

The Controversy Begins
Mark 2:1-12

One look at the news recently and I wouldn't be surprised if many, if not most, in this room have asked themselves, what's this world coming to? I don't know if that's just because things are really bad or we just have greater access than ever before to what is happening in our state and nation and world. But that would be a common question that probably has filled your mind or the minds of many people, what is this world coming to? The news-filled reports of political incompetence in our government, societal failures in our cities, moral corruption in our leaders, physical weaknesses despite medical advances, increased terrorist attacks in our world - all these things flood the headlines. We see them over and over again.

People like to offer their own analysis of what's happening; opinions start to form and people start to rise up and speak to these things, and they attempt to formulate and analyze what's taking place, and see, first of all, what is the problem? Try and identify the problem because, once you have the problem nailed down, we can begin to work toward a solution of some sort. Sadly, it becomes very evident that there's not even unity on understanding the problem. There's a clear lack in that regard when analysts and people rise up and speak and come on TV and are somehow professionals and experts in their fields and they try to assess situations and explain the problem. And there's just such disagreement just on the foundational level of what is the problem? What is the problem with mankind? What is the problem with our world and what is taking place?

As believers, we are united in knowing that there's nothing new under the sun. And we know the problem. We know that there are scores of problems that are taking place. We can read these headlines and see them all, and we know the enemy that's responsible for all this confusion, for the evil, for the pain and the sorrow. This problem, and the source of all of it, stems from one thing, and that's sin. Sin. Sin is the problem. We have the full story in front of us. We can go back and recognize what God intended, and what He created in the Garden of Eden. We can see the creation account and recognize the joy, the bliss, that mankind had in relationship with God until sin entered the world, until sin took place in Genesis 3 and the fall of mankind. This relationship between God and man severed and separated. Pain increasing and becoming abundant, toil and the increasing nature of

work and how that spread throughout the world - sin brought all these things. Sin is the reason why even creation itself is longing and groaning for the day when it will be restored, and there will be this new earth. It's all because of sin. Sin is us. As mankind has creation in bondage, enslaved, it's all coming from sin. Sin is what earned man his rightful reward, death - separation from God and death. That's the problem. We're clear on that. We can be united in stating that. We can be explicit in stating that and not question it or try and bring other opinions in. We know it. It's clear from God's word. This is all from sin, when we look around and see the problems that abound.

The question immediately comes; can this sin problem be fixed? Can it be dealt with? Can something be done to reverse the effects, what sin has created in our world that we experience? Can pain be eliminated? Can evil be brought to an end once and for all? Can man live in harmony once again with God? Can man be forgiven of his sinful rebellion against God? This morning, you and I are here, and we have the resounding answer of yes! These things will be brought back into restored peace, harmony, and righteousness. We know that, and we know that that is all possible through the person and work of Jesus Christ as we've been exposed to in our singing and the reading of Colossians 1, and even more so now, turning our attention to Mark chapter 2.

In Mark chapter 2, we will see this authority of Christ continue to just blossom in front of us in His authority to solve the greatest problem of all time, the greatest problem of mankind, the greatest problem that's causing what we see and witness every day. Let's look at Mark chapter 2 and read verses 1:12; "And when he returned to Capernaum after some days, it was reported that he was at home. 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. And they came, bringing to him a paralytic carried by four men. 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. And when Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, 'Son, your sins are forgiven.' Now some of the scribes were sitting there, questioning in their hearts, 'Why does this man speak like that? He is blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone?' 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?"

Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Rise, take up your bed and walk’? But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins’—he said to the paralytic— ‘I say to you, rise, pick up your bed, and go home.’ 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!’ ”

We have this account of Jesus now interacting with another person in society. We’ve seen Him interacting with different types of people, people that are ill, people that are demon possessed, people that are outcasts because of skin disease, and now Jesus interacting with this paralytic. This account goes far beyond what we’ve seen so far in His authority, His authority over what we see in the physical realm, His authority over the spiritual realm even. Now, we see His authority even to forgive, authority to forgive sins, as it comes forcefully in our text. So, we’ll begin to walk through this. In our first 5 verses, we see Mark set for us the scenario. He sets up the scenario. You see the word “and” over and over again. He’s walking through it, getting to the point ...and here’s the scene... and then this was... and these people were there... and it was here at this point... and this was happening... and this... And it gets and builds up to what Jesus says at the end of verse 5. So, the scenario is set for us in verses 1 through 5. And, specifically, we see this crowd that forms in verses 1 and 2 - the crowd at Capernaum - the crowd at Capernaum. We read “And when he returned to Capernaum after some days, it was reported that he was at home.”

Where we left off we knew that Jesus was embarking on this preaching tour. He was going throughout the region of Galilee, going throughout all the different cities and towns in Galilee, finding His way into the synagogues and preaching, preaching the good news of the Kingdom of God that was at hand in His own person. This was Jesus’ operation. He was going for the purpose of preaching as chapter 1 verse 38 reminds us. Jesus said it Himself, “Let us go on to the next towns, that I may preach there also, for that is why I came out.” We saw the halt in this preaching tour. He began and He was going from, starting in Capernaum, going to other places, and it stopped when He encountered this leper in an unknown city. When He encountered this leper and healed this man - was willing to even touch this leper and cleanse him and then in humility telling this leper to tell no one, yet the leper goes out as we saw at the end of chapter 1:45; “But he went out and began to talk freely about it, and to spread the news, so that Jesus could no longer

openly enter a town, but was out in desolate places, and people were coming to him from every quarter.” So, Jesus was relegated to the outskirts, relegated outside of cities; and His preaching tour and the way He was going about it was abruptly halted and changed. That’s where we left off.

We find ourselves in verse 1. Jesus is returning to Capernaum - returning to Capernaum, the city where we’ve seen so much take place already, where He taught with authority in the synagogues, where He cast the demon out of the man, where He was even entering into Simon and Andrew’s house and healing Simon’s mother-in-law, where He was pretty much having the whole city show up at the doorstep of the house and healing all those that were brought with illness or demon possession.

So much is already taken place in Capernaum, but because of Jesus’ incident with the leper, He had to leave for a period of time, and we don’t know how long this time is. It just says, “...after some days...” And Jesus now returns to Capernaum, and it says “...it was reported that he was at home...” So, the word was already starting to spread, already starting to get out that He was there. And when it says He was at home, more than likely a reference here to Simon and Andrew’s house because, in other places in the gospels, we see this same term used when Jesus was at home... this is His house, almost like His home base at Simon and Andrew’s house that He was already at in Mark chapter 1.

Verse 1 tells us all these things - that He’s there - He’s returned after some time. And the word is starting to spread as we see. Verse 2; “...many were gathered together, so that there was no more room, not even at the door.” So, crowded, crowded in this house. Jesus tries to sneak back into Capernaum, and here we find the word gets out so that the house gets packed immediately, and our expression here, “...so that there was no more room, not even at the door.” Get the scene. It’s bursting at the seams. All right. It’s a big scene with a lot of people packing out this house, and what is Jesus doing? He’s about the very business that He knew was most important. As we would expect and is customary so far, the end of verse 2 tells us, “...he was preaching the word to them.” Making the emphasis once again on the message, the message that He was bringing to these people. This is the crowd that forms here at Capernaum in the house as they gather to hear Him, and the word gets out once again that He’s there.

Verses 3 and 4 give us a tweak in the scene as we have new characters introduced - the roof top removal - the roof top removal that we see here in verses 3 and 4; “And they came, bringing to him a paralytic carried by four men. 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.” This interruption takes place in the middle of Jesus teaching in the house. And I don’t know about you, but when you are talking to people, even in a normal conversation or in a greater setting of some regard, it’s nice to not be interrupted. It’s nice to be able to have a smooth back and forth dialogue or teaching opportunity, but there’s an interruption in our text. That’s what we find. “...they...” Who is the “they”? It’s five people, four people carrying this paralytic. And we don’t know much about this paralytic, just that he was coming and being brought by these men. Was he born this way potentially, legs being weak and not being able to walk? They come to this house, and they obviously reach an obstacle immediately. The word gets out. They want to go. They want to see Jesus. They want to hear what He has to say. And then, verse 4 becomes pretty clear “...when they could not get near Him because of the crowd...” So, they did the next logical thing. They went up on top of the roof and started a little demo project. They started un-roofing the roof. They started digging out the roof.

And for us, we think that’s probably not the route I would take. Maybe, I would... is there a window somewhere we can go through or sit in or something like that? A roof, really, you want to go on top and carry this man and try and dig a hole in the roof? Well, we have a little help in understanding a little more of what a typical house at this time was like. It wasn’t necessarily like our houses with a typical kind of slanted frame that was going up, but we have, really, a simple one-story house with this courtyard out front where you might have your animals, and then, always, these houses had stairs leading up to the roof. You actually used the roof. The roof was a part of your property you went on often, and it was utilized in the average first century home. One commentator states this, “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.” So, even the occasional slumber party. This is a simple explanation of how these houses worked and a simple way that these people tried to remedy the

situation in front of them. They go, well, let's just go up the stairs like every house has, and let's go on top, and let's dig out the roof.

But, still, you have to ask yourself what kind of scene does this make for? Here's Jesus trying to teach, and you have people pounding on the roof right above you. It's not a massive house so it's right there. You can see it, probably, and then, basically, dirt starts coming through, more than likely, and falling on people in the house. And this is a little distracting, more than likely, causing a scene as these people are digging a hole in the roof to let this man down. And Mark doesn't even tell us what people think about this. Mark doesn't tell us everyone got scared. Everyone was shocked, and they moved to the side or people got mad. Simon got really upset because this was his house and said, what are you doing man? I'm not a roofer. I'm a fisherman. And, no, that's not what Mark tells us. He just gets right through. He just gets the point across. The point is there was a determination here, the clear and obvious determination by these men, these four and the paralytic, to see and come near to Jesus. So, they do whatever it takes. They come on this roof, and they say, hey, we'll fix it later. Let's just dig a hole for now and let this man down; "...they let down the bed on which the paralytic lay." ...probably like a stretcher of some sort since they carried him around this way from place to place. So, this was the emphasis of Mark's account here, just them getting to Jesus, as he keeps stacking up the "ands" like I mentioned earlier... and He was preaching... and they came... and when they could not get near Him, then they do this... and then...

Then, we have Jesus' response in verse 5. Jesus' response that comes to us in verse 5 - the authoritative announcement - the authoritative announcement that comes. After all this taking place, a house busy with people, and Jesus teaching, these men making this noise and interruption and bringing this paralytic down, verse 5; "And when Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, 'Son, your sins are forgiven.'" Jesus does not say, what are you doing? I'm trying to teach here. Get out of here. We can talk another time. I'll be in town. Jesus allows this, and He actually responds in favor. He's pleased; "And when Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, 'Son, your sins are forgiven.'" Jesus attributed all their effort of going up on top and breaking the roof and coming down as a good thing. It was faith, and notice how he says, "...when Jesus saw their faith..." it's plural, actually. It's not just referring to the paralytic, it's referring to the whole group, all five of the guys, all five of them that brought this paralytic, the four that brought the

one paralytic, and now He's saying He saw all their faith and speaks specifically to the paralytic. He speaks with comfort, consoling; "Son, [Son], your sins are forgiven." He didn't say, man, get out of here, He says, "Son, your sins are forgiven."

At this point, there's some natural questions that might arise, some natural kind of wonderment that might come into your mind as it did into mine. First, why does He have this, you know, perfect scene, and this paralytic comes right down right in front of Him, and He talks about something spiritual? He doesn't address the obvious thing in the room, that this guy is on a stretcher because he can't walk. He can't move. All right. He addresses a spiritual need instead of some physical need. And this is even more interesting when we look at a parallel account in Luke 5. In his parallel, as we take into consideration what he adds, he says, "And the power of the Lord was with him to heal." More than likely, as Jesus is in this house teaching, He's also potentially healing people. He's about His same business of healing and preaching. So, taking that in consideration, you have a paralytic let down in front of Him; and how has He responded so far in the book of Mark in chapter 1? He heals people. He heals. He has compassion. He's moved, and He acts in a way to heal them of their physical disease or ailment or whatever it might be. But that's not what Jesus does. He says "...your sins are forgiven?" Jesus, did You notice how this guy can't walk? He's paralyzed and You're going to say, "...your sins are forgiven?" Interesting.

Jesus doesn't address this, the outward appearance, He goes right after the heart. Jesus acknowledges a greater problem, a greater problem not just with this man, but with humanity in general. There's a greater problem. It doesn't matter how healthy you are or how sick you are. It doesn't matter how rich you are or how poor you are. It doesn't matter everyone has this same problem. They have a heart of stone. The heart is deceitfully wicked. It's sick. Who can know it? This is the problem, not just for the paralytic here but for everyone. You have a bad heart. This is the case of all of us. It's sin. We inherited it from Adam and Eve as descendants of them, we have this problem. And Jesus, presented in a scene where He's potentially healing and preaching, chooses to go after the heart, not the physical obvious thing to do. He makes this statement, "...your sins are forgiven." Seems odd that He would just completely, almost, neglect all that. And it might of caught

people off guard just in that alone, but then you take it another step further, and you ask yourself, well, who would dare say something like this?

Do you recognize the... just the audacity of this claim; "...your sins are forgiven"? Your sins... is that a normal thing that man does? Do men walk up to other people and forgive them of their sins? This is outrageous. This is, simply put, Jesus declaring in front of everyone in that house, and as we'll see with scribes there, that He is God. He possesses the same authority as God. He's on the same level as God. No one else could even come close to making this claim; "...your sins are forgiven." One commentator puts it this way, "Jesus utters no intercessory prayer to God for forgiveness and healing. He completely bypasses any priestly atonement ritual. He's not taking the role of a priest who could pronounce the forgiveness of sins on the basis of repentance, restitution, and sacrifice. He's not speaking on behalf of God as if He had God's power of attorney. Jesus remits sin on His own authority as if He were God." There's no question here. There's no question what Jesus is doing. Jesus is elevating Himself to that same exalted place as God, the One who forgives sin. He makes it clear. This perfect scene where He could heal a paralyzed man, He goes after a totally different problem, the bigger problem - the bigger problem - forgiveness of sins. This is Jesus' response, and it sparks the outrage that we see in the rest of our text.

Verses 6-9, we see the suspicion - the suspicion as a result of Jesus saying these words, "Now some of the scribes were sitting there, questioning in their hearts, 'Why does this man speak like that? He is blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone?' 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?' Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Rise, take up your bed and walk?'" First, the scribes' accusation that we see - the scribes' accusation in verses 6 and 7. People try and justify and different commentators try and say Jesus isn't acting on the authority of God by saying "...your sins are forgiven." He's just stating a matter of fact. Anybody could have stated it, but Jesus knew so He says, yeah, according to God "...your sins are forgiven" because of your faith. That's not the case. Jesus isn't simply saying what God had already done. Jesus is acting like God, and what confirms that and makes that so certain and clear is what the scribes do in verses 6 and 7. How do they respond? They're "...questioning in their hearts..." And verse 7 states that they are wondering, "Why does this man

speaking like that? He is blaspheming! [He is blaspheming!] Who can forgive sins but God alone?” There’s no ambiguity in what Jesus is doing. He’s claiming He’s God by doing what only God can do, stating this man’s sins are forgiven. This is pretty much even more bold when you recognize the audience, not just these scribes.

But Luke helps us out with adding more to this. So, these scribes we’ve already discussed before in chapter 1 briefly. They’re experts of the Law. They knew the Law of Moses well. Luke says that there were Pharisees and teachers of the Law sitting there who had come from every village of Galilee and Judea and from Jerusalem. He had people from all over, people from all over Israel, that knew what the Law taught. They knew the word, and they’re here in this presence of Jesus. And Jesus, noticing His audience, goes right for one of the most controversial topics possible, makes a statement that they declare to be blasphemy. They’re questioning in their hearts. As Mark tells us, it’s not quite out loud in this tight-packed house. They’re kind of wondering, did he just say what I think he said? Did he really go there? Did he just say that right now? Did he act like God and say his sins were forgiven? As they think this in their hearts and in their minds, they call this blasphemy. And to help us in understanding, essentially, what they’re saying, the text not only tells us “Who can forgive sins but God alone?” but in other places in the gospel, like John 10:33, we see how the Jews, in their heated discussion with Jesus, how they wanted to kill Him. 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.” How dare you. No one can do this. The Law made it very clear that anybody who even tried to do this was automatically to be stoned and killed. You don’t put yourself on the same plane as God. You can’t do that. And as we know the full picture later on in the end of Mark’s gospel, we’ll find that this is exactly what their decision is when they have Jesus on trial, and they decide He’s committed blasphemy by saying He is the Messiah, and thus they march Him off to be crucified.

Well, what does the Old Testament actually teach about forgiveness of sins. Maybe the scribes, maybe the Pharisees, had it wrong. Maybe they weren’t reading things right. Maybe they kind of mishandled it and didn’t recognize that it says more in the Old Testament about other people and men that can forgive sin, and it’s not just God but other people can. Well, I think they were pretty much right on. Just a few Old Testament verses to help us out...

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; “[God saying,] “I, I am he who blots out your transgressions for my own sake, and I will not remember your sins.” God is the One making this claim. This isn’t some prophet or priest or king. This is God. Daniel 9:9; “To the Lord our God belong mercy and forgiveness...,” not to the king, not to some other function or role of an Israelite, but to God, to Yahweh, “belong[s] mercy and forgiveness for we have rebelled against Him...” It’s pretty clear. The scribes and the Pharisees, they weren’t wrong. They knew that only God was the One who would forgive sins, thus making what Jesus says that much more outrageous as they respond and say, who dare says something like this? This is absolute blasphemy. Only God can do this. This is their accusation.

Jesus responds. Even though they think these things, as Mark tells us, they kind of have these things in their heart and their mind, thinking about them. Jesus acknowledges what they say - the Savior’s acknowledgement in verse 8 - the Savior’s acknowledgement. We learn now in Mark’s gospel another ability of Jesus. We’ve seen plenty of things that He’s done that are absolutely just supernatural and miraculous and powerful, but now we have another one. He can read minds. All right. He knows what people are thinking. He knows how they’re feeling. Verse 8 tells us, “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?’ ” This packed crowd in the house, you know, it’s just.... it’s bustling There’s people everywhere, and He can, basically, make eye contact and call them out and say, why are you having such a hard time with this? I know what you’re thinking. Why? Why is this such a big deal to you? Why is this so difficult for you?

We learn of Jesus’ ability to do this, also, in John 2:24-25, John tells us “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.” This was Jesus. He “...knew what was in man.” He didn’t need other people to come up and tell Him and bear testimony. Hey, can I trust this person? Are they someone I can actually, like, rely on? He already knew. He knew all these things. He “...knew what was in [a] man.” He knew what they were thinking, and He reveals this publicly in our text. He publically calls them out and says, why? Why do you question these

things...?” In a parallel, Matthew 9:4 states, “But Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said, ‘Why do you think evil in your hearts?’ ” He describes their thoughts as evil. “Why do you question these things...?” Why is this so hard for you? Why is this so difficult for you?

And Jesus goes on in verse 9 to bring this strategic argument - this strategic argument as He moves on. He asks them, “Why do you question these things in your hearts? And then, verse 9 states, “Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, ‘...your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Rise, take up your bed and walk?’” If you’re just talking about what’s easier to say, think about it. What is easier to say? And Jesus makes this easy, simple argument. Anybody could say “...your sins are forgiven...” because who’s going to prove it? How are you going to know? Who’s going to physically see some light come and burst through and watch this person’s sins disappear? You can’t see it. We’re talking spiritual realm. It’s unseen. It’s invisible. But if someone were to go so far to tell a paralyzed person to get up and walk, everyone’s expecting something to happen. That’s a bold statement to make, and anybody can make that statement, but if you don’t back it up, and if the person doesn’t walk, then you look like an idiot. You look like a fool. So, Jesus is saying, what’s so hard about this? I mean, what’s easier to say? What do you think? It’s easier to say, “...your sins are forgiven...” It’s easy because you can’t see it. There’s nothing there. Right? There’s no way to actually know that that took place, but when you say to someone that’s paralyzed to get up and walk, now everyone’s expecting something.

So, just based on words alone, easier to say “...your sins are forgiven...,” but we know more based on actions and what it actually takes to carry this out. It’s much more difficult to remove sin from someone else. Think about it, for Jesus. When He does speak to paralyzed people and other people that are ill, to make them well, He just states it. He just speaks, and it happens. To forgive mankind of their sin, He offers up His very life to be crucified by the sinful mankind He’s dying for and bleeding. Clearly, more difficult to actually follow through and do the action of forgiving sins as Jesus will do, as He will solve this problem of sin, this problem that’s plaguing the world in their day and still is rampant in our day. But in this case of this strategic argument here, He’s just looking at the words. It’s easy. Right? Anybody could stand up and say something about angels or demons. When you can’t see it, you can’t see it. You can’t see the sins being forgiven, so I could say

that “Your sins are forgiven...,” but if I were to say, “Rise, take up your bed and walk,” that’d be something because now I’d have to back it up.

And Jesus says no problem. I’ll back it up, no problem at all. and He gives us the sign in verses 10-12. You think it’s a hard thing to say, “...your sins are forgiven...” Well, anybody could say that, but if you can actually speak and have this man walk, that would mean something here. In verse 10, Jesus states very clearly the reason... the reason for this miracle; “But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins”—he said to the paralytic— ‘I say to you, rise, pick up your bed, and go home.’ ” He makes it very clear. In this miracle right now, once again, this miracle, this healing, this amazing supernatural event in taking place in front of their eyes, this physical thing that they can see, serving a greater purpose. Jesus says I will do this right now so that you understand that I wasn’t just blowing smoke when I said, “Your sins are forgiven...” I will cause this man to get up and walk again and have strength again in his legs so that you can trust and know that I actually am God, and I do have the authority to forgive sins, and I wasn’t joking, and it actually took place. I dealt with the greater and bigger issue, the issue of sin and its demand of punishment through death. Jesus gives the reason. Once again, it’s not about the show. It’s not about making everyone ooh and awe, as they will here in being amazed, it’s simply to prove this point that He has authority – He has authority.

What also helps prove His point is how He refers to Himself. He says in verse 10, “But that you may know that the Son of Man...” “...the Son of Man...” That’s the first time Jesus has used this title in referring to Himself, and we ask where did it come from? Is He just saying that to say that He’s a human - He came from mankind - He’s a human of some sort? No, it’s more than that. It’s, actually, a phrase that we can see from the Old Testament referring to the Messiah in Daniel 7. And in this passage, you’ll have two, two characters. You have the Ancient of Days, referring to God the Father. And then, the Son of Man, referring to the Messiah, God the Son. So, what do we read taking place in this? “I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man [this is the Messiah], and he came to the Ancient of Days [God the Father] 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.”

It's not coincidence that Jesus uses this title for Himself. He's calling Himself the Messiah. He's identifying with this Son of Man in this text. He's recalling back this vision that Daniel saw of the Messiah getting full authority from God the Father. Full authority? Yes, full authority. Authority to forgive sins? You bet! Authority to forgive sins. This is Jesus saying that I am this Son of man, and I do have the authority on earth to forgive sins. And to prove it to you now in a physical tangible way, because that's what you need, I'll tell this paralyzed man to walk. So, He does. As normal, Jesus speaks to this man; "I say to you, rise, pick up your bed and go home." In typical response, the man responds and does exactly what He says, immediately. This healing would prove His point about His authority to forgive sin. As one commentator says, "He did the miracle which they could see that they might know that He had done the other one that they could not see." How could they know that He actually forgave the sins of this paralytic when He told him "...your sins are forgiven..."? Because He gave them the tangible sign of healing him of his paralysis. Jesus is the Son of Man. Jesus has authority. Jesus is God, and He can declare and forgive man of their sin.

Verse 12 gives us the response of marvel - the response of marvel - as people witness this in front of their very eyes; "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!" This is unprecedented. We haven't seen this. This is amazing. They're glorifying God because of this miracle, this amazement. Matthew 9:8 states, "When the crowds saw it, they were afraid, and they glorified God, who had given such authority to men." This is Jesus the Messiah who is God, who is able to forgive people of sins. More than likely in our text here, when the people are amazed at this, and they say, "We never saw anything like this!", it's very possible that they're only referring to this paralyzed man getting healed. It's very possible that they don't understand the next step. They don't understand that Jesus took care of the greater issue in this man's life. They might not of grasped that Jesus actually did forgive this man's sins, and that was his greater need. And that was their greater need, not to bring their family and see everyone healed, but to actually be right with God, to have the sin, which really deserved punishment and death for them, taken away.

Forgiveness - watching this just in the front of their very eyes but maybe not even comprehending it fully.

We need to reflect, do we understand the problem around us? As we've gathered together, and we've had a time of singing together, and we've looked at the word, we're reminded that the ultimate problem of mankind is sin. They're not right with God. There's separation between man and God, but it is funny how we forget that pretty quickly. It is funny that we read headlines and go, what's this world coming to? It is funny how quickly we just forget the fact that man is not right with God. This is the biggest problem of mankind. It was then, and it still is now. People are not right with God. They have sin that causes the separation and earns for them punishment and not just death in terms of physical death in this life, but even more specifically and dramatically, the fact that they have offended a holy God who's perfect and infinite in His holiness; and He will be just and fair, and He will punish those who remain in their sin.

Those who choose their sin and fail to surrender and come to Him, they will be punished by His wrath forever. This is the greatest problem and need of mankind. A passage like this needs to remind us of that. That needs to be our lens by which we see the headlines, and we observe what's taking place around us. Why the pain? Why the evil? Why? Why the moral corruption? Because sin; nothing new under the sun. This is what the Bible teaches us, and we need to quickly run to the solution. The solution is not found in government. The solution is not found in society moving together. The solution is not economic. The solution is not physical, getting healthier in some way. The solution is Jesus Christ. The solution is the Savior who offered Himself, who did the greater miracle, who did the harder work of offering Himself to take the punishment of your sin on the cross. That's the solution.

We need to desperately cling to that solution every day. If you have not already, I urge you, do this today. You do not want to walk out of here and be in a place where you are still separated from God, deserving His wrath and punishment. Get right with God. And He's made it simple and easy in His Son Jesus Christ; He paid the punishment for you. If this is you, you do recognize the solution. You have put your whole life in faith and trust in the hope and the solution, and I urge you, hold fast. Don't let go. Don't get distracted. Don't look for other solutions. Don't find hope in other things

because it's, really, just false hope. Come back to the rock that is Jesus Christ. Come back to the foundation upon which the church is built, which is Jesus, His death, His Resurrection, and the hope that we have. From that, we have life. From that, we can move forward and say no to sin. From that, we can have hope and look forward to the day when all that is wrong will be made right. This is Jesus with the authority of God to forgive sins. It is unprecedented, and truly the earth has never seen anything like this - what Jesus has done here.