

“Who Can Meet Our Deepest Needs?”

Mark 2:1-12
November 5th 2017

I know each day is a little longer than Seth usually does it, so I only included four days, so you can split it up a little more if you need to.

It was probably winter in Capernaum at this time, for Jesus was teaching in a house, possibly Peter’s house, for chapter 1 indicates that Peter’s house was there in Capernaum. Now the house that day was packed with people. Included in the audience were several types of people. No doubt the disciples and friends of Jesus were present, with a genuine interest in the truth. Also, there must have been people who were merely burning with curiosity, hoping to see Jesus perform some miracle. But Luke’s account focuses our attention on still another group, consisting of strait-laced Pharisees and like-minded law teachers (5:17). They seem to have been filled with envy, probably deeply disturbed about the large crowds Jesus was attracting. Finally, we will read of 4 men bringing a paralyzed man to Jesus.

Day 1. WE HAVE NEEDS

As with the man with leprosy, the man who was brought to Jesus had at least two basic needs in his life.

First:

A Physical Need – In v.3 we read, “Then they came to Him, bringing a paralytic who was carried by four men.” He has some type of paralysis. It could have been the result of a neck or back injury, a birth defect, or perhaps a stroke. It’s apparent in this man’s case that he had a severe paralysis that may have even rendered him a quadriplegic. Of course, one of the most difficult realities of this problem is the fact that so often paralysis is irreversible. Even today, modern science is unable to cure this problem. You might think that this was his main problem, but notice he also illustrates the fact that:

Second:

A Spiritual Needs- This man probably accepted the Jewish teaching that sickness or injury was due to personal sin. This lent itself to confirm the Jewish teachers in their own self-righteousness. If sickness and disease is always due to personal sin, then it is logical to believe that good health is a sign of being right with God. Too many are deceived into thinking that they are right with God just because everything seems to be going OK. Many people enjoy a false security and therefore do not sense a need for Jesus Christ. Today, when a message is preached on forgiveness, some will open their hearts to Christ. Yet many others will leave uninterested, failing to recognize the problem of sin and therefore not willing to accept the solution of forgiveness.

But now, getting back to this man's problem, perhaps he was distressed that, because of his sin, he would not be healed. Jesus taught in John 9 that sickness or accidents which cause pain and suffering are not always due directly to personal sin (cf. Luke 13:1-5 & the case of Job). But perhaps in this man's case it was due to some sin he had committed. It is possible that there is a relationship between a sinful lifestyle and disease or injury. When you sow sin, you reap the consequences (Gal. 6:7-8). So the paralytic not only suffered from the disease itself and the stigma and incapacitation that accompanied it, but also from an overwhelming sense that he was sinful and responsible for his illness. But whether this was the case, or whether he just believed this was the case, what this man needed most was an assurance that his sins had been forgiven. For without that, he would have a hard time believing that he could be healed. MacArthur even states, "I believe without any doubt that the paralytic came to Jesus primarily because of his sin, not his sickness." How can you know that I am on target regarding this man's spiritual need? Notice what Jesus said in v.5, "Son, your sins are forgiven you." The Lord knows the heart. And He knew what this man needed. In a wonderful way, the Lord comforted and encouraged one who was fearfully conscious of his sickness and sin. If Jesus had said or done nothing else, that should have been enough to make the man joyful. David wrote, "Blessed is the man whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered" (Psalm 32:1). Jesus therefore spoke to the conscience before He touched the bodily ailment, and met the sufferer's deepest need first. He thus proclaimed that the cleansing of the soul was even more important than the healing of the body.

Day 2. HOW OUR NEEDS CAN BE MET

How could his needs be met? For example, how can we be forgiven of our sins? Many seem to think that you can be forgiven by "making up" for your wrong doings. That's what we do in human relationships. When a friend or spouse is mad at us, we try to win their favor back with gifts, words, or thoughtful deeds. And we think that is all we need to do with God. You sin on Saturday night and make it all OK by coming to church on Sunday morning, putting money in the offering plate, and going through prescribed religious rituals. Or you do some good works. Perhaps you reform and turn over a new leaf in life. That sometimes works in human relationships, but not with God. The forgiveness of sin from God does not come that way. You need to come to Jesus. He is the One who died for your sins, and you can be forgiven only by your faith in Him. Yet this paralyzed man couldn't get to Jesus on his own. Likewise, since people are sinners by nature, we are not able to come to Jesus on our own. The Bible says, "There is none who seeks after God" (Rom. 3:11). So first of all:

A. We Need Friends Who Will Bring Us to Jesus – Again, we read in v.3, "Then they came to Him, bringing a paralytic who was carried by four men." Mark tells us that there were 4 men who brought this man to Jesus. They were possibly friends or relatives of the man. This man would not have been forgiven and healed had it not been for these 4 friends or relatives who brought him to Jesus. We must admire several characteristics of these men, qualities that ought to mark us as "fishers of men." First of all,

1. We Need Friends Who Believe in Jesus - They believed that if they could just get this man to Jesus, He would heal them. So they brought their paralyzed friend to Jesus with great effort. Notice that Jesus "saw" their faith (v.5). Whose faith? It was the faith of these 4 men. How can you "see" faith? After all, faith in something that's intangible. They could "see" their faith

because true faith always shows itself in action, in works. If you truly believe the weatherman that it is going to be cold, you will dress accordingly. These men were demonstrating their faith in Jesus by going to so much trouble to secure healing.

2. We Need Friends Who Care about Us - They had heard that Jesus was in town and wanted to get the paralytic to Jesus.
3. We Need Friends Who Are Persistent - They arrived at the house where Jesus was teaching, and Luke 5:18 indicates that they kept trying to get into the house, but couldn't. The people were standing in the doorways. They were sitting packed in the windows. And no one would yield his or her spot. Since the crowd was too tightly packed, they looked for another way to get the man to Jesus.
4. We Need Friends Who Will Use Creative Means to Bring Us to Jesus - They were not easily swayed from their task. Going so far as digging through the roof to get this man to Jesus!

Day 3: THE PROOF THAT CHRIST CAN MEET OUR NEEDS.

Now in vv.5 & 10 Jesus clearly claims the authority to forgive sin. We all need forgiveness. Does Jesus have the authority to forgive sin? Can you trust Him? Well the scribes and Pharisees rightly understood the implication of His claim. They said in v.7, "Why does this Man speak blasphemies like this? Who can forgive sins but God alone?" Jesus pronounced forgiveness, but by what right could He do that? Only God can forgive sin, since all sin is directed ultimately against God (Psa. 51:4). So Jesus needs to back up His claim by demonstrating that He is God's Son. This is one of the few occasions where Jesus performed a miracle in the face of unbelief to prove His deity. I see two proofs of His deity here:

- A. He Demonstrates That He Is All-Knowing – Notice in v.8 that "Jesus perceived in His spirit that they reasoned thus within themselves...." Had He not been God, He would not have been able to penetrate so deeply into their "secret" thoughts. Several times in the gospel accounts we see evidence of Jesus ability to know what people were thinking. In John 2:25 it says: "[Jesus]... had no need that anyone should testify of man, for He knew what was in man." This is an attribute of deity. 1 Chron. 28:9 says, "...for the LORD searches all hearts and understands all the intent of the thoughts." So Jesus did what only God can do.
- B. He Demonstrates That He Is All-Powerful - In response to them, He asked a penetrating question in v.9, "Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven you,' or to say, 'Arise, take up your bed and walk?'" If you consider His question from the perspective of doing, then both are equally impossible. Only God could do either. From the perspective of "saying", it is easier to say, "Your sins are forgiven you" than "rise and walk." Why? It is because the latter may be put to an immediate and obvious test. But the onlooker does not know whether sins are forgiven or not. Jesus will say in essence, "I will do the visible impossibility, and then I leave you to judge whether I can do the invisible one or not." But their own theology told them that the One who could heal diseases could forgive sin and vice versa.

Day 4: WHAT IS YOUR RESPONSE?

Well let's see how the people in the story responded. After this great miracle it says in the last of v.12, "so that all were amazed and glorified God, saying, 'We never saw anything like this!'" I believe there were 3 responses that can still take place today:

- A. Astonishment - All 3 Synoptic Gospels report how jubilantly the onlookers reacted to what they had just now witnessed. "They were all amazed" literally speaks of being beside yourself, but here it speaks of astonishment, amazement. Oh, I hope I never lose the wonder of Jesus.
- B. Unbelief – While the Pharisees & Scribes probably were amazed along with everyone else, some of them almost certainly refused to believe in Christ, regardless of the facts. What an opportunity they missed when they came to the meeting with a critical spirit instead of with a repentant heart!
- C. Belief in Christ to the Glory of God - This miracle should have led everyone past the point of amazement to faith in Christ. For the Pharisees taught that a man could not be healed until he is forgiven. So His healing proved His forgiveness! The complaints of the Pharisees had recoiled on them and left them speechless.