

CALLED TO HEAL

Bible Background – MARK 2:1-12

Printed Text – MARK 2:1-12

Jesus Heals a Paralyzed Man

² ¹When Jesus returned to Capernaum several days later, the news spread quickly that he was back home.

² Soon the house where he was staying was so packed with visitors that there was no more room, even outside the door. While he was preaching God’s word to them,

³ four men arrived carrying a paralyzed man on a mat.

⁴ They couldn’t bring him to Jesus because of the crowd, so they dug a hole through the roof above his head. Then they lowered the man on his mat, right down in front of Jesus.

⁵ Seeing their faith, Jesus said to the paralyzed man, “My child, your sins are forgiven.”

⁶ But some of the teachers of religious law who were sitting there thought to themselves,

⁷ “What is he saying? This is blasphemy! Only God can forgive sins!”

⁸ Jesus knew immediately what they were thinking, so he asked them, “Why do you question this in your hearts?”

⁹ Is it easier to say to the paralyzed man ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or ‘Stand up, pick up your mat, and walk’?

¹⁰ So I will prove to you that the Son of Man has the authority on earth to forgive sins.” Then Jesus turned to the paralyzed man and said,

¹¹ “Stand up, pick up your mat, and go home!”

¹² And the man jumped up, grabbed his mat, and walked out through the stunned onlookers. They were all amazed and praised God, exclaiming, “We’ve never seen anything like this before!”

-----New Living Translation

Lesson Introduction

Where and how can we find true healing? Our existence as limited human beings makes wholeness elusive, since it is intertwined with the physical, emotional, social and spiritual states. As we study Mark’s account of Jesus healing the man with paralysis, let us pray that God’s healing grace touches us at our point of need.

Background: The news of Jesus, the worker of miracles, spread throughout Capernaum. This was an exciting time. The community had never experienced a healer and teacher like Jesus. No wonder Mark 1:32-33 speaks of the townspeople bringing all the sick and demon-possessed to Jesus. And in Jesus’ great compassion He healed every one of them, but He too needed a time of restful healing. So the next morning He departed to be alone with the Father.

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The Scriptures do not tell the length of Jesus' solitude, but His time was shortened by the disciples' appearance. Jesus did not appear to be irritated by the disciples' presence, but informed them that He must preach in other places: "Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also: for therefore came I forth" (from Mark 1:38). Of a certainty there were more people in need of healing in Capernaum, but Jesus knew His mission was to spread the Gospel to everyone, so He traveled to other towns.

-----*Precepts for Living*, the UMI Annual Commentary 2020-2021, p. 237

Jesus Preaches

Mark 2:1-4: People were drawn to Jesus. They wanted to be in His presence—to hear Him preach, and teach. As the Son of God, His very nature drew people to Him. The grace of God was upon Him and His words, wisdom and actions drew them as they watched Him touch the lives of the people. At the beginning of this passage, Jesus had returned to Capernaum. The house where He was staying was so crowded with people who had come to hear Him, that the crowd barred access to Jesus, to four men who had brought a paralyzed man for healing. But these men would not be deterred. They found a way by bringing the man through the roof and lowering him to Jesus' feet. These were obviously men of great faith who believed that the Lord Jesus could heal their companion.

◆ *Think of a time that you have worked hard to help a friend hear the word of God.*

Jesus Pardons

Mark 2:5-9: When Jesus saw "their" faith He declared forgiveness for the paralyzed man. Notice that Jesus responded to the faith of all five men. The four who brought the sick man demonstrated their faith by creating a way for their friend to reach Him. By calling the paralytic 'Son', Jesus addressed the man with the loving care of a father and forgave him of his sins. Forgiveness was not why they came to Jesus, but Jesus illustrated that the greater need was for spiritual wholeness, not physical. This statement provoked the scribes who were present and assumed that Jesus' statement was blasphemy, for only God can forgive sins. What the scribes failed to see was that Jesus indeed had the authority to forgive sins for they did not recognize Him as the Son of God. This began the conflict with the scribes and Jewish authorities that endured throughout Jesus' earthly ministry. And ultimately, blasphemy was the charge for which they demanded Jesus' death on the Cross (Mark 14:64).

Through the Spirit, Jesus discerned their thoughts and begin to challenge their thinking. To the scribes' way of thinking, both actions were humanly impossible—to heal the man and to pardon his sins. But was one easier than the other? Both actions are equally impossible, but the pardoning of sins is not verifiable. However, healing would be visible for all to see.

◆ *Why do you think Jesus performed the miracle of forgiveness before performing the miracle of healing?*

Jesus Heals

Mark 2:10-12: Jesus makes it clear that He has the power to do both—forgive sins and to heal the body. He also reveals His true identity as the "Son of man" which is a declaration of His divinity. He heals the

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man to show that He also has the authority on earth to pardon sins. It makes the crowd realize that if He can perform the miracle that can be seen, He can certainly perform the miracle that they cannot see. The man was immediately obedient to Jesus and did what he was told. He picked up his pallet and walked. The man's obedience was his act of faith and he received his healing. The man came to Jesus with the help of four men, but immediately, Jesus healed his paralysis and strengthened his legs so that now, he can carry his bedding and walk through the crowd by his own power. The people were amazed and glorified God.

Conclusion

Notice that in the passage we have just studied, the emphasis is not on the Lord's compassion on the sick man and the ability that Jesus has to heal the man's infirmity. The focus is on Jesus' authority to forgive sins. This pardon is what the man (in fact, all of humanity) needed most. It is important for us to pray for those suffering from physical illness. But our prayer should also be for emotional and spiritual strength and the grace to understand the role of faith in the healing process. But whether God offers healing to overcome illness or strength to continue despite it, we need His grace and mercy to experience His power in our lives.

Sources:

Banks, M. (Ed.). (2020). Love For One Another. *Precepts for Living*, 23(Fall Quarter), 233-243. The Urban Ministries, Inc. Annual Commentary 2020-2021.
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Lesson for Next Week – January 24, 2021 – Study Guide 8

CALLED AS THE INTERCESSOR

Bible Background ♦ John 17:14-24
Printed Text ♦ John 17:14-24
Devotional Reading ♦ 1 Timothy 2:1-7

Daily Bible Readings

MONDAY

Prayer for Peter in Prison
(Acts 12:5-11)

TUESDAY

Pray for a Successful Ministry
(Romans 15:22-33)

WEDNESDAY

Pray for Inner Strength and Power
(Ephesians 3:14-21)

THURSDAY

Pray the Prayer of Our Lord
(Matthew 6:7-13)

FRIDAY

Pray for Your Abusers
(Luke 6:22-33)

SATURDAY

Pray to Avoid Trials
(Luke 22:39-46)

SUNDAY

Jesus Prays for His Disciples
(John 17:13-24)