

# Two Sicknesses We All Have

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[ 0 : 00 ] I'm going to ask you if you would turn in your Bible to the Gospel of Mark, chapter 2. This morning our attention will be directed to verses 1-12.

! This is a great event in the life of Jesus.

He shares with us the extent to which a group of people go to bring a paralyzed man to Jesus for healing. Jesus heals the man.

But in a sense, the fact that Jesus heals the man should not be unusual because we've read that Jesus healed countless people.

And so when we read about this account that Mark takes the time to detail, we should ask the question, why does Mark detail this healing? Why does Mark take the time to give us all these details about this paralyzed man's healing?

[ 1 : 22 ] And I ask that question because Mark and the other Gospel writers are not just giving us random information. They're just telling us little things, little quaint events that happened in the life of Jesus.

Mark and the other Gospel writers are telling a story. They're telling a story to essentially ask and answer three questions.

And they are, number one, who is Jesus? Number two, why did he come? And number three, what does it mean to follow him?

That's the aim of all the Gospel writers, though they take different approaches to doing so. And this account of the healing of this paralyzed man answers two of those questions.

And we're going to consider them in the sermon this morning. So beginning in verse 1 of Mark, chapter 2, please follow along as I read, and I'm reading from the English Standard Version.

[ 2 : 39 ] If you have another translation, you also read a bit differently. And when he's reading from the English Standard Version. 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. 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 is blaspheming.

[ 3 : 57 ] 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?

For 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.

Let's pray. Father, thank you this morning for your word that is our very life.

[ 5 : 17 ] the word by which we are to live. I pray that you would cause this word to be life to our souls now, through the power of your Holy Spirit, through the illumination that only he can bring.

But quicken our minds that we may hear and understand and respond to your word as we should. Again, Lord, I ask for abundant grace to enable me to be faithful, to proclaim your truth to your people.

We pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen. This is quite a fascinating event in the life of Jesus. Quite a fascinating event in the Gospel of Mark. And the question is, why does Mark include this account of the healing of the paralytic?

Why does Mark include this account of the healing of the paralytic? That's the big question this morning. It's the question I want us to think about as we consider this passage.

[ 6 : 36 ] And since it's a big question, you can rest assured that it also has a big answer. And the answer is not to be found outside of the passage, the answer is to be found within the passage.

And the answer to the question is the point of the sermon. And this morning, I have a single point. And rather than announce it up front, what I want to do is I want to announce it at the end.

That is, for those of you who to that point would not have seen it. Last week, we saw how in the midst of large crowds seeking him out, Jesus made a decision to go into other regions that he might preach the Gospel as well.

and we're told that he left Capernaum and he went throughout Galilee to preach the Gospel to the surrounding towns. Now we see here in Mark chapter 2 that after some time, Jesus returns to Capernaum.

And word gets out that he is back in town and Mark tells us that people flocked to the house where he was. They flocked there so much that there was no room to get into the house.

[ 8 : 01 ] Even the door itself was covered. You couldn't get to the door. And Mark tells us that Jesus was preaching the word to them. And then we see in verse 3 that a group of people came and they had with them a man who was paralyzed and there were four men carrying him.

And since they were not able to get into the house to bring this man to Jesus, they became creative and they decided that they were going to go and open the roof and the construction in those days would have been like tiles that they just lift up and they lifted the tiles up and they laid the paralyzed man on his bed before Jesus.

And we read in Mark 5 that Jesus saw their faith and Jesus says to this paralyzed man your sins are forgiven. Now that's what Mark tells us.

the reality we could try to picture the reality of that scene and try to think about perhaps details or degrees that Mark doesn't necessarily give us.

I believe you could imagine that if one was paralyzed paralyzed today with all the medical knowledge that we have, the advancements in medicine and medical technology, a paralyzed person today would be in a very difficult situation.

[ 9 : 56 ] so just imagine in that day when medicine was very, very basic and even where it was available it wasn't very much available and so we see this man being brought to Jesus and what we're able to see right at the outset is these people were desperate.

no doubt they heard about Jesus and here's the wonderful thing they would not have heard well he heals some and he doesn't heal others.

They wouldn't have heard that. He healed them all. This is as good as done. This is as good as coming to Jesus and they knew he could and they expected he would heal this man.

And imagine the situation as well that they probably came from a long distance and they walked. The four persons who would have had this man on his cot or his bed whatever he was on they would take you this journey to come to where Jesus was.

And it's interesting that one detail that I saw as I was studying this passage that I hadn't seen before was I used to think that this was four men bringing a relative or a friend to Jesus but that's not what Mark tells us.

[ 11 : 30 ] If you look at verse three Mark says and they came bringing to him a paralytic carried by four men.

so he was being carried by four men but there was a group who kind of like were the escorts who were bringing Jesus who were bringing this man to Jesus.

but not only was this group desperate but it says that they were determined they were determined to get this man in the presence of Jesus to get the attention of Jesus.

And they weren't discouraged by the large crowd. They weren't discouraged by the fact that they could not get through the door. they go up on the roof.

And as I thought about this just imagine the commotion of just getting up on the roof all these people and then lifting off the tiles. And I imagine that Jesus probably stopped teaching and people began to wonder what was going on.

[12:37] Is this an earthquake? Is this a tornado or something? And it's kind of like when you're talking and an airplane flies over and you have to stop. Just because the distraction that's actually there.

And I guess when the roof had opened and they were lowering the man people figured oh I see he needs to get Jesus' attention. They're bringing him for Jesus to heal him.

By that time they would have understood what was going on. But really when you consider the account and you consider what the objective was for all of this effort and all this promotion what Mark tells us happens in verse 5 really is most unusual.

They bring the man to Jesus for healing and Jesus says to the man in verse 5 son your sins are forgiven. most unusual.

And then Mark goes on in verse 6 and 7 and he tells us that the scribes who were there evidently they came to hear Jesus they were questioning they were complaining about what was going on.

[14:05] The question why does this man speak like this? Why does he blaspheme as he is doing? Because they reasoned and they were right. Only God can forgive sins.

And this man is saying he is forgiving sins and only God can forgive sins. He is blaspheming. What Mark doesn't tell us but we can know is also true the scribes were not the only ones who were questioning.

I'm absolutely sure that the people who brought that man were questioning as well. He brought him here for healing. He's going to say his sins are forgiven.

They didn't bring their friend to Jesus because he was a good teacher. they brought their friend to Jesus. They brought this man to Jesus because they wanted him to be healed.

They knew that Jesus could heal him. So no doubt the question or the statement your sins are forgiven was surprising them. It was also no doubt surprising to the crowd.

[15:20] Imagine being there and you know Jesus could heal and you see this paralyzed man being laid before him. You're waiting to say oh wow I want to see this one. And Jesus says your sins are forgiven.

Well Jesus understood the questioning Mark tells us that was going on in the hearts of the scribes. Jesus and Jesus in verse 8 says to them why are you questioning these things in your heart?

Jesus understood that they had a problem with him forgiving sins or saying their sins are forgiven because again rightly so only God can forgive them. And so Jesus decides to prove to these scribes that he is God and that as God he can forgive sins.

And so he asks them a question he says okay well you tell me what's easier to say to someone your sins are forgiven or to say to someone rise pick up your bed and walk which is easier.

That's a no brainer. It's a no brainer because it is easier to say your sins are forgiven because for example if I say your sins are forgiven you may doubt whether I can do that or not but you have no conclusive proof to say I can do that because there's no objective way to know whether a person's sins have been really forgiven.

[17:08] But if I say to someone who is paralyzed pick up your bed and walk rise pick up your bed and walk immediately you're going to know whether I have their ability to do that because if the person doesn't rise up pick up their bed and walk you will know I'm just talking off the top of my head.

So what Jesus says to them is this he says I'm going to prove to you that I have the ability to forgive sins by doing what you would acknowledge is the more difficult thing.

And Jesus turns to the man and he says to him rise pick up your bed and walk and the man does that.

God and let us be careful about this Mark writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit tells us he tells us in verse 10 he says this is why Jesus did it he says but that you may know that the son of man has the authority on earth to forgive sins he said to the paramilitary so that you may know this is what he does to show that he has this authority to forgive sins.

He heals the man as evidence that he has the authority to forgive sins. One of the things we're able to see from this account and it is an observation that I think is easily missed by many who consider it is that this man who came to Jesus was actually sick in two ways.

[ 19 : 14 ] He was sick in terms of his paralysis but he was also sick in terms of his sin. And what we see Jesus doing is Jesus addresses and deals with his most important sickness first.

It wasn't lost on Jesus the desperation of this man in his paralyzed condition. It wasn't lost on Jesus that his friends brought him for healing.

Jesus wasn't daft that he couldn't figure out that they came to him for one thing. They came to him or at least primarily one thing and that is that he would heal him.

As a matter of fact, Jesus recognized it when he said when Mark tells us that Jesus saw their faith. Their faith was not for the teaching of Jesus.

Their faith was not for forgiveness from Jesus. As a matter of fact, it would appear that the others who brought the man to Jesus were primarily coming to Jesus to bring the man.

[ 20 : 26 ] They weren't coming to Jesus so much for themselves. They were coming to Jesus to bring the man that Jesus might heal him. But Jesus goes on to prove a point that physical sickness, no matter what it is, no matter how severe it is, is not more important than spiritual sickness.

And spiritual sickness can only be healed through forgiveness from God. And so Jesus first heals the man spiritually by extending forgiveness to him.

And then he heals them physically. by telling him to take up his bed and walk. And brothers and sisters, what we see in this paralyzed man and this account of him being brought to Jesus is a picture of you and me.

It's a picture of all of Adam's race because all of Adam's race is sick in these two ways. sickness. There's a spiritual sickness, there's a physical sickness, and the spiritual sickness brought about the physical sickness.

Sickness that we know in the world today, the physical ailments, every bit of it, directly or indirectly, goes back to the fall of Adam. sickness.

[ 22 : 02 ] But again, we're no different from this man and from the people who meant him well, that we can be so much more concerned about physical sickness than we are about spiritual sickness.

And the truth is, we can get some measure of health for physical sickness through doctors and through medicine and through the natural healing processes that God has put into our bodies.

when it comes down to being healed from spiritual sickness, from the disease of sin that has affected all of us and that has separated us from God, there's no human being, there's no human invention, there's no human initiative that can help us with that.

We are all absolutely hopeless. And without God's intervention through his forgiveness, we remain sick and separated from God.

But this is the reality of every single descendant of Adam. God's intervention is going to great lengths to make this point about our spiritual sickness because as you'll see next week, next week Mark gives us the account of Jesus calling Levi, one of his disciples.

[ 23 : 40 ] And one of the things that you'll see next week is how Jesus refers to himself as a physician and how Jesus says that he came for those who are sick, not for those who are well, or not for those who don't recognize their sickness, not for those who think they are righteous in and of themselves.

He says that he's come to call sinners. And so he recognizes the sinful condition as a spiritual kind of sickness and recognizes himself as a spiritual kind of physician.

When I asked you this morning as you consider this, what is your own priority? How aware are you of these two kinds of sickness in our own lives?

while it is true that those of us who have trusted in Christ, who have been forgiven of our sins, we have been healed in a spiritual sense.

But the reality is because of indwelling sin, because sin will be a battle for us until the day that we die, we continue to need to look to Jesus as our great physician, as the only one who can forgive us from these sins.

[ 25 : 07 ] as the only one who can spiritually heal us from the spiritual sickness of sin.

And certainly for anyone present this morning who have not yet trusted in Jesus Christ, this is one of the ways in which you are sick. You may not be aware of any physical ailments in your body, and I can say to you this morning that if you have not trusted Jesus Christ as Lord and personal Savior, your condition from a spiritual point of view is you are sick.

And the only way to address that sickness, the only way to be healed from that sickness is to receive forgiveness that only comes through Jesus Christ.

And the reality is that all those who do not receive this healing of forgiveness through Jesus Christ will spend an eternity in hell separated from God.

God And I don't say that this morning casually or flippantly. I say that with deep gravity in my own heart.

[ 26 : 29 ] I don't say it to be dramatic. I say it to be honest this morning. This is why Jesus says, he says, when there's sin in your life, he says if your right hand is causing you to sin, cut it off.

If your eyes are causing you to sin, gouge them out. And he's not speaking literally. He's not telling us that if we have, for example, a problem with stealing, cut your hand off. He's not saying that at all.

What he's saying to us is that we must take sin seriously and we must be radical to sin because sin left untreated will send us to hell. Sin undealt within our lives has eternal danger and eternal consequence.

And we need to be aware of that. we need to recognize that there's nothing of greater importance in our lives than ensuring that we have received spiritual healing for sin that only comes through Jesus Christ.

forgiveness. What's amazing is we can safely conclude that that man was not the only one who needed spiritual forgiveness or spiritual healing through forgiveness.

[ 27 : 55 ] He was not the only one. He was representative of all of them. He was representative of all of them who were coming to Jesus for all kinds of different things.

Whether it's healing or whether it's to be fed as we will see as the gospel of Mark continues. Whatever they were coming to Jesus for, if it was not that they may receive forgiveness through him, that they recognized that he was the one's whom forgiveness would come, they didn't understand Jesus.

and they had wrong priorities. The primary reason that Jesus has come is to offer forgiveness and to reconcile men and women to God.

And since that's the primary reason that Jesus came, we can safely conclude that that's the primary need that we have. It's the greatest need that we have. Every other priority that we could possibly have pales in comparison to that.

But we can be like this man, we can be like the people who brought him to Jesus, where we are blind to this great need that we have, to be forgiven, and to be reconciled to God.

[ 29 : 19 ] you see the desperation with this man, and the reason he was desperate and his friends were desperate is they knew his condition and they knew Jesus could do something about it.

And friends, when a sinner sees his true condition, when a sinner recognizes how hopeless he is, how impossible it is for anyone to do anything for him, the same desperation that we see from this man and from those who brought him to Jesus, would be the same desperation of the sinner running to Jesus, recognizing Jesus as his only hope.

The only hope to do this sin. I want us to think a bit more about the question that the Pharisees were asking in their hearts in verse 7.

They asked, who can forgive sins but God? Who can forgive sins but God? And see, when we think about this, and we see what Mark is telling us, this would help us.

In particular, those of us who wonder, is Jesus Christ really God? Or people will come like the hope of his witnesses and say, well, Jesus, he is not God. God is God, and Jesus is the Son of God, meaning he is less than God.

[ 30 : 52 ] He indeed is the Son of God, but he is not less than God. And so when we think about this question, who can forgive sins but God alone?

It's an important question because they are right. The question is right. Who can forgive sins but God alone?

Only God can forgive sin. And that is exactly what we see Jesus doing. We see Jesus forgiving the paralytic sin and proving his authority to forgive sin.

I want you to think of it another way. Imagine if I sin against Sister Faye, and then I go to Sister Faye's sister and ask her for forgiveness.

sin. Or, imagine somebody sin against you and going to some relative or some friend or somebody and said, you know, I want you to forgive me.

[ 32 : 09 ] You say, you're crazy. You didn't do anything to me. You need to go to the person who you sinned against. And the point is this. Only the one sinned against can forgive sins. Any other

forgiveness is illegitimate.

sin. And what we understand is that all sin really is on two levels. We sin against people. It's a real sin. We've sinned against them, but ultimately we sin against them.

All sin ultimately is against them. And so the only one who can forgive sin is the one against the sin has been committed.

And so what we see is that Jesus in forgiving sin is saying the sin has been committed against me and I have the authority to forgive sin.

And since only God can forgive sin, Jesus therefore is God the Son. Not God the Father. Not God the Holy Spirit.

[ 33 : 10 ] He is God the Son. And as God the Son is able to forgive sin. sin. And this is why Mark includes this account in his gospel.

But Mark is going to continue his gospel and Mark is going to show us that this forgiveness of Jesus was not just in a vacuum. He's going to show us that Jesus is going to go to the cross where he's going to take the face of sinners, where he's going to assume the sin of sinners, he's going to pay the price for those sins, which will be the basis for forgiveness.

So here's why Mark includes this account of the healing of the paralytic. This is the point of the sermon if you've not seen it yet. Mark wants us to see that we're all physically and spiritually sick, but spiritual healing is our greatest need.

So Mark wants us to see that we are all physically and spiritually sick, but spiritual healing is our greatest need.

And he also wants us to see that only God can heal our spiritual sickness by forgiving our sins. forgiveness. And by helping us to see that, he wants us to see that by forgiving sins, Jesus proves he is wrong.

[ 35 : 01 ] Notice the argument. we're both physically and spiritually sick, but spiritual healing is our greatest need.

Only God can heal our spiritual sickness by forgiving our sins. And by forgiving our sins, and in this case, in the account that we have considered this morning, by forgiving this paralytic sin, Jesus proves that he is God.

And again, not God the Father charading as God the Son, but God the Son, the second person of the Godhead.

The same attributes as the Father, the same essence as the Father, though different in his person. He is God, unable to forgive sin.

What I find interesting when I consider this account, I consider this account that Mark takes the time to put in his gospel, at a time when it would not have been too far removed from when it happened, just about 30 or so years, for a very long time.

[ 36 : 32 ] There are self-proclaimed atheists and agnostics who say none of this is true. They say none of this is true.

Some even would go to the extent to say that Jesus is a fiction. He never lived. Some would say he lived but he didn't do these things and this is all a lie. Others will say that's just a concoction, just a story that you all have come up with.

And if it is a story, it is one of the, it must be the longest running lie that has been able to be sustained in the history of all of mankind.

time and the gospel writers like Mark must be the biggest liars, shameless liars who would take the time to write these things, in particular at a time when their very lives were in shape for holding to these things.

There must be lunatics to be willing to die for all of this that is not true. But the record of Mark and the gospel writers is true.

[ 37 : 50 ] Jesus did heal the paralytics, but the main point is not about the man who was healed, it is about the one who healed him. And the one who healed him was able to heal him in two ways, physically and spiritually, but he showed that the greatest way he needed to be healed was spiritually.

And by healing him, the one who healed him showed that he was God, that he was able to forgive sins because ultimately sins have been committed against him.

And Mark helps us to see that forgiveness is the great need, indeed the greatest need, of every single person.

Let's pray.