

Tusculum Hills Baptist Church
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Sermon title: The Healing of the Paralyzed Man, Mark 2:1-12

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INTRODUCTION: Today, I want us to realize how paralyzed we are in our sins. They are holding us back from living the life we were created for. We can do nothing about our sin, only Jesus can do that. There are four points to my message today and they are:

1. The high value of faithful friends.
2. Jewish leaders question Jesus.
3. God's vindication of Jesus.
4. The illustration of what Jesus can do for us.

First, WE HAVE THE HIGH VALUE OF FAITHFUL FRIENDS

SCRIPTURE: Mark 2:1-4 *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.*

EXPLANATION: In Mark 1, Jesus was baptized, cast out demons, healed people, and went to a quiet place to pray. By now, news of this incredible man had spread throughout the land, and here we find Jesus back in town; this time in a building so full there was no extra room whatsoever. The idea of bringing a paralyzed man to hear Jesus would have been considered no more than a nuisance to everyone present. And the building must have been full, because no one bothered to clear the crowd so this man could come to Jesus.

But, there were four men who'd probably heard about the healings in chapter one, and they just knew if they could get their friend to Jesus, he would be healed.

I've tried to picture this. On a flat roof, these men got their friends on the flat roof and dug through the roof. I wonder who owned the building. I wonder if the owner was upset his roof was damaged? I wonder what the conversation was like with the four men. "Hey, let's make a hole in the roof." The Gospel of Matthew says they lowered him through some tiles on the roof. And then think about Jesus—inside, teaching away—and all of a sudden, the roof starts shifting, and down comes a man on a mat, lowered in plain view of everyone.

Of course, I do a lot of wondering. I wonder why they didn't simply wait until Jesus had finished teaching? Why didn't they just wait at the door until Jesus came out? We can speculate for a long time about this.

And so there was Jesus, in a packed room with a man in front of him. His friends wanted him to be healed, and they knew Jesus could do it. And all the people stood there waiting for Jesus to say the words...and did he say, "Be healed?" No, he said something they weren't expecting:

SCRIPTURE: *Mark 2:5 When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralyzed man, "Son, your sins are forgiven."*

Hmm. But it was obvious he was paralyzed. It was obvious that his need was to be healed. It looked like Jesus missed the obvious.

Imagine the four friends looking at each other: "We didn't bring him here to have his sins forgiven; we brought him here to be healed." Jesus used this situation to focus on the real need of people, the spiritual need, the need to be spiritually whole, the need to be forgiven.

So here we have the high value of faithful friends, and

Second, JEWISH LEADERS QUESTION JESUS

SCRIPTURE: Mark 2:6-8 *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?”*

EXPLANATION: When you read “Jewish leaders”— what we have here is the presence of the Pharisees and the scribes. The Pharisees were not priests; they were an order of men who wanted to keep the nation faithful to God. The Jews were under Roman rule, and I believe the original intention behind the Pharisees was pure. They wanted to be a visible reminder of the holy and to keep the nation faithful to God. But something went wrong, and pride and arrogance took over this order of men. They focused on obeying the letter of the law instead of the spirit of the law. They focused on works instead of faith. And when Jesus came on the scene, he really messed things up for them. He wrecked their whole system. Under Jesus, their whole world was about to become obsolete. Numerous times the Pharisees clashed with Jesus.

And along with the Pharisees were the scribes. Scribes were needed in nearly every level of society. It’s a trade which has completely disappeared. Each of you has a bulletin. Think of the work it would have taken a group of people to handwrite all of these. In the pews, you have hymnals and a pew Bible; most people here have their own individual Bible. Think of the work it would have taken for all this to have been handwritten, letter by letter. This is what scribes did. This puts the importance of their job in perspective.

They were needed at nearly every level of society: in government and for contracts. Their work had to be flawless, or they would have to look for another profession. Those who were really good at it got higher level jobs. If you were a scribe and you’d spent ten years copying the scripture, you’d get to know it quite well. You’d have it memorized. So since the scribes were knowledgeable of the Law of Moses, they helped develop the religious traditions.

Jesus knew what they were thinking. They were thinking, “This man is blaspheming the name of God because he says he can forgive sins.”

SCRIPTURE: Mark 2:9 *Which is easier: to say to this paralyzed man, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Get up, take your mat and walk’?*

Don’t you just love the riddles of Jesus? It sounds as if it would be easier to say, “*Your sins are forgiven*” because this is something which happens on the inside of a person which no one can see. But in reality, neither of them is easy unless you are Jesus.

EXPLANATION: A common belief in this day was that God did not help sinners. Another common belief in this day was that sickness was the fault of a person’s sins or the fault of his parents’ sins. So we have a packed house—the people very knowledgeable of the scripture, people who thought Jesus was blaspheming, four men who brought their sick friend, a sick man who was also a sinner, and Jesus, who claimed to have authority over both sin and sickness.

We had the high value of faithful friends, and

Next, the Jewish leaders questioning Jesus, and now

Third, GOD’S VINDICATION OF JESUS

SCRIPTURE: Mark 2:10-12 “*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!’*”

EXPLANATION: Notice how Jesus calls himself, “Son of Man.” This is the first time we read it in the Gospel of Mark. In Aramaic this was a term used to refer to someone or somebody. It was also a term used to refer to oneself. It would be like me saying, “Somebody’s ready for lunch.” Jesus specialized this term in reference to himself.

In this passage of Scripture, we have the first of God’s numerous vindications of Jesus. Those religious leaders who were thinking critical thoughts, the ones who

thought Jesus was blaspheming, were waiting to see what happened. If Jesus claimed to have the power to forgive sins and they thought he wasn't able to heal the man, they would have proven he was a blasphemer. Jesus walked out where no one had walked before. Elijah was vindicated by God when he called fire down out of heaven, but Elijah didn't have the power to forgive sins.

The ultimate vindication of Jesus came when Jesus resurrected from the dead.

Imagine what would have happened had Jesus said, "I have the power to forgive sins. Now get up, take your mat and go home," and then nothing happened. He would have been laughed to scorn and accused of blasphemy.

The Scripture says everyone was amazed and praised God. If the word "everyone" really meant "everyone," then this would include the Pharisees and the scribes. But in time, they would come to despise him.

A few years later, Jesus would be accused of blasphemy again at his trial before the crucifixion.

So, let's review:

- First, **we had the high value of faithful friends, and**
- Next, **Jewish leaders questioning Jesus.**
- Then, **we had God's vindication of Jesus,**

And then finally, we have,

Fourth, THE ILLUSTRATION OF WHAT JESUS CAN DO FOR US

In our sins we are paralyzed. We can do nothing about our sin. Doing better doesn't make us less of a sinner.

CONCLUSION: Just as the paralyzed man could do nothing for himself, neither can we do anything about our sin. Our sin can only be forgiven by

Jesus. He's the only forgiver. Jesus specialized in forgiving sin. It's what he does.

The Scripture says in Luke 24:46-47: *The Christ will suffer and rise from the head on the third day, and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.*

Jesus can save you today. He can forgive your sin and give your life new meaning and purpose.

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Sincerely, Paul Gunn
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