

The Most Important Thing

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 09 October 2021

Preacher: Dr. Wes Feltner

[illegible]

The End The End The End

The End The End

The End How many of you ever heard that quote?

The main thing is keeping the main thing the main thing. Well, that was certainly true on the night of December the 29th, 1972.

[6 : 12] That was the night that Eastern Airlines flight 401 left JFK Airport on its way to Miami full of holiday travelers.

Everything went fine.

They got permission to circle the Florida, they got permission to circle the Florida Everglades while they looked into the situation. And as they circled, they circled, and then they circled, and then another crew member got involved.

They got involved, they got involved, and then they got involved, and then they got involved. working. In fact, so distracted were the pilots, they forgot to put the plane on autopilot.

And without realizing it, because it was dark outside, the entire time that they were focused on that light, the plane was slowly descending towards the ground until it crashed into the Florida Everglades, killing 101 of the 176 passengers on board. And get that imagery in your mind, the imagery of this. That crew became so focused on that light not working, they forgot the main thing, which was flying the plane. Faith family, the main thing is keeping the main thing.

[8 : 14] The main thing. Amen? But that's hard to do, right? I mean, that's hard to do in life. It's very easy for us at times to lose sight of the main thing. Have you ever lost sight of the main thing?

Anybody want to testify tonight to that reality in your life? Yeah, it happens all the time. Maybe for you, it was in a relationship. You lost sight of the main thing and you begin to drift apart.

Maybe for some of you, it was your business or company. You lost sight of the vision and you started to decline. We see this often. Politicians lose sight of serving people, hypothetically speaking, and they get caught up in corruption. You see this in the sports world. Teams will often lose sight of the main thing and then they start fighting with one another. Churches lose sight of the mission they've been given and become completely irrelevant. And Christians can lose sight of the main thing of salvation, forgetting all that God has done for you in Christ. Sometimes it's hard to keep the main thing to keep the main thing. And that is exactly what Jesus reveals here in Mark chapter 2. In this very, very famous miracle, one that no doubt many of you have probably known, in this miracle, Jesus reminds us what matters most in life, what really the most important thing truly is. Now at this point in the gospel of Mark, Jesus' fame is spreading everywhere. It is all over town. The news has gotten out about everything that Jesus can do. We've already seen that he teaches with an authority unlike they've ever heard. He has cast out an unclean spirit in the temple.

He has now healed a leper, likely a leper who's had leprosy for a long time. Luke tells us that his skin is white. He's in the final stages of leprosy. And so the word has spread that, listen, anybody, anywhere that has an issue, all you have to do is bring them to Jesus because he can solve any problem you have.

Jesus performed so many miracles. You think the carpentry ever came up when he was doing the miracles? Jesus, if you could cure our son's blindness and we'd love some shelves right here.

[10 : 58] I don't know if you want to do the blindness, then the shelves. We need the shelves by Tuesday. Of course, we'd love our son to see those shelves. That's how people are treating Jesus, right? I mean, Jesus, we have this physical problem. And if you could do that by Tuesday, that would be great. But now, let's not blame these people because we would be the same way. Let me ask you this. Let me ask you this. What issue, and don't say it out loud, this is for you to keep within. What issue did you bring in with you tonight? What life issue are you going through right now? Be honest there with yourself. What are you dealing with? Is it a financial problem? Is it a relationship problem? Some of you, maybe it's a medical problem. Some of you are dealing with a sickness. Some of you are dealing with a job crisis. I'm asking you seriously, and those of you watching online, what is your issue? What's the thing physically that captures your attention the most?

Well, what if I told you that you could go to a physical location where an actual person could make it all go away?

The line would be out the door. Amen? I mean, that line would go on for miles and miles and miles. Exactly. Look at chapter 1, verse 36.

And Simon and those who were with him searched for him, and they found him and said to him, everyone is looking for you. Verse 45. But he went out and began to talk freely about it and to spread the news so that Jesus could no longer openly enter a town, but was out in desolate places. And people were coming to him from every quarter. Chapter 2, verse 1. 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. In other words, the word of Jesus has spread throughout town, and he can't go anywhere without a crowd because people are consumed with their physical needs. And evidently, there are four men who have a friend that is a paralytic. And they know because of the word on the street and because of what's going around town, they know they have to get him to Jesus, and they will not accept no for an answer. There is not a light bulb. They will not change. There is not anything that will get in their way because they know the only hope for their friend is for him to experience a miracle.

[14 : 00] It's the only hope for him. So when they arrive at home where Jesus is teaching, and they realize that this show is sold out and there's no more room, they improvise.

That's a rope. Put it back, man. If you are willing, Rabbi, I know you can do this.

If you are willing, Rabbi, I know you're willing to do this. Now picture in your mind what it must have been like to be there on that day.

You're one of the ones that got in the room and you're listening to Jesus teach and the next thing you know, you hear a chainsaw and somebody's cutting a hole in the ceiling and they lower this man down before Jesus and Jesus says something to him that is totally unexpected and completely strange.

Verse five. And when Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, son, your sins are forgiven.

[15 : 41] So the first thing we see here is the need for forgiveness and the reason why I say that this is not a response that we would expect, it's certainly not a response they would have expected. When Jesus says your sins are forgiven, the response must have been, that's fantastic.

Thank you, Jesus. I mean, we can all use a little bit of forgiveness of sin. Amen? But that's not why I'm here. I'm here to be healed.

It's like imagine that you go to the doctor for pain in your back and your doctor says to you, I've got just the solution. I'm going to enroll you in six weeks of counseling.

You'd be like, I probably could use the counseling, but I didn't come for counseling. I came to have my back healed.

What is Jesus doing here? Faith family, please come in, come in, come in. He's keeping the main thing, the main thing. He's keeping the main thing, the main thing.

[16 : 45] How many times in this series, when everybody has been caught up in the urgent, consumed in the physical, only focused on the temporary, we need another meal, I need healed of this issue, the raising of Lazarus and the death of a loved one, Jesus always brings it back to the main reason why he came.

He will not be distracted from his mission. Amen? Jesus, notice it on the screen, didn't come to be our physical healer.

Jesus came to be our eternal Savior. Somebody say amen. Amen. Why? Why is that true? Next slide.

Because our greatest need is not a temporary fix. Our greatest need is eternal forgiveness. Oh, faith family, look, notice this on the screen.

Paralysis will keep you from walking. Sin will keep you from God. God. Jesus will not be distracted from the main thing.

[17 : 59] And the main thing is not your temporary need. It's not your momentary fix. Your main need is forgiveness of all your sins so that you can be right with God.

Jesus does not give you always what you want, but he will give you what you need. Amen? And if you come back at me, are you saying that Jesus doesn't care about my physical situation?

Are you telling me he doesn't care about my physical condition? Are you saying that he's not sensitive to this man's situation? No. In fact, has Jesus not time and time again in this series shown how much he cares and how compassionate he is to our physical condition?

Look at verse 11. Jesus cares about the man's physical condition. And he cares about the man's physical problems.

Jesus cares about the man's physical problems. Are you listening to me? He cares about yours. He cares about yours. But the main thing is keeping the main thing the main thing.

[19 : 16] And the main thing is the forgiveness of sins. Yes, Jesus is the true Adam. And he has come to restore creation. Your body matters.

The physical creation matters. But can I ask you a few questions? And if you're not listening, would you listen for just a moment? Because these questions matter. Or some of you are like, how could we not be listening, right?

What good is it if you're able to stand before others, but you can't stand before God? What good would it be if you had the greatest family in the world, but weren't in the family of God?

What good would it be if they are walking a path to hell? Or here's how Jesus asked it.

What good would it be for a man to gain the whole world, but forfeit his soul? Yes, your physical life matters to Jesus.

[20 : 23] He has proven his compassion about that over and over again. But he will not be distracted from the main thing. And that means I must ask you this tonight, Faith Family, and I hope that you will answer it in your heart.

Tonight, what do you really want to hear from Jesus? What do you really want Jesus to say to you? Do you want him to look at you and say, pick up your bed and walk?

Or do you want him to say, your sins? Are forgiven. Because many of us think that our life would be perfect if Jesus would just solve our physical problem.

Solve our money problem. Solve our health problem. Or things like this. Listen, Jesus has already solved our greatest problem. Amen? He has given us a way by which we can be forgiven of our sins and be in relationship with God.

That's the main thing. And Jesus won't be distracted from it. But that's not the only thing we see here in this story. We also see another necessary thing.

[21 : 32] Another main thing, if you will. And it's not just forgiveness. Look at verse 5. When Jesus saw their faith. Faith. Faith. He said to the paralytic, your sons are forgiven.

And so now we see the main thing or the important need of faith. This miracle shows us how forgiveness happens, namely through faith.

And you might ask, how does Jesus know they have faith? I mean, we have no record in the text where they say, Jesus, we put our faith and trust in you as Savior of the world.

We don't see that here. How does Jesus know they have saving faith? Well, we have a clue in the text. Look at verse 6. 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, look at this, perceiving in his spirit that they thus questioned within themselves, said to them, why do you question these things in your hearts?

[22 : 49] Jesus can read your mind. You think you're hiding that attitude? You think you're hiding that thought about Jesus? Oh, no, no, no, no.

Jesus knows what they're thinking. Jesus is perceiving what is going on in their minds. You say, what's the point? Jesus knows the heart of these men.

And he knows it is a heart of faith. We don't get every single detail in these stories. But what is clear is that Jesus knows, based on what he perceives in these individuals, that they have faith.

He's been in them. He's been in them. Notice it on the screen, faith family. Faith is how forgiveness is received. That's a great place for an amen.

Thank you, brother. All right. Faith is how forgiveness is received. Salvation comes through faith alone, in Christ alone, and not by works.

[23 : 53] Do you want the main thing of forgiveness? To be right with God? To be in relationship with God? It comes through the one thing, the main thing of faith.

Ephesians 2, 8 and 9. For by grace you've been saved through, you'll get better. And this is not of your own doing. It's a gift of God, not a result of work, so that no one may boast.

Romans 5, 1. Therefore, since we have been justified by? There it is. We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Galatians 2, 16. Yet we know that a person is not justified by the works of the law, but through in Jesus Christ, so that we who have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ, and not by works of the law, because by the works of the law no one will be justified.

Justified, Philippians 3, 9. And be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on John 5, 24.

Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life.

[25 : 10] John 3, 16. For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, and whoever believes in him shall not perish, but have everlasting life.

Faith, faith, faith, faith, faith. That's the main thing. Amen? Amen. That's what salvation is all about.

It is not by works, and that's good news. Amen? It means that salvation is not about what you do. Salvation is about what Jesus has done. Do you believe it?

Do you trust it? And do you receive it? Not work for it, not earn it, but do you receive it by faith? Now, the question here would be faith in what? Is this just kind of any faith?

I mean, a lot of people in our day will say, I'm a person of faith. Yeah, but what does that mean? And what is Mark getting at in this passage? What's the object of the faith here in Mark chapter 2?

[26 : 11] Well, that, dear friends, is what's dividing this room. Not this room, the room in Mark 2. You see, Jesus knows that there's people in the room that don't believe.

And Mark emphasizes this other group in the home. And Jesus, I'm quite certain, said, son, your sins are forgiven, because he knows what that's going to do.

It's going to trigger the theological alarms in their mind. And this is what Jesus will say. Son, take heart.

Your sins are forgiven. Who is this who speaks blasphemies?

Who can forgive sins but God alone? Right. But I ask you, which is easier to say, your sins are forgiven, or rise up and walk?

[27 : 23] It's easy to say anything, no? But to show you, and so that you may know that the Son of Man has the authority on earth to forgive sins.

I say to you, my son, rise, pick up your bed, and go home.

If he goes home, Easy does it.

Easy does it.

It performs this miracle. Because remember I told you that miracles are what? They're signs. This miracle is pointing to something bigger.

[29 : 10] So knowing that the scribes are struggling with the identity of Jesus, Jesus says, which is easier, forgiving sins or healing this man?

And the answer, of course, is it's easier to say your sins are forgiven. Why? Because you don't have to back that up. You can just make that claim and nobody will really know.

But if you say get up and walk and he doesn't get up and walk, you are a fraud. Therefore, in order to prove that Jesus does have the ability to forgive sins and therefore is the very Son of God, Jesus says to him, rise, take up your bed and go home.

And this happens, verse 12. And he rose and immediately picked up his bed and went out before them all.

In other words, notice this on the screen. Jesus performs this sign to reveal he is the Son of God.

[30 : 18] That's what this miracle is all about. What's easier to say your sins are forgiven? Arise and take up your bed and walk. I tell you, so that you know I have the authority to say your sins are forgiven, rise.

Pick up your mat and go home. Are you listening to me? The object of our faith is that Jesus is the Son of God.

The main thing is forgiveness. How do we get that forgiveness? By faith. But faith in what? Or better ask, faith in who? It is what Jesus is showing us in this miracle.

Faith in Jesus Christ. The man, the God-man. God made flesh. And there is no forgiveness apart from faith in Jesus Christ.

There is no other name by which you can be saved than Jesus Christ. Amen? Amen. So this passage shows us the main thing.

[31 : 29] The need for forgiveness. That's more important than the physical healing, though Jesus cares about that. The need for faith. All of this in this story is driving us to see that Jesus is the Son of God.

And then I want to emphasize, while I think that's the main point, because we want to keep the main thing the main thing, right? That's the main point of the passage. I'm going to close tonight by showing you one other emphasis.

That's not the main point, but it's a secondary point worth mentioning. And it's this. The need for faithful friends. The need for faithful friends.

Because, aside from the obvious point that Mark is making about who Jesus is and what he came to do, who is he? He's the Son of God. What did he come to do? To forgive sins.

There is something that should be said about these four men and our mission as Christians. And here it is on the screen, faith family. We must be willing to do whatever it takes to get people to Jesus.

[32 : 36] We must be willing to do whatever it takes to get people to Jesus. You see, these men could have arrived that day and made excuses.

Sold out. Let's go home. There's no room. You know what? Jesus is probably tired. And I sure know I'm tired. I mean, carrying you the whole way. I'm exhausted.

It's just not. Today's not going to be the day. We'll try it again a different day. But, no. These men will not accept that at all. They're willing to do whatever it takes.

And so, I'm asking you this question, faith family. Look at it on the screen. When it comes to getting people to Jesus, do you make excuses or do you climb roofs? You know, I don't really want to have that conversation today.

I'm tired. You know, I don't really want to serve that person. They kind of made me mad at lunch. You know, I just got so much stuff going on in my life.

[33 : 35] I don't really need to be all that concerned about their eternity. You know, like, do you find yourself making excuses or do you find yourself saying, I'll do whatever it takes? Whatever it takes to get somebody to Jesus.

Let me give you five characteristics. You say you don't have time for five. And I say, hush. I'm going to hit them fast. But I'm going to give you five characteristics that I think I see in these men that I think we need to emulate as Christians and as the church.

The first is this. Notice their concern. Notice their concern. They cared about their friend and his condition.

They really cared. And if they cared about his physical condition, how much more should we care about people's spiritual condition? Are you with me? See, lostness should grieve us.

Lostness should burden us. We ought to be a people that are very concerned about the eternal destiny of those around us.

[34 : 47] Number two, notice their confidence. They believed so much in the power of Jesus, they knew all we have to do is get them to Jesus.

We don't have to do the healing. We don't have to do the saving. We don't have the authority to say your sins are forgiven. Amen? All we got to do is get them to Jesus and let Jesus do what Jesus does.

That's how confident they are in Jesus. I know that Jesus is powerful. That's why it emphasizes their faith.

It's not just the paralytic who believes. All of them have confidence, have faith in the person of Jesus Christ. Number three, is there cooperation?

They couldn't do this on their own. It took four of them. They knew this mission is greater than me.

[35 : 51] And so, listen, I'm going to need you to join me because we care about our friend. And together, we're going to get him to Jesus.

You can't do this alone. I can't do this alone. But we are in this mission together. Amen? Their concern, their confidence, their cooperation.

And number four, I love their creativity. Like, what I would give to just have listened in to their conversation. Amen? Come on. Don't you want to be there?

Don't you want to listen? Because there was one of them that had to say, hear me out. All right, hear me out. I got an idea. It's going to sound a little cuckoo for Cocoa Puffs. And I'm sure there had to be somebody else in the group like, you're crazy.

You have lost your mind. I know. But the only hope is Jesus. And so, therefore, if it means we're going to have to be a little creative and go up on the roof and make a total mess, that's what we'll do.

[37 : 01] We're not going to take no for an answer. Lastly, their commitment. This whatever-it-takes attitude.

We don't care what it costs. Like, I wonder if the homeowner was like, you're going to pay for that. Okay? You made an awesome story. It's probably going to make it in the Bible. Okay?

So, I'll give you a discount. We'll give you a discount. But you're still, Saturday morning, get your hammer. You're repairing that. All right? But they're like, I don't care about the cost.

I don't care if we have to repair things. I don't care if we get physically hurt. I mean, what if we fall through? What if our friend falls off the mat, splat on the ground?

I don't care about any of those things. I'm totally committed to the mission of getting my friend to Jesus, whatever it takes. That's the kind of commitment these men had.

[37 : 59] And so, yes, yes. Oh, listen. Keep the main thing the main thing. Yes, I understand that in preaching. And the main thing is forgiveness, being right with God. And that only happens by faith in Jesus Christ as the Son of God.

That's the main thing. But these men are worth mentioning. Because the main thing for the church of Jesus Christ is to go and make disciples of all nations.

And we are irrelevant if we don't keep the main thing the main thing. Charles Spurgeon said this, Oh, my brothers and sisters in Christ, if sinners be damned, at least let them leap to hell over our bodies.

If they will perish, let them perish with our arms about their knees, imploring them to stay and not madly destroy themselves.

If hell must be filled, let not one go there unwarned or unprayed for. That's the kind of urgency.

[39 : 06] That's the kind of commitment we ought to have as followers of Jesus Christ to the mission of Jesus Christ. And if you feel like that's just so heavy, again, let me remind you, these men aren't responsible for the healing.

They're not responsible for the saving. Their responsibility is just get them to Jesus. And let Jesus do what only Jesus can do.

Isn't that freeing? I can't save anybody. And it's not even my responsibility to do so. But I can tell you about Jesus. And my prayer is that by faith in Him, He would say to you, your sins are forgiven.

Faith family, the main thing is keeping the main thing. The main thing. Amen? And while I have no doubt that there are real physical issues in your life tonight, I ask you, what good is it if your legs can stand before others, but your life can't stand before God?

Do you have the main thing that matters in life? Do you have faith in the Son of God for the forgiveness of your sins?

[40 : 29] You need to answer that tonight. And the only reason that that forgiveness is even available to you today is because Jesus kept the main thing, the main thing.

And all of the physical needs that He had, and all of the physical needs He faced, hey, turn those stones into bread. Kill you.

Jesus, we're never going to let that happen. Save yourself and come down off that cross. And yet through all of that, Jesus kept the main thing, the main thing.

He did whatever it took so that He could look upon your life with all authority in heaven and on earth and say, your sins are forgiven.

And all God's people said, amen. Amen. Let's pray together. God, thank you for this passage that we were able to study tonight. There is so much for us to think on and walk away with.

[41 : 42] The main thing is, do we have faith in Jesus Christ? Have we trusted Jesus as our Savior that we might be forgiven of our sins and be right with God?

That's the most important thing. Oh, that we would not gain the world but forfeit our soul. Others in this room, the main thing that your Spirit has convicted them about is the mission.

God, we've let secondary things in life keep us from the main thing we're called to do as your church, and that is to make disciples and to get people to Jesus.

Convict us of that. Bring us to our knees on that. May we be inspired by the story of these four men that were willing to do whatever it took, whatever it cost to get people to Jesus.

Thank you for this passage that surfaces for us what the main things really are. Now give us the faith and the strength to run after those things and to focus our lives on those things.

[43 : 03] In Jesus' name, amen.