

**Study Notes: Mark 2:1-12**  
**February 14, 2021: “*Their Faith* Led to Forgiveness”**  
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***A few days later, when Jesus again entered Capernaum, the people heard that he had come home. They gathered in such large numbers that there was no room left, not even outside the door, and he preached the word to them.***

- After spending some time in the other villages, Jesus returned again to Capernaum. When people heard that He had returned, they crowded around the place where He was staying (most likely the home of Simon Peter). Mark notes that the home, and the area outside the home, were absolutely packed with people.
- With the crowd gathered, Jesus preached the Word to the people. The term that Mark uses, refers to the Good News of the Gospel (see Mark 1:15). Much like when He was at the synagogue, Mark does record the exact words Jesus preached, because the activity was more important than the content; Jesus was carrying out His mission of proclaiming the Good News of the Kingdom of God.

***Some men came, bringing to him a paralyzed man, carried by four of them. 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.***

- When Jesus was teaching, four men carried a man who was paralyzed to the home, with the hope Jesus would heal the man. However, the crowd prevented them from getting to Jesus. The Pillar New Testament Commentary explains, “The single most common attribute of crowds in Mark is that they obstruct access to Jesus... Being part of the crowd around Jesus is not the same as being a disciple of Jesus.”
- When they were unable to get into the home, they climbed on the roof. Ancient homes had flat roofs with stairways going up to them. These men would have removed some roofing material (clay and brush), and lowered the man directly in front of Jesus.
- The action of the men truly showed their determination to get their friend to Jesus.

***When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralyzed man, “Son, your sins are forgiven.”***

- When the scene was unfolding itself before Jesus, He noticed the faith of the group. This is the first time that faith is mentioned in the Gospel of Mark. The Pillar New Testament Commentary explains the significance of faith, “The first mention of faith (2:5) in Mark significantly links it with acting rather than with knowing or feeling. We know nothing of the beliefs of the four friends of the paralytic except that they take action, including circumventing crowds and removing roofs to ensure that their charge is brought to Jesus. Faith is first and foremost not knowledge about Jesus but active trust that Jesus is sufficient for one’s deepest and most heartfelt needs.”
- Faith is often seen as an individual attribute, but in this case, Jesus saw the collective faith of the group. This collective faith in action moved Jesus to say to the paralyzed man that his sins were forgiven.

- In order to heal the man completely, Jesus forgave him of his sins. Jesus may have recognized the man was in need of spiritual healing first, or that his condition was worsened because of the sin he committed.
  - However, this need not be the case. Everyone needs forgiveness to experience healing because of the devastating effects of sin. Jesus was also making a point, that He has been given authority by God to offer Divine forgiveness. Jesus' words would have been understood as "God forgives you of your sins."

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

- When Jesus offered forgiveness, the teachers of the law became enraged. In their minds, Jesus committed blasphemy, as only God can forgive sins; therefore, if Jesus was offering forgiveness to this man, He was claiming to be God. The New American Commentary notes the error in the teachers' reaction, "What they failed to recognize was that the reign of God had drawn near in Jesus and that he had authority to act on God's behalf."
- The Pillar New Testament Commentary adds, "Forgiveness of sins remains everywhere the exclusive right of God. The reason is that in every sin, even in sins committed ostensibly only against one's neighbor, God is the party most offended."

***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? Which is easier: to say to this paralyzed man, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up, take your mat and walk'?"***

- Though the teachers of the law did not say anything out loud, Jesus knew what they thought, and He confronted their attitude. Jesus posed the question about if it was easier to forgive sins or to heal.
- Commenting on Jesus' question and the purpose of it, the Expositor's Bible Commentary notes, "Of course, as Jesus meant the words, neither of the two was easier. Effecting both was equally impossible for human beings and equally possible for God. To the teachers of the law, it was easier to make the statement about forgiveness, for who could verify its fulfillment? But to say, 'Get up ... and walk' — the authority to issue that command could indeed be verified by an actual, observable healing. Jesus' question takes the form of a rabbinic-style 'lesser-to-greater' (*qal wah omer*) argument. If someone can do the 'harder' (in this case, physically heal someone), it will prove the 'easier' (here the forgiving of sins) has also been accomplished."
- Jesus called Himself "The Son of Man" in this passage, which would be a common title He used for Himself in the Gospels. The title came from the prophecy of Daniel (7:13-14).

- The Faithlife Study Bible states, “The phrase, which may be literally rendered ‘human one’ (compare Ezek 2:1), refers in Dan 7:13–14 to a Messiah figure who comes to Yahweh (called the Ancient of Days), with the clouds surrounding him, to be given dominion over all of the world. Yahweh is also depicted as riding on the clouds (e.g., Isa 19:1), which means the Son of Man is depicted like Yahweh himself — indicating that the Son of Man figure is also divine. This is fitting as a description for Jesus’ ministry, since He is divine and human, and is establishing the kingdom of God on earth (Mark 1:15).”

***But I want you to know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins.” So he said to the man, “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.***

- Jesus used this opportunity to show those gathered that He had been given authority to forgive sins. He also healed the paralyzed man, and called him to get up and walk home. In full view of everyone, the man got up, picked up the mat that he was carried-in on, and left. The Pillar New Testament Commentary explains, “Jesus’ victory over sickness and sin is complete, for Jesus does what only God can do.”
- The fact that Jesus healed the man proved that He had authority to forgive sins and was not blaspheming. If Jesus had been speaking out of turn, He would not have been able to do such a thing.

***This amazed everyone and they praised God, saying, “We have never seen anything like this!”***

- On seeing what Jesus had done, the people were amazed and praised God. They saw something that had never been done before. Sins had been forgiven, and a man had been completely physically and spiritually healed.