

**Valley Bible Church**  
**Sermon Notes for July 17, 2016**

**The Controversy Begins**  
**Mark 2:1-12**

I. The Scenario (2:1-5)

A. The crowd at Capernaum (2:1-2)

*1 And when he returned to Capernaum after some days, it was reported that he was at home. 2 And many were gathered together, so that there was no more room, not even at the door. And he was preaching the word to them.*

*1 “And when he returned to Capernaum after some days, it was reported that he was at home.”*

- Jesus was on a preaching tour in Galilee (1:38-39)
- After healing the leper, His fame forced Him into desolate places (1:40-45)
- Capernaum, where Jesus taught in synagogue, cast out a demon, healed Simon’s mother-in-law, and healed many who were either ill or demon-possessed
- Not sure how much time has passed since the leper incident
- Somehow the word got out that He was back in town
- “at home” is probably a reference to Simon and Andrew’s house

*2 “And many were gathered together, so that there was no more room, not even at the door. And he was preaching the word to them.”*

- Apparently, word got out and many gathered quickly
- Many=A lot, since there was “no more room, not even at the door”
  - The area ‘near the door’ would have been in the street in front of the house
  - “Doorway” is perhaps the more accurate description
- No surprise that Jesus was about the business of preaching the Word to this group

B. The rooftop removal (2:3-4)

*3 And they came, bringing to him a paralytic carried by four men. 4 And when they could not get near him because of the crowd, they removed the roof above him, and when they had made an opening, they let down the bed on which the paralytic lay.*

- Interruption by four men carrying a paralytic
- Don’t know much about paralytic (unable to walk) like the leper in 1:40
- Crowded group created an obvious obstacle for the paralytic and companions

- “Palestinian roofs were generally flat and made of wooden crossbeams covered with thatch and a layer of compact dirt. They were sturdy affairs and were used for work, storage, drying fruit, and sleeping on warm summer nights.” (Strauss, 120)
- Imagine commotion of removing the roof
  - Jesus teaching
  - The noise
  - The mess
- Paralytic was on a bed which was more like a stretcher
- Letting down the paralytic apparently not a major distraction in this story
- Emphasis on the effort of the paralytic and his companions

### C. The authoritative announcement (2:5)

*5 And when Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, "Son, your sins are forgiven."*

- Jesus attributed all of this effort as faith
- Jesus noticed their (plural) faith - the group
  - “Son” is a reassuring title
- “Son, your sins are forgiven.”
- Some obvious questions:

#### 1) Why address spiritual need of someone in physical need?

- Surprising to address spiritual sin issue to a physically suffering paralytic
- Luke 5:17, ... And the power of the Lord was with him to heal.
- Jesus does not address outward appearance, only the heart

#### 2) Who would dare utter such a statement?

- “Jesus utters no intercessory prayer to God for forgiveness and healing. He completely bypasses any priestly atonement ritual. He is not taking the role of a priest who could pronounce the forgiveness of sins on the basis of repentance, restitution, and sacrifice. He is not speaking on behalf of God as if he had ‘God’s power of attorney.’ Jesus remits sins on his own authority as if he were God.” (Garland *Theology of Mark*, 284)

#### 3) Is this a connection between faith and forgiveness?

## II. The Suspicion (2:6-9)

### A. The scribes’ accusation (2:6-7)

6 Now some of the scribes were sitting there, questioning in their hearts, 7 "Why does this man speak like that? He is blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone?"

- Scribes were apparently a part of this audience
  - Scribes were previously mentioned in Mark 1:22
    - Experts and teachers of the Law
  - Luke 5:17, On one of those days, as he was teaching, Pharisees and teachers of the law were sitting there, who had come from every village of Galilee and Judea and from Jerusalem...
- Their questioning was only in their hearts, not aloud
  - Heart=the center of intellect and emotion
- This appears as blasphemy before their very eyes
  - Blasphemy=Claiming to do what only God can do
  - John 10:33, The Jews answered him, "It is not for a good work that we are going to stone you but for blasphemy, because you, being a man, make yourself God."
  - Mark 14:64, (Admitted to being the Messiah) "You have heard his blasphemy. What is your decision?" And they all condemned him as deserving death.
- What does Old Testament teach about forgiveness of sins?
  - Psalm 130:3-4, If you, O LORD, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand? But with you there is forgiveness, that you may be feared.
  - Isaiah 43:25, I, I am he who blots out your transgressions for my own sake, and I will not remember your sins.
  - Daniel 9:9, To the Lord our God belong mercy and forgiveness, for we have rebelled against him
- "The Messiah would exterminate the godless in Israel, crush demonic power and protect his people from the reign of sin, but the forgiveness of sins was never attributed to him." (Lane, 95)

#### B. The Savior's acknowledgment (2:8)

8 And immediately Jesus, perceiving in his spirit that they thus questioned within themselves, said to them, "Why do you question these things in your hearts?"

- A new ability of Jesus in Mark is His perceiving what others think
  - John 2:24-25, But Jesus on his part did not entrust himself to them, because he knew all people and needed no one to bear witness about man, for he himself knew what was in man.
- Jesus publicly reveals His knowledge of their very thoughts
- Jesus asks why they are questioning these things
  - It seems natural for scribes to be asking this question, right?

- Matthew 9:4, But Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said, "Why do you think evil in your hearts?"

### C. The strategic argument (2:9)

*9 Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Rise, take up your bed and walk'?*

- In one sense, it is easier to say “your sins are forgiven” because it does not require physical, tangible or concrete proof
  - Thus, it is harder to say “rise, take up your bed and walk” because an immediate and visible result is expected
- On the other hand, it is harder to forgive someone’s sins because God alone can forgive sins
  - Thus, it is easier to heal someone much like prophets of the Old Testament
- Healing a paralyzed man is a small thing compared to the cosmic significance of inaugurating the kingdom of God and restoring creation to a right relationship with him through a sacrificial death on a cross.
  - Mark 10:45, For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

## III. The Sign (2:10-12)

### A. The reason for the miracle (2:10-11)

*10 But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins"--he said to the paralytic—11 "I say to you, rise, pick up your bed, and go home."*

- First time we see the title “Son of Man”
  - Title allowed Him to identify with mankind
  - Title also indicated His Messianic status
  - Daniel 7:13-14, "I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed."
- Authority has been displayed in various ways (disciples, demons, disease) but now Jesus declares His authority to forgive sins
- “on earth” mentioned in Matthew, Mark and Luke’s accounts

- Forgiveness is not just a heavenly but also earthly function because the Son of Man who has received authority from God can forgive sins (Dan. 7:13-14)
- Thus, this healing would prove His point about His authority to forgive sin
- “He did the miracle which they could see that they might know that he had done the other one that they could not see.” (Strauss quoting A.M. Hunter, 124)

B. The response of marvel (2:12)

*12 And he rose and immediately picked up his bed and went out before them all, so that they were all amazed and glorified God, saying, "We never saw anything like this!"*

- “Immediately” communicates the nature of this healing as customary for Jesus
- Everybody witnessed this miracle (“before them all”)
- Response of amazement like synagogue exorcism witnesses (1:27)
- Response of glorifying God seems to be unique and a first in Mark’s gospel
  - Luke 5:25, And immediately he rose up before them and picked up what he had been lying on and went home, glorifying God.
- Glorifying God by saying, “We never saw anything like this!”
  - Difference between scribes’ suspicions and the people’s response of amazement and glory to God (France, 129)
- Matthew 9:8, When the crowds saw it, they were afraid, and they glorified God, who had given such authority to men.