

# Our Greatest Need

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[ 0 : 00 ] All right, good morning. Please have a seat. Please turn with me in your Bibles to Mark chapter 2.

Am I on? Is my speaker working okay? I just want to say thank you. What's been unique about this week when I preached here last week, I was preaching before a group of strangers.

And just this past week of getting to know you, both through the Bible studies and lunches and time together, I can firmly say that I'm preaching before friends this morning.

I thank you so much for the love that you have both shown, my wife and I, just in hospitality and kindness and opening up your hearts with questions, with your stories.

That has meant a lot to us. So please hear me when I say thank you very much. Do you ever wonder what the difference is between what you want and what you need?

[ 1 : 07 ] And I'm sure we're understanding that there is a difference. But there's some things in life that we want, but there's certain aspects of it.

Like we might need a car. We might want a Lamborghini. But the Lord kind of fits us into that Toyota mind frame, right?

Now what's interesting is the world knows that we have these needs, but it turns some of them into wants, and it plays on several of our vices.

I don't know if you remember those American Express commercials that used to come on. You used to say you want American Express because you're a somebody, right? There was some type of importance that you derived by taking their credit.

If you're watching the Super Bowl this year, it made me feel that the only way I could be a man is if I drove a really big truck, right? It plays on those aspects of our life.

[ 2 : 17 ] And in fact, there is a whole type of psychology that studies, and it's dedicated to this study of what motivates us.

Perhaps you've heard of Maslow's hierarchy of needs. He developed this in the late 30s and 40s. And he began trying to decipher what are man's prime motivators and what are prime man's needs. And of course, he believed in the physiological motivators of life, as in we need food, shelter. We need water. We need safety and security of a home.

And then he kind of built it up. We need prestige. We need feelings of importance. We need love. And his whole point was getting to the fact that in order to be fulfilled in his mind, all those things need to be accomplished in a certain order.

What's interesting is that through the years, these things have been tweaked as scientists and psychologists trying to figure out what is man's greatest need.

[ 3 : 30 ] Today, we meet a man who came to Jesus looking for something that he wanted, but he found something quite different.

Jesus met him with his greatest need. Please turn with me, like as I said, to Mark 2. We're going to begin reading in verse 1. I'm reading out of an ESV Bible.

And when he, being Jesus Christ, 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 laid him down on a bed on which the paralytic lay.

[ 4 : 29 ] 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 is 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 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.

this. I'm just going to give you a complete rundown, or not a complete rundown, but a short rundown of the Gospel of Mark, so you understand the context in which Jesus is performing this miracle, and doing his teachings.

[ 5 : 48 ] Mark is somewhat different than the other Gospels. Mark actually focuses on the actions of Jesus Christ, as opposed to his teachings.

There's a couple of chapters in there where he has a little bit of a discourse with teachings, but Mark primarily writes this Gospel to the Romans in Rome, and he wants to tell them of these great actions that Jesus has done, so they might believe that he is the Son of God.

So throughout the Gospel of Mark, we see God demonstrate power over life and death. We see Jesus Christ have power over demons, over the weather, over both the natural and supernatural, over sickness, disease, blindness, deafness.

So at the end of it all, you can only conclude only God can do these things. So as we're starting here in chapter 2, in chapter 1, it's a very kind of, it's a long chapter, but it provides an introduction to the calling of the disciples, but it also outlays Jesus Christ's mandate.

And his simple message is, the time is fulfilled, the kingdom of God is at hand, repent, and believe in the Gospel. That's Jesus' prime order.

[ 7 : 12 ] He's going to go around, and what he does is, he travels throughout the land, and right now he's situated at the northern part of the Sea of Galilee. And he works out of Capernaum, which is a fishing village, where they actually believe that both he and Peter shared a home with several of the disciples.

So this is where Jesus has come to rest. He's been going out throughout the land, doing once again, and in order to prove that his words were indeed words of power, he ends up doing all these miracles so that they would know without a doubt that he is him.

So let's take a look at verse 1. And when he returned, it's like I said, he had been out traveling. He comes back to Capernaum after some days, and it was reported that he was at home.

What does that tell you? It was reported. They were waiting for him, right? They had people at the gates waiting for the time when Jesus Christ was going to be coming back to Capernaum.

And it's right here we meet one of the most powerful characters in the life of Jesus Christ. And that character is the crowd.

[ 8 : 29 ] The character is the crowd. If there is one thing we learn from the Gospels is that Jesus always drew a crowd. In fact, the crowds were so pressing on him at times that he would go out into a boat on a lake just to get some breathing room to preach.

We also know that he had difficulty even finding quiet time for him to pray unto his Father, right?

The people wanted to be around Jesus. They wanted to hear what he said.

They wanted to see what he could do and they were just incredibly anxious to see him do his work. Now I believe the crowd symbolizes something. And I believe the crowd symbolizes something that is reflected in us.

Here's some truths I'm going to tell you about the crowd. First, as we study the entire Gospels we know that crowds are no guarantee of success, right?

We can draw a big crowd but that doesn't mean we have a successful event. Nowhere does it say that the crowds were coming to Jesus in great repentance and responding to his message.

[ 9 : 42 ] In fact, Mark tends to focus on these off moments between the crowds where people enter in his life and come to saving faith. It is my belief that the crowds are more curious than anything else.

What's interesting having lived in LA for over five years there's huge freeways as many of you know and what actually slows down traffic is not so much accidents but it tends to be the rubberneckers.

You know what a rubbernecker is? They're driving by and they have to stop and look at the traffic so sometimes you get into this big traffic jam thinking there's going to be a crash but it's not until miles down the road you notice the crash is on the other lane but everybody on this lane is slowed down to watch it, right?

So that's what some of these people they want to see what's going on. Sometimes we see that the crowd is both passive indifferent and curious. We believe they want healing sometimes they want food but we will soon learn that sadly many of them do not become true believers.

but here they are this big group of people waiting to see Jesus perform. Verse 2 and many were gathered together so that there was no more room not even at the door.

[11:07] Imagine that, right? I'm sure you guys at Halloween things get a little hairy, right? Kids lined up but not so much that there's no more room at your door. Like this is just an incredible crowd pressing in and here he was Jesus preaching the word calling them to repent telling them that my father's kingdom is coming but someone else is there amidst the crowd.

We learn in verse 6 that the Pharisees are there the scribes the religious rulers Luke's parallel account found in Luke 5.17 tells us these men had come from all villages of Galilee and in fact from Judea and Jerusalem.

So Jesus by the time we get to chapter 2 in verse Mark people have heard the great things that Jesus has done and they're coming from all over to see him perform. They want to hear him teach and what's interesting is and it's not just interesting but they're kind of testing Jesus.

they want to know if he's legit or not right? If you don't understand who the Pharisees or the teachers of the law I'm just going to sum up really briefly for you who they are.

These are the guys that are the guardians of the religion. If you are familiar with Old Testament Israel fell into a pattern of worshipping other gods so God said that's it I've had enough and he sent in foreign nations to capture them and they were sent off into exile.

[12:45] Scholars believe during this time the Pharisaic movement began. These were a group of men that said hey we're going to know this law so well and so good that we will never let our nation fall into false teaching again.

So what we're going to do is we're going to provide such a wonderful holy example to the people that they'll know what it is follow us and we will never have that happen to us again. These men believed in the Old Testament they believed in Moses and they set up this system of religion to earn favor with God.

Now where they began to err is that they ended up creating more rules on more rules right? Isn't that kind of like us?

I think that's the story of mankind right? We create more rules that we think God will be somewhat more happy with us. Some examples that I always use, we might believe that to look in a lustful way is wrong obviously.

We might conclude that that happens a lot in movies. So we're going to make a rule we're never going to watch another movie, which sometimes is a good rule of thumb. But we're going to observe that there's a movie theater down in the mall down here right?

[14:11] So what we're going to do is we're actually going to create a rule we're actually not even going to that mall. We're not going to go to the mall we're going to agree as the people we're going to create that rule. In fact in that same mall it's where the London drugs is right?

No it's not that mall? You don't have a movie theater anymore? Well I'm out of here. No sorry. All right you guys you've prayed it out.

Praise God. But usually you'd create right? All these rules protecting yourself from that one sin which is a righteous sin to avoid but you create others and then you develop a system of judging other Christians by whether or not they follow your rules or they follow their own rules.

rules. So these are the men that are there. And this is where it gets really interesting. Verse 3 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.

[15:28] Do you get the irony of what's going on here? You have a group of people here to see Jesus do a great work.

A man comes to the door who needs the work of Jesus probably more than any of them and they don't let him in. In fact Luke tells us that they tried and tried to get through the crowd to bring this

man to Jesus.

So showing some ingenuity if you're familiar with the way houses were built in that center they're basically one level they'd have a staircase on the side and they'd have a flat roof and often they would go on that roof to entertain people in the cool of the night they could also sleep there during the evening but it's not like these are straw hut kind of roofs right?

These would have been like thank you very much these would have been strong roofs so in fact in the Greek just as it says it removes the roof it's not like they dug a hole they actually unroofed the roof so they got in there a couple of crowbars these men are going to work on it and there's a motivation for these men what's interesting is we don't read whether these are friends or brothers but these are men that love this man who's paralyzed and notice what it says in verse 5 and when Jesus saw their faith the fact of the matter is you don't unroof someone's roof to get someone to Jesus on a chance right hey man sorry we took apart your roof just bill me later right like this is a significant undertaking that's going on and these men had a reason for it so these men obviously believe it's warranted this is someone they love but more importantly they believe Jesus is able to accomplish what they want why do they know this I contend by this time in the gospels there was no more illness or any more healing that needed to happen in Capernaum and the surrounding villages wherever Jesus went he healed and the way they would do it is if you had a child who was paralytic there was no social system to help you what you would do is you'd bring your child or your friend your brother or your sister and you would lay them at the front gates and you would ask them to beg they would beg there for the day so any village or city you'd come into you'd see these spreads of these people you walk into Capernaum there's no such thing and you know if you went to these cities you would know

[18:46] Jesus had been there right this is powerful so powerful in fact that the religious rulers had traveled all the way from Jerusalem to witness what they had been hearing so do I believe these men had some kind of supernatural faith I'm not sure but I know they had the type of faith that was willing to unroof a roof to get around a crowd to lower their friend at the feet of Jesus so that he could be healed Alexander McLaren a pastor who lived a while ago simply stated their faith developed a sanctified ingenuity to overcome difficulty imagine if we could captivate that in all our lives right goodbye worry goodbye anxiousness hello patience so here we see in verse five when Jesus saw their faith he said to the paralytic son get up and walk don't you get that that's what they're expecting right they've just taken off this old guy's roof they want him to walk and instead

Jesus says something that they don't expect son your sins are forgiven some writers scholars critics write that they believe that maybe Jesus knew that this man's paralyzation happened because he was maybe committing a crime running away from the Roman guards fell off a house paralyzed right there's nothing in the text that indicates that but I'll tell you God or the word uses a very special word here which tells us this isn't just any type of statement Jesus uses the word son you know sometimes you see older men calling younger men son but there's actually a difference in the Greek what is the tender son guess which word is the tender I know you

I love you son this is the son that Jesus Christ is using right here by using that word that I know you you know what I know I know what your greatest need is my son to be forgiven he knew this man's greatest anxiety his greatest longing of his heart was to be forgiven so we come upon a man's greatest need revealed in this greatest miracle because there's only one person that can forgive sins amen and that's Jesus Christ and here I believe we read what our greatest need is as well I believe there are two specific things that can really prevent a person from knowing and growing in Jesus Christ and as a pastor I run into this barrier quite a lot the first barrier and I'm not going to expound on it but I believe people do not grow in Christ when they choose not to forgive you hear me on that it's a blockage when you choose not to forgive as Jesus has forgiven you you've stunted yourself you've cut yourselves off at the legs but I believe what I want to talk to you about is the second person and it's the one person who chooses not to accept the forgiveness that Jesus offers him this is the person that I want to address today it's the story where my sin is too shameful too great that God could ever forgive me sadly we lost a pillar of the faith in R.C.

Sproul but I've got this quote that R.C. if you do not know him he's a Christian author apologist teacher pastor and he tells the story when he first started off in ministry he was offered a job alongside a psychiatric practice and R.C.

[23:25] says that he would have he was clearly not a psychiatrist so he asked the psychiatrist why on earth would you think about hiring me and the psychiatrist answered him 95% of the people

I see do not need a psychiatrist they need a priest you see what the psychiatrist realized in his practice that man the overwhelming majority of people he sees have a blockage in their life and it's that they do not receive the forgiveness of God like a person who needs heart surgery because their arteries are so black with plaque so here in many lives of believers have this major blockage not a physical blockage but a spiritual blockage when Jesus declares this man's sins are forgiven he's not stating that they are forgiven in fact he's stating I am the one who forgives your sins it's the whole reasons the Pharisees and the scribes get upset in this passage it's because they understand that the only one who can forgive sins is

God you can choose to God's love you can cherish God's love you can rejoice and even revel in God's love at a conceptual level you can be deeply affected by Jesus disposition towards you in fact you may be holding God's love for you at arm's length because you cannot reconcile such a love with who you know yourself to be my question for you today is this you you want God's love you want to experience the intimacy of Jesus Christ you want to be known but you fear in the deepest parts of your heart Jesus can't love me as I am he cannot love me knowing what I've done let me tell you here unequivocally that God wants to remove that blockage that you may have God wants to set you free to know that he does and will forgive any sin that is brought to him he doesn't want to ignore it he doesn't want to just explain it he doesn't want to just cast it aside he wants to remove that from you thoroughly and if you get your arms around your true condition and choose to embrace what God offers that is exactly what he does right here your sins are forgiven how many of you have been plagued by sins long since past and beg for forgiveness this was me for years after

I was saved knowing and understanding some of the sins I committed in my youth I felt that I had never truly been forgiven and I would continue bringing them to God please forgive me for what I did I did not understand they had already been forgiven but yet I was choosing to live in this prison of wondering if God's love for me was great enough to forgive me of even that sin see fact is our greatest curse is sin right it's our problem sin is the curse of every planetary problem we have it is the cause of every sickness and it's the problem behind every issue of our soul Romans 5 12 reads therefore just as sin came into the world through one man and death through sin and so death spread to all men because all sin we're born into it we can't escape it when we think we have Jeremiah 17 9 reminds us that the heart is deceitful above all things and is desperately sick see the reality is we need to know that we are sick in order to recognize the cure that Jesus Christ offers us only by understanding our true condition can we understand what our greatest need is pop quiz what sends people to hell some people answer sin that's not what sends people to hell unforgiven sin sends people to hell the fact of the matter heaven is filled with sinful people but who come to faith in Jesus Christ and whose sin has been forgiven hell sadly is populated by people who have unforgiven sin see that is our greatest need right to move us from hell to heaven

[ 29 : 08 ] Jesus Christ alone is the only one with the authority that can forgive sins the greatest need of every soul is divine forgiveness of all sin and greatest benefit of Jesus than is the provision of that complete forgiveness what's interesting is that God throughout the pages of scripture presents himself as a God who is willing to forgive in fact the pages tell us that he is eager to forgive he is by nature compassionate kind loving merciful and he seeks to save sinners from his own wrath amen and if you are sitting here I'm not too sure BK let's go through the facts right I'm just going to read off some incredible verses here Acts 13 38 it says let it be known to you therefore brothers that through this man forgiveness Paul Paul writes in

Ephesians 1 7 in him Jesus Christ we have redemption through his blood the forgiveness of our trespasses according to the riches of his grace Exodus 34 6 7 says the Lord passed before him and proclaimed the Lord the Lord a God merciful and gracious slow to anger abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness keeping steadfast love for thousands forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin anybody tells you that the Old Testament is a horrible wrathful God take him to Exodus take him through the timeline of all that God endures in his incredible patience for his people Nehemiah 9 17 says but you are a God ready to forgive gracious and merciful slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love and do not forsake them Psalm 103 12 as far as the east is from the west so far does he remove our transgression from us

Isaiah 38 17 says behold it was for my welfare that I had great bitterness but in love you have delivered my life from the pit of destruction for you have cast all my sins behind your back isn't that a beautiful picture God Isaiah 43 25 I I am he who blots out your transgressions for my own sake

and I will not remember your sins Micah 17 19 7 19 he will again have compassion on us he will tread our iniquities underfoot you will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea and the result of all this is the verse that David read to us today blessed is the man whose transgression is forgiven whose sin is covered we are blessed to have a savior in

Jesus Christ Jesus paid the penalty of our sins my friends this is the greatest news we can ever hope to hear but I'm going to tell you something Satan wants you for himself and he will fight for you one of the tricks he whispers in our ears is that somehow your sin is so shameful so great that Jesus Christ himself could not forgive it he's saying that the blood of Jesus Christ wasn't red enough for the blackness of your sin well I'm here to tell you by the testimony of everything that God has written he is and the lie we believe is that we believe that of all the sinners of the world and I've met many friends who've been saved through alcoholism who were addicts abusers adulterers I've even served who were found guilty of murder and manslaughter who have found forgiveness in Jesus Christ so if you are here today and say somehow my sin is too great for God to forgive I'm telling you that is a lie from the pit of hell so the reality is what stands in opposition to believing in Jesus Christ generally is we tend to believe ourselves in our own way this is the plight of the scribes let's check out verse six here now some of the scribes were sitting there questioning in their hearts what does this man speak like this speak like that he is blaspheming who can forgive sins but God alone immediately Jesus perceiving in his spirit there again proof that Jesus Christ is indeed God that question within themselves said to them why do you question these things in your hearts which is easier to say to the paralytic your sons are forgiven 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

[ 34 : 31 ] I say to you rise pick up your bed and go home do you understand what a rebuke that was to these men you almost get this picture that he's leaning over this new brother who's come to him in faith and he just turns to him I know what's in your hearts and just to prove to you again that I have the power because nobody in all of Jewish literature had ever heard of anybody being able to heal like Jesus did and he just simply says I say to you rise pick up your bed and go home so here in the face of doubt Jesus demonstrates his power and he does something that their religious system cannot do it does not heal and it does not bring forgiveness of sins so what's interesting in this text we reveal something of those who choose

God's forgiveness and what happens to us God actually uses in verse 11 three verbs rise pick up your bed go home and what do disciples of Jesus Christ do they listen to him they obey him verse 12 and he rose and immediately picked up his bed and he went out before them all so that they were all amazed and glorified God saying we never saw anything like this my friends are you willing to choose God's forgiveness for you are you willing to trade in your own religion you know what generally that religion is and we get to this hey we come to God we love this God we're all excited about this God but it's like hang on for a second

Jesus I'm going to leave here I'm going to clean myself up and make myself somehow more presentable to you that's where a lot of people struggle right and then we start to create our own works of righteousness that we believe that's going to all of a sudden make us more presentable as if God is going to say hey yeah way to go man you kind of cleaned up yourself pretty good I really don't have to die for you as much the fact is it's Jesus Christ who wants to clean us all up do you get that he wants all our dirt our junk our sin our depravity and he wants to redeem it why because it's for his glory not ours amen are you willing to admit that sin does reside in your hearts and you need forgiveness forgiveness that you are willing to choose God's forgiveness that you are willing to admit that your sin isn't too big for

God too shameful for God and if you are I'd like to ask you to pray with me today that you're willing to take that step of faith and trust Jesus Christ for the entirety of your forgiveness all right let's come to him in prayer