



The Scrolls

Helping **CENTRAL BIBLE CHURCH** Families Belong, Become and Go Beyond

V22 N25

July 5, 2020

KING JESUS

"The Harder Way Out"

Mark 2:1-12

THIS WEEK'S CORE COMPETENCY

Humanity

I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."

John 3:16



Who can
forgive sins?

Mark tells an interesting story about a paralyzed man taken to Jesus by four friends, all convinced that he could heal him. When they could not enter the house where Jesus was teaching because of the press of the crowd gathered outside the door, they ascended a stairway on the side of the house and "unroofed the roof" (2:4). Looking up, Jesus saw them looking down through a hole they had dug in the mud and thatch. Immediately, they lowered the mat their friend was lying on, positioning him in front of Jesus. Seeing their faith and ignoring the shower of dirt they sent raining down on his audience, Jesus said, "Son, your sins are forgiven" — unexpected words, to say the least. One commentator explains: "Jesus' immediate response is not a word of healing but the statement *Son, your sins are forgiven*. Jesus deals with the man's paralysis by focusing first on his sins, with the implication that forgiveness of sins and physical healing are interrelated" (Eckhard J. Schnabel, *Mark*, TNTC, 66). Unfortunately, Jesus does not explain exactly how they are related.

On a grand scale, sin and death clearly are related, for Paul declares, "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Ro 6:23). And in another place, he says, "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (3:23). Putting the two texts together, it becomes obvious that *all have in fact sinned* because *all do in fact die*. It's the gist of a third Pauline text: "Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all people, because all sinned" (5:12). Of course, death entails all

of its immediate physical causes, namely, medical maladies of any and every sort.

On an individual scale, the relationship between one's personal sins and one's physical suffering is unclear. On this relationship, another author writes: "In the Old Testament disease and death were viewed as the consequences of man's sinful condition, and healing was predicated on God's forgiveness (e.g., 2 Chron. 7:14; Pss. 41:4; 103:3; 147:3; Isa. 19:22; 38:16-17; Jer. 3:22; Hosea 14:4)" (John D. Grassmick, "Mark," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: New Testament*, 112). And yet, the book of Job suggests otherwise, namely, that there may be no corresponding sin for each occurrence of sickness and suffering. In the New Testament we find a similar balance: certain passages indicate that suffering, illness and death *are* the result of specific sins of the people concerned (cf., Jn 5:14; Ac 5:1-11; 1Co 11:30; 1Jn 5:16), while other passages indicate that they *are not* (cf., Lk 13:1-5; Jn 9:2-3; 2Co 12:7; Gal 4:13-14). And so the same author continues: "This does not mean there is a corresponding sin for each occurrence of sickness (cf. Luke 13:1-5; John 9:1-3). Jesus simply showed that this man's physical condition had a basic spiritual cause" (Grassmick, 112).

In a nutshell, Jesus intended for people to know that he, the Son of Man, had the authority to forgive sins. The "surprise" appearance of a paralyzed man gave him the perfect opportunity to say as much, "Son, your sins are forgiven," and prove as much, "'I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home.' He got up, took his mat and walked out in full view of them all."

1 *A few days later, when Jesus again entered Capernaum, the people heard that he had come home. 2 They gathered in such large numbers that there was no room left, not even outside the door, and he preached the word to them. 3 Some men came, bringing to him a paralyzed man, carried by four of them. 4 Since they could not get him to Jesus because of the crowd, they made an opening in the roof above Jesus by digging through it and then lowered the mat the man was lying on. 5 When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralyzed man, "Son, your sins are forgiven."*

6 *Now some teachers of the law were sitting there, thinking to themselves, 7 "Why does this fellow talk like that? He's blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone?"*

8 *Immediately Jesus knew in his spirit that this was what they were thinking in their hearts, and he said to them, "Why are you thinking these things? 9 Which is easier: to say to this paralyzed man, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up, take your mat and walk'? 10 But I want you to know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins." So he said to the man, 11 "I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home." 12 He got up, took his mat and walked out in full view of them all. This amazed everyone and they praised God, saying, "We have never seen anything like this!"*

After reading the text, practice your Observation skills by noting the following:

- Underline "A few days later" in v. 1.
- Circle "home" in v. 1.
- Circle "the word" in v. 2.
- Circle "their" in v. 5.
- Bracket "Who can forgive sins but God alone" in v. 7.
- Circle "immediately" in v. 8.
- Underline "Which is easier" in v. 9.
- Box "but" indicating *contrast* in v. 10.
- Bracket "Son of Man" in v. 10.
- Circle "amazed" in v. 12.

What one word would you use to describe the TONE of this passage? (i.e., stern, joyful, cautious, etc.)

What word or idea stands out to you in this passage?

What one thing you do not understand in this passage?

Try to summarize the THEME of this passage in one word. If you were going to describe these verses, you might say, "This text is about _____."



DIG DEEPER

Answer the questions to help you apply the passage and prepare for discussion

1. What was Jesus up to before returning to Capernaum?
 2. Describe his reception upon returning.
 3. Some men bring a paralyzed man to Jesus. What are they thinking?
 4. Verse 5 refers to “their faith.” Identify *them* and describe *their* faith.
 5. Jesus’ first words to the paralyzed man are unexpected. How so?
 6. Put the point of what the teachers of the law are thinking, expressed in two rhetorical questions (v. 7), in your own words.
 7. Jesus does what is *harder to say* in order to prove he can do what is *easier to say*. Explain.
 8. Jesus refers to himself as “the Son of Man” (v. 10). Explain the origin and significance of that title (see note).
 9. Mark underscores that the man “walked out *in full view of them all*.” Why?
 10. **Discussion:** What do you think of applications of this story in this vein: “There are always many who will never reach Jesus unless someone takes them, and this is the business of the Church and of every Christian” (W. Graham Scroggie, *The Gospel of Mark*, SHC, 48)?
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Commentary On The Text

Mark 2:1 opens a section of the Gospel describing a number of controversies between Jesus and the Pharisees (cf., 2:16, 18, 24; 3:2, 6) that end with the Jewish leaders plotting to kill him (3:6). According to one commentator, “Mark brought together the five episodes in this section because of the common theme of conflict in Galilee between Jesus and the Jewish religious leaders. Thus they are not in strict chronological order. A similar unit of five controversies in the temple at Jerusalem is recorded in 11:27-12:37” (John D. Grassmick, “Mark,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: New Testament*, 112). The five episodes involve: forgiving a paralyzed man’s sins (2:1-12); dining with sinners and tax collectors (vv. 13-15), slighting fasting (vv. 18-22); picking and eating grain on the Sabbath (vv. 23-27); and healing on the Sabbath (3:1-5). Following the last episode, which involves restoring a man’s shriveled hand, “the Pharisees went out and began to plot with the Herodians how they might kill Jesus” (v. 6).

The first episode, which involves forgiving and healing a paralyzed man, is narrated in 2:1-12. After Jesus returns to Capernaum from a short preaching tour throughout Galilee (cf., 1:38-39, 41-45), a large number of people gather inside and outside Peter’s home to hear Jesus teach about the kingdom of God. His teaching, healing, and exorcisms have gone before him to make him famous throughout the region. And now a throng of people blocks direct access to him, posing a problem for four men, convinced that Jesus can heal their paralyzed friend—if only they can get him to him. Desperate and determined, the men carry their friend on his makeshift stretcher up an outside staircase to the roof. Roofs of houses in Peter’s neighborhood are flat, supported by wooden beams, covered in a bed of reeds, and coated with layers of mud and plaster. Topside after pausing to catch their breath, the men make an opening in the roof (lit., “they unroofed the roof”), and then “digging through it” (a vivid description of their demolition of a large portion of it), they lower the man’s stretcher down to Jesus. When he sees their faith, he unexpectedly tells the paralyzed fellow, “Son, your sins are forgiven” — not “Son, get up, take your mat and go home.” In the words of one commentator, “The pronouncement was startling because it seemed inappropriate and even irrelevant to the immediate situation” (William L. Lane, *The Gospel According to*

Mark, NICNT, 94). However, what seems inappropriate and irrelevant is neither but makes perfect sense given Jesus’ purpose. He clearly intended on that occasion to reveal that “the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins” (v. 10). What better way to do that than to forgive the paralyzed man on the one hand, and then to prove that he has the authority to do so by healing him on the other. In other words, by doing what is harder to say, “Get up, take your mat and walk” (v. 9), Jesus proves what is easier to say, “Your sins are forgiven” (v. 9).

Teachers of the law who are there do not like what they hear. Their response indicates that Jesus’ words are not to be understood as a divine passive, meaning “God forgives your Sins.” One commentator writes: “These scribes (NIV ‘teachers of the law’, which is loose, but correctly defines their status) were men of theological acumen. They were not the local synagogue officials of provincial Capernaum, but a fact-finding commission of the type that had already minutely cross-questioned John the Baptist (Jn. 1:19; Lk. 5:17). They saw at once down to the theological roots of the matter. Of course, none but God could forgive sin; how dare a mere human like Jesus claim such authority?” (R. Alan Cole, *The Gospel According to Mark*, TNTC, 120). Clearly, the context makes it obvious that Jesus claims to have the authority to forgive sins (see Robert H. Stein, *Mark*, BECNT, 118-19). To the scribes’ way of thinking, this means that Jesus is infringing on God’s prerogative, claiming to be able to do what only God can do—which is tantamount to blasphemy, a capital offense (Lev 24:10-16), and the charge on which Jesus is eventually indicted.

Healing the paralyzed man provided irrevocable proof that Jesus, the Son of Man, has the authority on earth to forgive sins, and when he “got up, took his mat and walked out in full view of them all” (v. 12), everyone knew it—even if the scribes refused to admit it.

Any *lower story* application of this miracle must involve the faith of the paralyzed man and his friends, and his friends determination to bring him to Jesus. Here’s an example of one such application: “There are always many who will never reach Jesus unless someone takes them, and this is the business of the Church and of every Christian” (W. Graham Scroggie, *The Gospel of Mark*, SHC, 48)

Word Studies/Notes

v. 1 *a few days later* Cf., “after some days” (NET); “several days later” (ISV). “‘Several days afterward’ translates a Jewish phrase that means ‘after a considerable interval.’ When Jesus returned ‘to Capernaum’ after one of His preaching tours, it did not take news of His arrival long to circulate. Soon locals were mobbing Him” (Thomas L. Constable, “Notes on Mark,” 2020 ed., 60, planobiblechapel.org/tcon/notes/pdf/mark.pdf). “From Capernaum (Ch. 1:21-34) he had departed to a ‘wilderness place’ (Ch. 1:35) before going to other towns and villages proclaiming the Kingdom of God. When his preaching tour was disrupted by the presence of crowds at the city gates clamoring for some benefaction he again returned to ‘wilderness places’ (Ch. 1:45). His entrance into Capernaum marks a return to the city” (William L. Lane, *The Gospel According to Mark*, NICNT, 93).

v. 1 *home* “The house in which he stayed is not identified, but it is natural to think of the home belonging to Peter and Andrew (Ch. 1:29)” (Lane, 93).

v. 2 *the word* I.e., the good news regarding the kingdom of God (cf., 1:15, 45).

v. 5 *their* “Some men” (v. 3) certainly includes the four who carried the paralyzed man, but perhaps there were more (cf., “four of them”). “The reference to four men carrying the paralytic emphasizes both the plight of the paralytic, in that he is not even able to crawl or hobble to Jesus, and the faith present in both the paralytic and the four men bringing him to Jesus” (Robert H. Stein, *Mark*, BECNT, 117). “The plural pronoun *their* makes it clear that Jesus was responding to the faith of the entire group, not just the paralyzed man” (*The NET Bible*, 10sn on Mk 2:5).

v. 7 *who can forgive . . .* “Only God **can forgive sins** (cf. Ex. 34:6-9; Pss. 103:3; 130:4; Isa. 43:25; 44:22; 48:11; Dan. 9:9). In the Old Testament forgiveness of sins was never attributed to the Messiah. The scribes regarded such **talk by this fellow** (contemptuous tone) as a pretentious affront to God’s power and authority, blasphemy against **God**, a serious offense punishable by death from stoning (Lev. 24:15-16). In fact such a charge became the basis for a formal condemnation later (cf. Mark 14:61-64)” (John D. Grassmick, “Mark,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: New Testament*, 112). “Already, the path to the cross was determined” (R. Alan Cole, *The Gospel According to Mark*, TNTC, 120).

v. 8 *immediately* Mark moves quickly from one episode in Jesus’ life and ministry to another. “A distinctive characteristic of Mark’s style is his use (some 47 times) of a Greek word that has been variously translated ‘at once,’ ‘without delay,’ ‘immediately,’ ‘quickly,’ ‘just then’ (see, e.g., vv. 18, 20, 23, 28, 42-43)” (*The NIV Study Bible*, note on Mk 1:12).

v. 9 *which is easier* “The a fortiori argument that follows involves what is easier to *say*, not what is easier to *do*. Although it takes greater authority to forgive sins (only God can forgive sins, but humans can heal), it is easier to say ‘Your sins are forgiven’ than to say ‘Rise, take up your bed, and walk.’ The reason for this is that the latter requires that a healing take place immediately or else the speaker’s inability to heal will be instantly demonstrated. Anyone, however, can say that a person’s sins are forgiven, for one’s inability to do this cannot be shown (Marcus 2000: 217-218). It is assumed that if the man is healed, this would demonstrate Jesus’s authority to forgive sins. ‘Your sins are forgiven’ means, ‘I forgive you of your sins’ (see 2:5)” (Stein, 120).

v. 10 *I want you . . .* The abrupt change of persons addressed – the scribes in verse 9 versus the man in verse 11 – has led some to conclude that verse 10a is a parenthetical comment by Mark. “Verse 10a is a parenthetical statement addressed by the evangelist to the *Christian* readers of the Gospel to explain the significance of the closing phrase of the healing *for them*” (Lane, 98; contra. Constable, 64-65), namely, “that Jesus as the risen Son of Man has authority (*exousian*, the right and power) on earth to forgive sins, something the scribes did not fully recognize. Only here in the Gospel is the forgiveness of sins attributed to the Son of Man” (Grassmick, 113).

v. 10 *Son of Man* “This is Mark’s first use of the title ‘Son of Man.’ He used it 14 times (cf. v. 28; 8:31, 38; 9:9, 12, 31; 10:33, 45; 13:26; 14:21 [twice], 41, 62). Scholars have debated the meaning of this title, but the best evidence points to Jesus meaning that He was the divine Messiah – the representative Man (cf. Dan. 7:13-14)” (Constable, 63). “In Da 7:13-14 the Son of Man is pictured as a heavenly figure who in the end times is entrusted by God with authority, glory and sovereign power (see note on Da 7:13). That Jesus considered ‘Son of Man’ to be a Messianic title is evident by his use of it here in juxtaposition to Peter’s use of ‘Messiah’ (v. 29; see note here)” (*The NIV Study Bible*, note on Mk 8:31).



APPLY THE TEXT

CENTRAL MESSAGE OF THE TEXT

Jesus Christ, the Son of Man, can restore people's spiritual health by forgiving their sins, for he has demonstrated that he has the power to restore people's physical health by healing their maladies.

CENTRAL MESSAGE FOR YOUR LIFE

(Rewrite the Central Message above to personally apply to your own life)



3 LIVING QUESTIONS

The "Living Questions" are simple questions we may ask of any text in order to apply the Bible to our life. Answer the questions below as personally as you can.

1. What does this passage teach me about God?

2. What does this passage teach me about myself?

3. What does this passage lead me to do?



FAMILY TALK

When my middle son was about to enter Kindergarten, his best bud moved out of the country. For nearly five years they had been inseparable and the hole we felt in our lives was deep. At that point my husband and I began to diligently pray, asking God to bring a friend for our son that would love and honor the Lord. Every time a house on the block would go up for sale, we were on our knees begging God to bring our son a friend. Five years later when he was in fourth grade, my son asked if he could bring a friend home from school and take him to Wednesday night church. Can you imagine the celebration?! That was a huge answer to prayer and the start of an amazing friendship. Today, these crazy boys are so much fun and quite possibly the loudest people I know. They are a dynamic duo and the best part of their friendship is how they honor the Lord and keep each other accountable. Our lesson this week tells the story of five friends who are dedicated and committed to pursuing and following Jesus. We should all be so blessed to have friends that sometimes carry our weight, daily spur us on and consistently point us to Jesus. Who are your kid's friends? Are you praying for them? Are you bringing them to church? Are you digging through the roof so they can know the One True God? We are praying your kids have friends that will follow hard after the Lord.

What Does The Bible Say?

What does the Bible say? Read Mark 2:1-12.

1. What problem did the men have when they brought their paralyzed friend?
2. What did they do about this problem?
3. What were the different reactions in the crowd?

What Do You Think?

Which is more important – to be physically or spiritually healed?

What Do You Do?

Get creative! Using Play-Doh, Lego's or a cartoon storyboard, create the story and send a picture or video to kidpix@wearecentral.org for 3 bonus virtual tokens.

CORE COMPETENCY: Humanity

I believe God loves everyone and we all need Jesus as our Savior.

MEMORY VERSE: Psalm 34:3

Glorify the Lord with me; let us exalt His name together.

KidPIX COUPON

Earn 1 KidPIX Token by completing the CENTRALKids Bible Study on this page and another token by memorizing and reciting the memory verse for this week.

Questions: kids@wearecentral.org

- _____ I completed my Bible Study
- _____ I memorized this week's verse
- _____ I brought my Bible to church
- _____ I brought a friend



CHILD'S NAME

GRADE PARENT SIGNATURE

OUR CORE COMPETENCIES

CENTRAL BELIEFS

Authority of the Bible (2 Timothy 3:16-17)
I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

Church (Ephesians 4:15-16)
I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

Eternity (John 14:1-4)
I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

The Holy Spirit (Romans 8:9)
I believe the Holy Spirit convicts, calls, converts and changes me as a child of God.

Humanity (John 3:16)
I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Identity in Christ (John 1:12)
I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

Jesus Christ (Hebrews 1:1-4)
I believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God who became man, died for sinners and rose from the dead.

Life Purpose (Acts 20:24)
I believe I am a steward of God's resources and have been redeemed to participate in His Kingdom purposes for His glory.

Personal God (Psalm 121:1-2)
I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

Salvation by Grace (Ephesians 2:8-9)
I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.



CENTRAL VIRTUES

Love (1 John 4:10-12)
I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

Joy (John 15:11)
I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

Peace (Philippians 4:6-7)
I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself and others.

Patience (Proverbs 14:29)
I take a long time to overheat and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

Kindness/Goodness (1 Thessalonians 5:15)
I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others

Faithfulness (Proverbs 3:3-4)
I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.

Gentleness (Philippians 4:5)
I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

Self-Control (Titus 2:11-13)
I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

Grace (Colossians 3:13)
I demonstrate forgiveness, mercy and generosity to others, even when they have offended me.

Hope (1 Peter 1:3-5)
I have a growing anticipation of God's promises and my secure eternity with Him.

Humility (Philippians 2:3-4)
I choose to esteem others above myself.



CENTRAL PRACTICES

Bible Study (Hebrews 4:12)
I study the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

Biblical Community (Acts 2:44-47)
I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.

Compassion (Psalm 82:3-4)
I seek to serve the last, the least and the lost in my community.

Disciple-Making (2 Timothy 2:2)
I multiply godly beliefs, virtues and practices in others to encourage their spiritual growth in Christ.

Evangelism (Acts 1:8)
I share Jesus with others through personal proclamation and demonstration of the gospel.

Generosity (2 Corinthians 9:6-11)
I gladly give my resources to fulfill God's purposes.

Prayer (Psalm 66:16-20)
I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

Single-Mindedness (Matthew 6:33)
I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

Spiritual Gifts (Romans 12:4-6)
I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

Worship (Psalm 95:1-7)
I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

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Stephanie Thomas (B.B.A University of Texas at Arlington). Stephanie is married to James and they have four children: Elijah, Levi, Ella and Simon. She and James are Shepherds of the Bailey Community Group. Stephanie has attended Central Bible Church for more than 20 years, has been on staff since 2014, and now serves as Children's Minister.

The Scrolls Bible Study is a spiritual growth resource of Central Bible Church, Fort Worth, Texas.

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