jewish leaders may have been open to Jesus' teaching, and perhaps even curious about his ability to heal others, but now, now he's gone way too far. I think, one thing that would have upset these people at this is that he's claiming to be God, right?

And that's a big deal. So let me give you an example. Let's just say that Zach is up here, and I just punch him square in the face, right? Now, would it make any sense for me to go to my mom, my mom, and ask for forgiveness?

[17:16] No. Zach's the one that I've offended. He's the only one who's going to offer forgiveness towards me. And so in the same way, for Jesus to announce your sins are forgiven, he's proclaiming that he is the one who is offended.

Only God can pronounce forgiveness of sins. Now, the scribes, if you know who the scribes were, they were individuals who were responsible for copying the Bible over and over again.

They were very detail-oriented. They knew the scriptures pretty well. And they knew it front and back. They probably even taught it as well. Now, there's a part of me that understands their question, right?

Not too long ago, Israel was in exile because of their idolatry. And now here's this man coming to proclaim that he's God. He's kind of leading the people. People are starting to follow him, right?

So now the scribes are saying, well, we don't want this exile to happen again. We need to preserve the scriptures. So I understand. It would be a good question to ask, is this guy really who he proclaims to be?

[18:26] Because if he's not, we shouldn't follow him. They're afraid that Israel's going to fall back into idolatry.

But Jesus responds in a very interesting way. First he says to them, why do you question these things in your hearts? Like we said, to question Jesus' authority seems like a pretty legit question. But Jesus makes it seem as if they shouldn't even be surprised at all at this point that he can forgive sins. The second question is rhetorical. He says, which is easier to say to the paralytic?

Your sins are forgiven or to say, rise, take up your bed? Now, it's a rhetorical question so it's almost assumed that the original audience was going to know the answer to this.

For us, it's not, I don't think it's quite as obvious. So let's just take a second to work through the possibilities of what he's actually meaning here. There's three main options.

[19:25] One is that perhaps it is more difficult to say your sins are forgiven than to say get up and walk. He goes on to say, though, to prove to you that I have the authority to forgive sins, I'm going

to show you that I have the authority to heal this man's paralysis.

So this first option, that to say your sins are forgiven is more difficult, doesn't actually fit with the outcome of the story. because if forgiving sins was more difficult, then a demonstration of something less difficult probably wouldn't prove anything, right?

It's like if I kick a 30-yard field goal and then say that proves it, I can kick a 60-yard field goal. Say no, that doesn't prove anything. You just did what was easier. The easier does not prove what is more difficult.

That doesn't seem to be what he's meaning there. Second option is that perhaps it's easier to say your sins are forgiven than to say get up and walk. Now this option is definitely plausible.

I would think of it as sort of flippantly saying I love you to someone. It's quite easy to say but it's not quite easily verifiable.

[ 20 : 38 ] Something like that takes some time to verify over the course of time. It's kind of like if I were to say check your pocket, there's \$100. That's easy for me to say but it's very easy to verify.

It's difficult in the sense that you could just check your pocket right now and see if there's \$100. If there's not, I'm a liar. If there is, I was telling the truth. So the same seems to go for the situation here.

At the same time though, to say your sins are forgiven without actually being able to verify it would be a very risky thing to do. So the text shows us that they immediately accused him of blasphemy, proclaiming to be God when he really wasn't.

This was punishable by death as we just said. Don't dare say these words. So that option is plausible. I think the third option is the best option. Third option and final option is that it is equally difficult to say your sins are forgiven than to say, as it is to say, get up and walk.

And this seems the most closely fit the details of this story. And Jesus is calling to their attention the fact that they are upset that he displays divine authority to forgive the man's sins, but yet they are open to him showing his divine authority to heal the man.

[ 22 : 02 ] Jesus is asking them this rhetorical question, which is easier because both are possible only by God's power. I was happy that we read Psalm 103 this morning because that gives us a glimpse into this situation where it says, bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits.

Who forgives your iniquity and who heals all your diseases? Who has the authority to do both? God alone. So at this point in the story, it can go one of two ways.

Either the man gets up and Jesus demonstrates that he has the power to heal and to forgive sins, or the man doesn't get up and Jesus looks like a fool and possibly gets stoned for claiming to be God.

This is the climax of the story, the point in which the story could go either way. So what does the text say? It says, 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.

both the healing of the incurable medical conditions and the forgiveness of sins are rooted in the authority of God alone.

[ 23 : 25 ] And so when Jesus displays his authority to heal this man's paralysis, he's demonstrating that he has the authority to forgive this man's sins. Jesus is proclaiming that he is God and he proves it by healing the man.

Dozens of people see this authority on display and the scribes really have nothing in response to say. So once again, what do we learn from this passage?

It is that Jesus has divine authority to forgive sins as shown by his divine authority to heal the paralytic. So I want to focus the rest of this time now on what do we actually do with this passage?

Like I said in the beginning, sometimes this is the passage we just quickly pass over. It's a truth that Christians should know. Yes, Jesus has the authority to forgive sins.

Well first, I want to speak to the non-believer that could be here this morning. Because I don't think I can preach this passage on the forgiveness of sins than to invite the non-believer to accept this truth.

[ 24 : 36 ] And when I say non-believer, I mean those who are not submitting their lives under the authority of Christ. And I feel that I need to clarify this unfortunately in this American church because it's unfortunately common that people believe that God exists, that Jesus is God, but then they don't submit their lives to his rule and kingship.

So in other words, they believe that God exists, but then they're still living a life of rebellion. And so this only offers a false assurance that we must be very weary and cautious of.

Because the Bible doesn't have a category for the individual who has one foot in the world and one foot in the gospel. So either you are a Christian walking in step in repentance and in step with the gospel, or you are not.

And just to clarify, that puts you outside the grace of God. You don't have forgiveness of sins. And this is important because as we find out very early in the book of Genesis, that the wages of sin is death.

And any sin, no matter how small, is worthy of eternal punishment before an infinitely holy God. And so in order for God to uphold his justice, he must carry out sin's sentence, lest his own character be undermined.

[ 26 : 07 ] But in his loving kindness, he made a way for his creation to be restored in right relationship to him. We see in the Old Testament that the Old Testament sacrifices, the animal sacrifices were insufficient to properly atone for and give any lasting forgiveness of sins.

And therefore, those Old Testament sacrifices always looked forward to a greater and a better sacrifice, the Messiah, Jesus Christ. The book of Hebrews says, without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness of sins.

And so as this passage shows, he has the authority to forgive sins because he is God, he is the one offended, and he is also the sacrifice, which we find out later, the unblemished lamb who can defeat death once and for all because death has no hold on him.

And so our only hope, therefore, is to be united to him, to seek safety underneath his wing and that death may pass over us. In Romans 2, Paul warns those who confess Jesus is Lord with their mouths, but they don't repent.

They feel convicted, they even confess their sins, even the most heinous criminals, after they've been convicted in a court of law, you might even see them crying. Most often than not, they're crying because they now have to pay the penalty for their crimes, right?

[ 27 : 44 ] They're not living in repentant faith. So we want to be careful that we're not doing that as well. So, Paul says in Romans 2, he says, or do you presume on the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance, but because of your hard and infinite heart, you are storing up wrath for yourselves on the day of wrath when God's righteous judgment will be revealed.

And so here's where a lot of people go wrong. They believe God exists. They know that they are a sinner. They confess that they have done what is wrong, but they do not submit themselves underneath the authority of God.

They're still living in open rebellion. Now, obviously, perfection is not required. The gospel assumes this. But a growing hatred of sin, a continual turning away from sin and turning towards God because they delight in obeying him and seeing his glory and not their own being realized.

My former boss once told me that he asked for God's forgiveness before he sins. That is conviction and confession without repentance because repentance, like we just said, is turning away from sin, not turning towards it.

And so when in Mark 1.15, Jesus says that he begins his ministry saying, the time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God is at hand, repent and believe in the gospel.

[ 29 : 22 ] So my invitation for the non-Christian is will you respond to the truth of this passage today and place your faith in the one and only person who actually has any ability to forgive sins.

Because only by him can you have any hope of reaching eternal life. at this point I turn to the application for the believer, the one who is prone to forgetting this truth.

For most of us here, Jesus' authority to forgive sins seems like a no-brainer to us. And as Christians, we have repented of our sins and put our faith in Christ, but functionally, I think this is a gospel truth that we all need reminder of on a daily basis.

And trust me, I'm giving a sermon needing this truth myself. So as I was reflecting on the main truth of this passage, I considered a few ways to actually that we can struggle to believe this truth.

The first is this. One way that we can show ourselves not to trust in the truth of this passage is when we don't actually make a regular habit of repenting of all of our sin.

[ 30 : 40 ] I have found that I prefer to categorize my sins in those of sort of like a tiered system. Some are very grievous, some are not very grievous, you don't need to repent all the time, and that is a dangerous place to be.

Something like maybe stealing something, that's under the category of always repent, but then simply getting angry at my wife, that's maybe a sometimes repentance thing. and like I said, it's a dangerous place to be because one, I can't be at odds, it's hard for me to be at odds with her, for one, but if I don't go to God, the one who is the one offended first and foremost, the one who has commanded me to love my wife and to live with her in an understanding way, if I'm disobeying him, I've first and foremost disobeyed the one and true God. Why should it be then that I can bear at being at odds with him and not bear with being at odds with my wife? My sin is first and foremost a rebellion against his rule and reign. So we undermine the seriousness of our sin when we do not live in the goodness of this truth, that Jesus has the authority to forgive sins.

[ 32 : 01 ] And then two, the second way that I thought that we can sometimes struggle to believe this truth, is when we try to pay the fine for an offense that has already been forgiven.

There's been a number of times over the last few weeks as I've led worship at Crossway Milwaukee, that immediately after the service is done, I turned to all the members and I started apologizing for all the mistakes that I made, and just for them putting up with me, my horrible performance.

And so there's a part of me that does this because I want them to see that I am punishing myself above and beyond. I'm doing jail time for my mistakes. I want them to know that I see this as serious.

What does that do? When we have that same mentality towards our, when we approach God with our sin. Well, it says that while we need to be remorseful, right?

Don't hear me wrong. But when we cross over to unbelief, it's when we refuse to let Jesus pay the fine. So we feel the need to punish ourselves beyond the punishment that's already been paid.

[ 33 : 11 ] And so when we approach God this way, we are not declaring to Him that we believe and trust that His death was sufficient for paying for our sins.

And we're suggesting that perhaps there's some debt left to pay that He hasn't already paid. And so in those moments when we don't believe that Jesus has the authority to forgive sins, but Christian, I assure you, what a rejoiceful thing when we can come to the Lord Jesus with our greatest and darkest, deepest sins.

And He can look at us in the eye and say, go free. Let sin rule you no longer. Your sins are forgiven. There is no fine left to pay.

And then as we proceed throughout the week to wage war on the flesh and we stumble once again, we go to the Lord and He says, go free once again. That too I have paid for.

Your sins are forgiven. Let sin rule you no more. Christian, God is patient with us. Right? He's gracious to us.

[ 34 : 26 ] It's actually God's mercy that He reveals our sin to us slowly over the course of time because if He were to show us all of our sin all at once, it would crush us. So He peels it slowly like an onion over the course of time.

One, that we would not be crushed, but two, that we might not think that there is a single day that we can go without God's ongoing grace to us.

We depend on Him fully as we continue to be sanctified by His Word. So then what would it actually look like for this passage to be helpful for us this week?

Let's return to the original scenario that I put forth at the beginning. Remember, I've just responded in simple anger to Olivia. First thing we observe is that there's a rift between me and Olivia, but there's also a rift between me and God vertically.

I've disobeyed Him in a way that I'm called to love my wife, but Jesus has the authority to forgive sins. He has paid my fine.

[ 35 : 37 ] He has paid my debt. So immediately, what do I do? I run to God and I say, I've sinned against you. I've sinned against Olivia. You have called me to love others, but what have I done? I've shown her unrighteous that you are rich in mercy.

I know that the blood of Christ has paid my fine. Please forgive me and help me live in obedience.

And so at that point, the claim of Mark 2 calls back to me, dear child, your sins are forgiven.

That too I have paid for. Let sin reign no longer. Go and sin no more. And so when I am made right with God, His promise of forgiveness empowers me to live in obedience.

My pride has been broken, and now I can go to Olivia and display the gospel at work with me. Is that not what we want as spouses or as co-workers to show the power of the gospel at work with us?

We all know how difficult it is to go to someone in forgiveness. And when someone does, as a Christian, that is evidence that God, the power of the gospel is at work within them.

[ 36 : 47 ] That's how we display the truth of the gospel. And I tell my clients this all the time. We should be discouraged if it takes some time for this to actually take root in ourselves.

It could be, at first, it could be a day until I realize my sin and the truth of the gospel. But over the course of time, as we begin to practice the message of this passage, as Romans says, be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that process takes place over the course of time.

And so the goal is that the amount of time that it takes me to sin against, for instance, Olivia, and for me to go to her and ask for forgiveness, that time should be decreasing over the course of my Christian walk.

Why? Because God is transforming my mind. I'm seeking and actively turning away from my sin and trying to love her and show her that the power of the gospel is at work within me.

So don't be discouraged if it takes a day or hours at some point. It may be like that for a while, but pretty soon, over the course of time, as God is working in you, which I trust that he will be, pretty soon, it can almost be instantaneous that you're remembering the truths of the gospel and that it would empower you to then, go and make things right on a horizontal plane with our earthly relationships.

[ 38 : 23 ] And then perhaps it's the other way around. Perhaps it's Olivia that has sinned against me or putting myself in Olivia's shoes. I've sinned against her. Perhaps she has sinned against me and comes to me asking for forgiveness and just as Jesus forgives me, so now I can display the gospel at work in me and extend to her the offer of complete forgiveness.

And there we have her sin against me as an opportunity for me to minister the gospel to her, to minister the gospel to my coworkers, to my family members.

God's love. It is evidence of the work of God in our hearts when we're able to do this. Christian, we are fully deserving of God's wrath.

And we were a people who were dead in our sins. But now, what are we? We're a people who received the forgiveness of sin. And so, as I close, I want to close with Romans 6, 5-7, which says this, and this is for believers only when it says, for if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his.

We know that our old selves were crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing. So that we are no longer enslaved to sin.

[ 39 : 56 ] No, for the one who has died has been set free from sin. It's my prayer, as we go into this week, that this would come alive for us.

As we go into our workplace, into our homes, and our interactions with our spouses, and our kids, that the truth that Jesus has the authority to forgive sins would come alive in our hearts.

Let's bow our heads in prayer. Dear Lord, you are an awesome God who has provided one way, one way alone for eternal life, and that is through your Son, Jesus Christ, who has taken on flesh, who has lived a life unstained from sin, so that you may extend and restore the relationship that has been broken by our own depravity, Lord.

We pray that those who are in this room who have not yet confessed and given their life over to you, that their hearts would be softened and they would reflect on this passage and know that it is not by anything of this world, not of worldly desires or striving that they can come to have forgiveness for their sins, but only by entrusting themselves under the authority of you alone.

We pray that those who are Christians, that this would become more and more realized in their life, in their hearts, in the upcoming weeks and months and years, that you would put on their hearts in times of great struggle, in times that they have sinned against someone or times in which they have been sinned against, that this truth would come to bear on their minds, that they would know that you have first and foremost restored us by forgiveness and therefore we are free to then go and ask for forgiveness and give forgiveness to those around us.

[ 41 : 53 ] Lord, this is a passage that we cannot forget. This is a passage that we cannot glance over. This is a passage that we need each and every day of our lives.

Please come and be in our hearts this week. In Jesus' name, Amen.