



## Silverdale Baptist

FOLLOWING JESUS • BRINGING PEOPLE TO JESUS • MARK 2:1-12 • 1/16-7/2021

### Big Idea

Christ's love must drive us to love others and help bring them to Christ.

### Getting Started

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

**Pastor Tony talked about *needs*. How do people around you use the word *need*?**

**What do you hear people say they *need*?**

**In our prosperous American culture, how much of what people say they *need* is a real *need*?**

An apologist talking to a university student group once began the discussion by saying, "Jesus is the answer. Now, let's talk about the questions." Jesus is the answer to the underlying problem behind every real need. We will see in Mark 2 a man with a very obvious and real need. How does Jesus address his need? Let's read.

### Learn

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ MARK 2:1-5.

In this familiar story, we find friends with such incredible faith that they will stop at nothing to bring a paralytic to Jesus. Their faith, compassion, purpose, and teamwork provide a clear example of how we can be the body of Christ in the world.

**What evidence do you see in this passage that the friends of the paralytic man were on mission for him?**

**According to verse 5, whose faith brought the paralytic to Jesus?**

**What can we learn about faith from these men?**

**How would you feel if you were the paralytic when your friends decided to help you “drop in on Jesus?”**

By faith, the paralytic’s friends brought him to Christ. The friends, believing Jesus was the answer, raised the roof to get their friend to Jesus. Literally, they unroofed the roof. They underscore for us the necessity of putting our faith to work in concrete ways. The intersection of our faith in the power of Christ and our concern for people should prompt us to do things that help others intersect the living Christ. We should express our faith by taking action.

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ MARK 2:6-12.

**Why were the scribes (experts in Jewish law) upset when Jesus told the paralytic his sins were forgiven?**

**Is what the scribes were thinking true? Who can forgive sins?**

**If only God can forgive sins (and only God can forgive sins), then what does this tell us about Jesus?**

**How did Jesus respond to their thoughts?**

The scribes understood that by saying to the paralyzed man, your sins are forgiven, Jesus was claiming to be God. Since they did not believe Jesus was God, His statement must have been horribly offensive. Jesus understood their thoughts.

**Why did Jesus heal the man’s paralysis, even though He had already treated the more important problem of his spiritual health?**

**What do we learn about Jesus from this miracle?**

To demonstrate that He had the power to do the invisible miracle of forgiving sins, Jesus performed the visible miracle of healing the paralytic. The man got up immediately and went home, glorifying God. Without his friends’ help, the paralyzed man wouldn’t have experienced Jesus’ physical healing, but even more tragically, he would’ve missed out on Jesus’ forgiveness of sins and eternity with Him.

## Apply

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

**The four carried their friend and placed him before Jesus. How can people today bring their spiritually needy friends to Jesus?**

**In this story, the crowd kept the men from getting to Jesus. What are we doing that might be keeping people from coming to Jesus?**

**Why is meeting the physical needs of the hurting and helpless so important for the Christ-follower?**

**How do the obstacles confronting the friends compare and contrast with obstacles that hinder believers today from bringing others to Jesus?**

## Pray

Ask God to open your eyes to the people around you who need to know Jesus and to ways you might introduce them to Him.

## Dig Deeper

| MARK 2:1-12

Whether this event took place in His own house (“He was at home,” nasb), or Peter’s house, is not made clear. Since hospitality is one of the basic laws of the East, the people of Capernaum did not wait for an invitation but simply came to the house in droves. This meant that some of the truly needy people could not get close enough to Jesus to receive His help. However, four friends of a palsied man decided to lower their friend through the roof, trusting that Jesus would heal him; and Jesus did. This miracle of healing gave our Lord the opportunity to teach an important lesson about forgiveness.

Consider this scene through the eyes of the Lord Jesus. When He looked up, He saw the four men on the roof with their sick friend. Houses had flat roofs which were usually accessible by means of an outside stairway. It would not be difficult to remove the tiles, laths, and grass that comprised the roof and make an opening large enough to fit their friend through on his mat.

We must admire several characteristics of these men, qualities that ought to mark us as “fishers of men.” For one thing, they were deeply concerned about their friend and wanted to see him helped. They had the faith to believe that Jesus could and would meet his need. They did not simply “pray about it,” but they put some feet to their prayers; and they did not permit the difficult circumstances to discourage them. They worked together and dared to do something different,

and Jesus rewarded their efforts. How easy it would have been for them to say, “Well, there is no sense trying to get to Jesus today! Maybe we can come back tomorrow.”

When our Lord looked down, He saw the palsied man lying on his mat; and immediately Jesus went to the heart of the man’s problem—sin. Not all sickness is caused by sin (see John 9:1–3), but evidently this man’s condition was the result of his disobedience to God. Even before He healed the man’s body, Jesus spoke peace to the man’s heart and announced that his sins were forgiven! Forgiveness is the greatest miracle that Jesus ever performs. It meets the greatest need; it costs the greatest price; and it brings the greatest blessing and the most lasting results.

Then Jesus looked around and saw the critics who had come to spy on Him (see Luke 5:17). These religious leaders certainly had every right to investigate the ministry of this new teacher, since the religious life of the nation was under their supervision (Deut. 13). But they should have come with open minds and hearts, seeking truth, instead of with critical minds, seeking heresy. Some of the negative attitude that had been present in Judea (John 4:1–4) had now invaded Galilee, and this was the beginning of the official opposition that ultimately led to our Lord’s arrest and death. He was now so popular that the Jewish leaders dared not ignore Him. In fact, they must have arrived early for the meeting, because they were right at the scene of action! Or perhaps Jesus graciously gave them front row seats.

When the Lord looked within, He saw the critical spirit in their hearts and knew that they were accusing Him of blasphemy. After all, only God can forgive sins; and Jesus had just told the paralytic that his sins were forgiven. Jesus was claiming to be God!

But the next instant, He proved Himself to be God by reading their hearts and telling them what they were thinking (see John 2:25; Heb. 3:13). Since they wanted to “reason” about things, He gave them something to ponder: Which is easier, to heal the man or to tell him he is forgiven? Obviously, it is easier to say, “Your sins are forgiven!” because nobody can prove whether or not the forgiveness really took place. So, to back up His words, Jesus immediately healed the man and sent him home. The healing of the man’s body was but an illustration and demonstration of the healing of his soul (Ps. 103:3). The scribes and Pharisees, of course, could neither heal the man nor forgive his sins; so they were caught in their own trap and condemned by their own thoughts.

Jesus affirmed His deity not only by forgiving the man’s sins and healing his body, but also by applying to Himself the title “Son of man.” This title is used fourteen times in Mark’s Gospel, and twelve of these references are found after Mark 8:29 when Peter confessed Jesus as the Christ of God (Mark 2:10, 28; 8:31, 38; 9:9, 12, 31; 10:33, 45; 13:26, 34; 14:21, 41, 62). It was definitely a

messianic title (Dan. 7:13–14) and the Jews would have interpreted it that way. Jesus used this title about eighty times in the Gospels.

Suppose the religious leaders had opened their hearts to the truth that day, what could they have learned? For one thing, they could have learned that sin is like sickness and that forgiveness is like having your health restored. This was not a new truth, for the Old Testament Scriptures had said the same thing (Ps. 103:3; Isa. 1:5–6, 16–20); but now it had been demonstrated before their very eyes. They also could have learned that Jesus Christ of Nazareth is indeed the Saviour with authority to forgive sins—and their own sins could have been forgiven! What an opportunity they missed when they came to the meeting with a critical spirit instead of with a repentant heart![1]

[1] Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 114–116.