

The Surprising Authority of the Son of Man

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[0:00] If you would open up your Bibles, please, to your pew Bibles, to page 995 or to the Gospel of Mark, chapter 2, 1-12.

We started the Gospel of Mark last week, and we continue our way through. This past May, many people witnessed the coronation of King Charles III to be the King of England.

And if you're familiar with British monarchy, you know that King Charles' kingship is not an absolute monarchy.

He doesn't have all authority. Rather, the British monarchy is a constitutional monarchy. It's Parliament calling the shots.

Which means, King Charles is, by and large, a figurehead position.

[1:03] A very prized, highly traditional, very expensive figurehead position.

A lot of this. For many people, both non-Christians and Christians, Jesus Christ, the God-King, is treated as a figurehead position.

Important in some ways. Traditions, yes. We have a real knack for reducing Jesus to a figurehead in our lives.

What do you think? How do you relate to Jesus? Thinking about your life, do you treat Him as a figurehead?

Or are you acknowledging Him for who He is? And are you coming under His loving and real authority in your life?

[2:31] Can you point to areas where you're saying, Yeah, I'm beholding Him. Yes, I'm bowing to Him. Yes, I'm obeying Him. You know, the difference between a figurehead king and a fully functional reigning king is authority.

Authority is the right to act on behalf of another person. It's the right to give orders. It's the right to make decisions on behalf of other people.

It's the right to require obedience. Parents exercise authority over children. Judges exercise authority in the courtroom. Bosses exercise authority over employees.

Even doctors exercise authority with their patients. And this morning, we will see the surprising authority of the Son of Man.

Jesus Christ. God's King. And it is good news. Because coming under the loving, authoritative reign of Jesus is good for us.

[3:39] How do you change? How do you change from living as if Jesus is just a figurehead to living with Jesus as He truly is?

The God King who reigns over all. Well, you behold His authority and you bow to His authority. You've got to take Him seriously.

You can't sentimentalize King Jesus into some kind of peripheral figurehead status. This morning, we get a big dose of the authority of Jesus.

So here's what I'm going to do. I'm going to walk you through Mark chapter 2 verses 1 through 12. And there are some surprising twists and turns in this passage. I'll bring it to a point and then I'll apply it to two groups of people.

Non-Christians in the room and Christians in the room. So, let me set the scene. Last week, we learned that Jesus, that Mark is setting out to demonstrate that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.

[4:45] Pastor Zach provided a weekly update that points out the beginning of Mark and the end of Mark. Both bookend Mark with these confessions of Jesus as the Son of God.

And so the whole book of Mark is to demonstrate that Jesus is God King. After Jesus comes on the scene, the first thing He says is, Hey, because the time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God is at hand, repent and believe the gospel.

From there, in chapter 1, we see some interesting things. Jesus calls His first disciples, Simon and Andrew, James and John. And then in verses 35 through 39, there's this really interesting interaction between Peter and Jesus in which Jesus says in verse 38, Hey, the reason why I came is to preach.

But for the rest of chapter 1, we see Jesus healing people. 21 through 28, healing a man of an unclean spirit in the synagogue on the Sabbath.

29 through 31, He heals Simon's mother-in-law. 32 through 34, He heals a bunch of people with diseases and casts out demons from His house in Capernaum.

[5:57] 40 through 40 and 45, Jesus heals this leper. He cleanses him by healing him because leprosy made him unclean.

He couldn't be with God's people. And Jesus healed them, cleansed them. And surprise, surprise, all throughout chapter 1, you've got these mobs of people gathering around Jesus, primarily because He's healing people.

Which leads us into now Mark chapter 2, 1 through 12. Hear God's Word. 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. And when Jesus saw their faith, He said, Son, your sins are forgiven.

[7:05] Now some of the scribes were sitting there, questioning in their hearts, why does this man speak like that? He is blaspheming. And 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 hearts? 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 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!

In verses 1-5, we have this surprise declaration by Jesus. I mean, He makes a really surprising statement. In verse 1, He just got back from some kind of like ministry tour in kind of the Galilee, Capernaum area, and He comes back home, and word spreads, He's home!

[8:13] What I love about that, is it just gets to the humanity of Jesus. He's probably renting a place in Capernaum. It's where He was.

He had an address. People knew where to find Him. Verse 2, again, there's this kind of like overwhelming response. It's a little surprising.

Many were gathered together so that there was no more room, not even at the door. Jesus' house in Capernaum was packed with people. We see the same thing in 1-33, just people showing up at His house.

They've heard that He's a healer, and they're bringing with Him people to be healed. And it's in verse 3 where things start getting interesting. It ratchets up.

And they came, bringing to Him a paralytic carried by four men. So four men show up carrying a fifth man on a bed, a paralytic, which at least means He couldn't walk.

[9:20] And they're carrying Him to Jesus' house in Capernaum. But let me ask you, so far with what we know leading up to Mark 2, 1-12, these four men are bringing this paralytic to Jesus for what reason?

To heal Him. I mean, these four guys want their friend to be fully restored, to have his body fully restored so that he can walk again.

You know, there are a lot of people in this room right now who are experiencing a similar longing, maybe for yourself or somebody else, whether by disease or by age.

You're not seeing like you used to see. You're not hearing like you used to hear. Your body's not functioning like it used to function. And there's a longing.

I want to be made whole. I want everything to work. We can all relate with that.

[10:32] In verse 4, we have another development. These four guys are industrious guys.

It's a little bit of a surprise. These four men show up to Jesus' house. There's like a giant house party going on. They can't get in. And so like, okay, what do we do? And they go up onto the roof of the house.

Now, in 21st century Kenosha area, roofs have shingles, some kind of like roof wrap, then kind of some plywood decking.

And so it's not like you can just kind of put your fingernail on there and pull something up, right?

First century Capernaum, the buildings were made out of different things. It's an arid place.

And so how it was set up is there was a living area in a house, and then on the outside there was a stairwell leading up to the roof, which was actually functionally like a patio.

[11:36] And so these guys say, okay, we can't get in. Let's go up the stairs to the roof, and they rip open the roof. Surely there's support beams in there, but you're just making it out of stuff that's around.

So sticks, brush, mud, stucco-y like stuff, so you can pull it off. So like, we're going to drop them in. You've got to admire their initiative.

And so they drop them down. They make a big enough opening for them to lower their friend in.

And again, what is everybody expecting? For Jesus to heal them. Surprise. Look what Jesus does. Verse 5.

And when Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytic, rise, take up your bed, and go home. No. No. Son.

[12:36] Your sins are forgiven. Now, if you were to ask the paralytic at that time, hey, um, what were you thinking at that moment? He'd probably say, well, I didn't know what to say.

I was kind of like, thanks, Jesus, I think. Thanks for forgiving me. But I really wanted to walk. Or maybe, maybe let's say you were one of the four and I was with you on the roof.

We just dropped our friend in. We hear Jesus say, son, your sins are forgiven. Do you know what I would ask you? What did He say? Is He moving? I mean, we would all have been surprised in an underwhelming sense, wouldn't we?

Forgiveness? we want our friend to walk. I'm guessing most people in Jesus' house that day were thinking that the paralytic's greatest need was to walk.

Not Jesus. At this moment, Jesus addressing that paralytic, His greatest need, all of our greatest need, His need for forgiveness of sins.

[13:53] It's our sins that separate us from God. It's our sins that provoke God's wrath. It's our sin that has caused such difficulty in our own lives and the lives of others.

This morning, you came into this sanctuary. What did you come in thinking was your greatest need today? New Jordans?

Cancer? Tucking away 15% every year for retirement? Moving up the ladder of your career?

Behold your King. And He is saying our greatest need is the forgiveness of our sins. Surprise! God, He throws His curveball at us, but He's not done with surprises.

If you now would look at verses 6-9, we're going to see a surprising insight from the Son of Man. So He's just kind of said, okay, Son, your sins are forgiven.

[15:03] And then the story takes another term because look at verse 6. Someone is there, the scribes. 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? Now, the scribes, if you're not familiar, were the Jewish religious professionals of the day and more likely than not, they're there not just to be like, oh, let's get some really good teaching from Jesus.

They're more like arms crossed, kind of like, okay. they would have been like the doctrine and morality police of the day. So they're checking out what Jesus is saying, arms crossed, making sure that He measures up.

And at the moment that Jesus says, Son, your sins are forgiven, that just got their attention. They're sitting there thinking in their minds, why does this man speak like that?

He's blaspheming. Who can forgive sins but God alone? Why does this man speak like that? A man. What is he saying that for?

[16:21] Blasphemy is a false claim to be God. Or, it's a false claim to do something only God can do and by making that claim, you're claiming to be God.

So, blasphemy is a false claim to be God. And they are saying in their hearts, why is this guy saying this? It's blasphemous. He's claiming to be God because he just said this guy's sin is forgiven.

And then they say, who can forgive sins but God alone? That is a true statement. Only God can forgive sins that have been committed against Him and every sin we commit, whether against Him directly or against somebody else, is always against Him.

Who can forgive sins but God alone? So, here's what's interesting. So, Jesus has this paralytic dropped in front of Him and instead of healing Him, He says, your sins are forgiven.

And then we learn from these scribes that that's like a major faux pas because He's seemingly being blasphemous. But make no mistake, Jesus is intentionally making a God-sized claim.

[17:33] And then in verse 8, there's more surprise. 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?

Why do you question my authority to forgive this man's sin in your hearts? subtle but profound. Jesus knows what they're thinking.

He's reading them. Not their faces, their hearts. What's inside them. That's something that only God can do, friends.

And so, from this surprise insight, Jesus confronts them. Why do you question my authority to forgive this man's sin?

And then He says to them, hey, which is easier? You tell me. Which is easier? For me to say to this paralytic, your sins are forgiven, or to say to this paralytic, rise, take up your bed and go home.

[18:42] Which one's easier? It seems like Jesus is kind of backing Himself into a corner a little bit here. What is He doing?

What's easier? Is it easier to say to someone, your sins are forgiven, what you can't see, or say to someone, hey, rise, take up your bed and walk?

What you can see. One doesn't obligate you to anything, the other does. So it is easier to say that your sins are forgiven because there's no way to prove it.

And Jesus is showing them that. He's admitting that His declaration, Son, your sins are forgiven, would be difficult to prove, easier said than done.

But Jesus, He's working the room. Jesus has everyone in the room right where He wants them.

[19:45] He's intentionally raising these things. He's intentionally pitting what He said about forgiveness to what He said about causing this guy to stand up and walk. He's intentionally put them at odds.

Behold your King. He's in control. He's using this moment for His purposes.

Which brings us now to verses 10 through 11. A surprising statement of His authority. So Jesus has been setting up a mic drop moment.

In verse 9, He's just said, okay, what's easier to say this guy's forgiven or to tell him to get up and walk. We're like, oh, it's easier to say, hey, your sins are forgiven. You can't prove it.

But if you tell him to get up and walk, you've got to show that. And so in verse 10, look what He says. But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins.

[20:53] So He's answering their blasphemy question. Who is this guy? Does He know He's blaspheming? Only God can forgive sins. Jesus is like, yeah? Yeah? That title, Son of Man, is the first time it's used in the Gospel of Mark.

It's used a total of 14 times in the Gospel of Mark. And the Son of Man is a very important title. Just as the Son of God is a very important title, the Son of Man is a very important title.

And so the first one we see is here. It's the Son of Man has the authority to forgive sins. If you flip now to the end of chapter 2, verse 28, the Son of Man, Jesus is speaking of Himself, is saying, the

Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath, which is a claim of authority over the Sabbath day, which only God can make.

And then, as you get through the Gospel of Mark, Jesus starts referring to Himself as the Son of Man in 8:31, He starts teaching His disciples that the Son of Man must be given up, He'll be killed, and on the third day be raised from the dead.

Chapter 9, verse 31, same thing. The Son of Man is going to be killed and on the third day raised from the dead. Chapter 10, verses 33 and 34, the Son of Man will suffer, be killed, and on the third day will rise.

[22:15] Chapter 10, verse 45, the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve and to give His life as a ransom for many. See the connection between the Son of Man and the saving work of Jesus?

So what, where is this title coming from? Did Jesus just make it up? If you flip back in your Bibles, in your pew Bibles, it's on page 884, it's Daniel chapter 7, this is where the title comes from, the Son of Man, and it is phenomenal.

Daniel's a prophet and he's prophesying in chapter 7, verses 13 and 14. Let me read you what he says. I saw in the night visions and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a Son of Man.

That's the title. Son of Man. And he came to the Ancient of Days, God the Father, and was presented before him the Ancient of Days, and to him, the Son of Man, was given dominion and glory and a kingdom that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him.

Kiss the Son. His dominion is an everlasting dominion which shall not pass away and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed. You see, this title, the Son of Man, is a kingly title, a messianic title.

[23:57] It's the title of the Son of God who would come and set up a kingdom to reign forever and would be indestructible, comprised of people from every tongue, time, every tongue, tribe, and nation.

It's a big deal. It's a big deal. Jesus is saying, I'm that guy.

Every time the word Son, or that phrase Son of Man comes up, you're to be thinking Daniel 7, 13, and 14. Every time it's used. The thing is, and this is the crazy upside down kingdom of God, the crazy thing is that the Son of God, the Son of Man is going to establish His forever and indestructible kingdom of people from all nations through suffering, through the giving of His life on the cross, and by being raised from the dead.

That's how He's going to establish His kingdom. And so when Jesus is talking here about an authority given to the Son of Man, it's the God-man, the God-king, who's going to establish a kingdom, a forever kingdom of those who will forever be forgiven, that you may know that the Son of Man may have authority on earth to forgive sins.

Who can forgive sins but God alone? And Jesus is saying, that's right! Because I'm the Son of Man. God in the flesh.

[25:44] Establishing the forever kingdom of God. And so then He turns to the paralytic. He's like to the scribe, so that you may know that I'm the Son of Man.

He turns to the paralytic and says, rise. Take your mat. Go home. This is an astounding claim of Jesus that He is the Son of Man.

The surprising authority of the Son of Man is that He can forgive sins. And what's even more surprising is He can forgive sins because He's actually God in the flesh.

And what's even more surprising is that He can forgive sins because He's God in the flesh and He died for sinners like you and me. authority. That's a compelling kind of authority.

Leveraged in love. What happens? 212. A surprise walkout.

[26:59] We read, and He, the paralytic, 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.

Everyone in the house, everyone packed in Jesus' house witnessed what just happened. The arms crossed scribes, the four guys up on the roof still, they're like, huh?

And everybody else in the room, do you know who else got to see it? You did. You did. This is a historical account of the Son of Man and it's here so that you can see Him.

You can behold your King. You can see His authority. You can ponder what this means. Here's what just happened.

By demonstrating His authority to heal the paralytic, what you could see. Jesus just proved His authority to forgive sin what you can't see.

[28:12] He just refuted the claim of blasphemy. He just said, no. I'm legit. I'm the real deal. Yes, only God can forgive sins.

And yes, I am that God. I'm the Son of Man. I am the Son of God. Because Jesus is God, He has authority to forgive sins.

But the people in the house kind of kind of missed that point to be honest with you. They're amazed at this guy that got up when the miracle was actually to demonstrate who Jesus is.

The Son of Man. So it's a surprise walkout, but what is surprising still is they don't seem to understand who they're in the presence of.

God in the midst. Who wants to forgive sins. I think if they understood what just happened, I think someone would have said, forgive me too.

[29:31] Forgive me too. who? Apparently they don't think that their greatest need is forgiveness of their sins.

So what is the point of this? What is the point of Mark chapter 2 1 through 12? In a general sense, it's to behold your King. To see Jesus. Jesus. I mean, we've seen this incredible response to Jesus. I mean, mobs of people are coming after him. We've seen a surprise declaration. Instead of him healing somebody, he says, your sins are forgiven. Instead of, you know, him kind of ignoring what the scribes were thinking, he knew exactly what they were thinking.

The surprise insight. He knows what's going on in their hearts. He knows what's going on in your hearts. Surprise authority. Who can forgive sins but God alone?

The Son of Man can't because he is God. The surprise walkout. This divine healing of the paralytic evidences the divine forgiving of the paralytic.

[30:49] So the point is, behold your King. Jesus in all of His authority can forgive sins because He's fully God.

So you behold His authority and then you bow to His authority. Which means for us, we must stop acknowledging Jesus just as a figurehead and start revering Jesus as our all-authoritative King. in two weeks time on our 10th anniversary as a church. Do you know what I get to preach on? I get to preach on the end of Mark chapter 4 and all of chapter 5. And what it is is story after story of Jesus' comprehensive authority over all things.

How do you stop living as if Jesus is a mere figurehead? And you behold Him in all His authority and you bow to Him confessing Him as your King.

Earlier I said that to come under the loving authoritative reign of Jesus is good news. And you might be thinking well how is that good news? That doesn't sound good news to me. Because the same Jesus, the Son of Man that we're seeing here, He's alive and He has full authority to forgive all of your sins.

[32:19] All of them. The authority by which Jesus spoke to the paralytic Son, your sins are forgiven is the same authority in which Jesus can say to you, Child, your sins are forgiven.

Now if you're wondering, He forgives not simply because He's the Son of God God's King. That's essential. The basis of His forgiveness is not just that He's the God King but that He died in the place of sinners.

He paid the price for our sin. That's the King's ransom. By His ransom payment, He is gathering people from every tongue, tribe, and nation into a new people.

The kingdom of the saved on earth. So, let's apply this.

If Jesus has defined authority to forgive your sins, what does that mean for you if you're non-Christian? Well, if you're a non-Christian in the house, God's what's clear here is that your greatest need according to Jesus, according to God in the flesh, is the forgiveness of your sins.

[33:48] Your sin has separated you from God. Your sin has provoked the just wrath of God and He will be just and glorified to pour that out on you for eternity.

But you do not have to pay for your own sin because this King has died for you.

All you need to do is to cry out to King Jesus for forgiveness. You don't have the authority to forgive your own sin against God.

Only God has that authority. So you must admit to Him you've been sinning against Him and then admit to Him in the same breath oh you only can forgive me.

And when you do that for the very first time you become a Christian. You become a follower of Him. And so you can pray it in a prayer like this. You say something to the extent of Lord Jesus, King Jesus, will you forgive me of all my sins that I have committed against you?

[34:55] The ones I know, the ones I don't know, and will you bring me into your kingdom, the kingdom of the saved, and completely forgive me and I will gladly live under your authority for the rest of my life.

There you go. That's it. That's how it starts. Does anyone in the room want to become a Christian today? It starts with beholding your king and then bowing to him for the first time, confessing him as your Lord.

Well, what does this mean, this authority of Jesus over sin to forgive sin? What does this mean if you're a Christian in the room? Follow me.

It means two things. Number one, if Jesus has authority to forgive all of your sins, Christian, and he paid for all of your sins on the cross, Christian, and Christian, all of your sins have been fully forgiven.

Period. If you are regularly haunted by the condemning ghosts of past sins, you speak to those ghouls, the words of your king from the cross, it is finished.

[36:21] He paid for that. It's no longer over my head. There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

It's because he's the authoritative king. Christian, you need not despair over your past sins because the forgiveness of those is not dependent on you.

It's dependent on the son of man. his authority is finished work. It's done. Behold your king. Bow to your king.

Boast in your king. Secondly, in light of his authority to forgive your sins and in light of his comprehensive authority over all things you'll see in two weeks, Jesus.

It's time to turn from living as if Jesus is just a figurehead. And to start bowing to Jesus day after day as your all loving, all authoritative king over all.

[37:33] You just behold him and you bow to him day by day and you say today, King Jesus, I live for you. Let me wrap it up.

King Jesus is no mere figurehead. He's not just waving. He's reigning. He's the all authoritative God king, the son of man who is building right now his forever indestructible multinational church.

this morning you saw the surprising authority of the son of man to forgive sins. And you're going to see his authority on display again and again and again.

Because he is the son of God. He is our king. It's good news. Behold your king and bow to him.

Let's pray. Lord Jesus, you are the king of the upside down kingdom and you by your mercy and grace have brought us in.

[38:52] Thank you Lord Jesus for forgiving our sins. We trust in authoritative pronouncement that it's done. And we are free. Free from being condemned.

Free from the lies. Free from the fear. God, would you help us now to live the balance of this day in light of who you are.

In your name we pray. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.