



## INTRO:

Alright Friends, come-on back and feel free to place your empty communion elements there in the bowls...If ya have a Bible and I hope ya do, go ahead and make your way to the Gospel of **Mark**. Last week you know, we opened the NT for the first time in this “*True Myth*” series and looked at the Gospel of Matthew. Tonight, we’re gonna turn the diamond as it were, and get another divinely inspired facet of Jesus from the Book of Mark...WHICH was written just as the apostles and that first generation of eye-witnesses to Jesus’ ministry were dying off. And so Mark was written to ensure that we’d always have access to what the real Jesus...really did.<sup>1</sup> - The problems and needs He came to address as Savior, which incidentally is why I’ve titled this message “*Your True Need*”...SO, let’s follow-along as we hear the reading of: **Mark 2:1-12**, which you’ll find on **pp.577-578** of your table Bibles. And as you’re following I want you to be thinking: *What do YOU need most in life? What’s YOUR “True Need?”*...**Natalie** Reads...

## TEXT:

Thanks **Natalie**...Pretty amazing story right? **V.12** actually says that “*ALL*” who were there to witness this story, “*were amazed and glorified God*”...I think the same can happen for us IF we really understand what Jesus is driving at here...Cuz you’ve got 4 groups of people right? This paralytic with his really devoted friends; The “*scribes*” or professional clergy “*sitting there, questioning in their hearts*” - basically investigating Jesus in hopes of discounting Him; The crowd packed in and lined up outside this home like a game-day at The Lincoln, and just hanging on every word Jesus is “*preaching,*” cuz of course, this is a people who in having been oppressed by the Romans, for better or worse, see Jesus, as one who’s gonna deliver em. And then of course, you’ve got Jesus at the center of it all...And right in the middle of Jesus teaching, He’s interrupted. And not by the kids ministry or a random guest, but by “*4 men, who it says, were carrying with them a paralytic. And when they can’t get near to Jesus*” they get...creative. Typical roofs at this time were constructed with timbers laid parallel to each other. And then crosswise over the timbers, you’d have sticks or reeds that were overlaid with packed dirt. And so all told, we’re talkin’ roofs of about 2 feet thick<sup>2</sup>...Which these 4 friends literally dig through in order to lower down their paralyzed buddy! I mean the image I get is like Tom Cruise in the first Mission Impossible...If Tom Cruise was paralyzed!...And so these guys get their buddy in front of Jesus, at which point Jesus, it says, “*when He saw their faith said to the paralytic, ‘Son, your sins are forgiven.’*”

Now, there’s two things you gotta see in Jesus’ pronouncement there. **First**, you gotta see His just **Shocking Sensitivity**. Cuz ya notice, Jesus pronounces forgiveness on this man BUT without this man ever really asking for it right? I mean if you know anything about the Bible you know that there’s this kinda hard-n-fast rule that says, “*there’s no forgiveness before God without repentance.*” So what’s happening here?...What’s happening is Jesus is showing you that even when your repentance is imperfect, fractured...even inarticulated, He’s still gracious enough to receive it! And here’s why I think we can say that: Ya notice **v.8** - in no uncertain terms Jesus

<sup>1</sup> Context of Mark adapted from “The Healing of Forgiveness - King’s Cross: The Gospel of Mark, Part 1: The Coming of the King - March 12, 2006 - Mark 2:1-12” - Timothy J. Keller, *The Timothy Keller Sermon Archive* (New York City: Redeemer Presbyterian Church, 2013).

<sup>2</sup> Details about roof adapted from R. Kent Hughes, *Mark: Jesus, Servant and Savior*, vol. 1, Preaching the Word (Westchester, IL: Crossway Books, 1989), 62.

basically reads the Scribes minds right? It says, “*He perceived in HIS spirit that they were questioning.*” And of course, Jesus can do that. He’s not just fully man/He’s also fully God... Well, in a similar way, when these friends lower down their buddy, we’re told Jesus equated their actions to “*faith*” right? It says, “*when Jesus saw their faith, he said, ‘your sins are forgiven.’*” And I get this from a number of commentators, but it seems to me that even though the motivation of this paralytic was prolly like 99.9% about getting physically healed, Jesus, in a sense looks into His heart and sees that there’s just enough spiritual dependence as to constitute true faith, and so is willing to forgive Him his sin... That even if this man has yet to say it or could himself even acknowledge it, He nevertheless has at least a fraction’s-worth/a mustard seed of faith in Jesus as to know He NEEDS Jesus!... And Jesus, because He’s JUST SO eager to grant forgiveness, love and grace to you, almost like pounces on it and says, “*That’s good enough! It can be rudimentary/even fragmentary, but the minute you recognize even the slightest need for me, I’m there to forgive your sins, my son/my daughter.*” Just **Shocking Sensitivity!**<sup>3</sup>

But you also gotta see His **Surprising Boldness**. Because notice AFTER Jesus has pronounced forgiveness, it says that the Scribes obviously began “*questioning within themselves.*” Cuz no doubt, what they're thinking is, “*who does Jesus think he is to forgive sin*”... Tim Keller gives a helpful illustration. He says, imagine Tom, Bill, and Harry are talking. And Tom suddenly just decks Bill in the mouth. So there's blood everywhere/Bill’s face is now all busted up. But Harry goes up to Tom and says, “*Tom, I forgive you for punching Bill. It's all right. We're all good.*”... Let me ask you: Once he’s calmed down, what do you think Bill’s gonna say? He’s gonna say, “*Uh Harry, you can't forgive him. Only I can forgive him. He didn't wrong you; he wronged me.*” Cuz of course, you can only forgive a sin if it's against YOU right?... And so when Jesus looks at this man and says, “*Your sins are forgiven,*” what He's actually saying is, “*Your sins have really been against me.*” And the only person who could possibly say that to a human being is God... So you understand, by forgiving this man, Jesus is claiming to be God,<sup>4</sup> which is WHY the Scribes are questioning... AND why when anybody says to me/and maybe you’ve heard this/its especially common with Jehovah’s Witnesses and other likeminded groups<sup>5</sup> that, “*Ya know Jesus never claimed to be God.*” On the one hand, I’m like, “*yeah, I mean, you’re kinda right, cuz nowhere in Scripture did Jesus ever LITERALLY say, ‘I am God.’*” But on the other hand if you can’t see Him claiming to BE God in things like this, or certainly when He calls Himself the “*Son of Man*” there in **v.10**, which was an OT term for an appointed heavenly being, OR even more directly in places like **John 10** and **14** respectively, when He says, “*I and the Father are one*” or “*I am the way, the truth, and the life,*” - if you can’t see that, then you’re just kinda not reading OR worse being intellectually dishonest about what you ARE reading!

Jesus is very clearly claiming to BE God, which is WHY the Scribes are questioning AND therefore WHY Jesus sets up this kind of lesser-to-greater Q/A - to authenticate His divinity.

<sup>3</sup> Explanation adapted from A Paralytic Forgiven - Light in the Darkness - February 1, 2015 - Mark 2:1-12 - Timothy J. Keller, “[A Paralytic Forgiven](#),” in *The Timothy Keller Sermon Archive, 2014–2015* (New York: Redeemer Presbyterian Church, 2015), Mk 2:1–12.

<sup>4</sup> A Paralytic Forgiven - Light in the Darkness - February 1, 2015 - Mark 2:1-12 - Timothy J. Keller, “[A Paralytic Forgiven](#),” in *The Timothy Keller Sermon Archive, 2014–2015* (New York: Redeemer Presbyterian Church, 2015), Mk 2:1–12.

<sup>5</sup> Insight about JW's from R. C. Sproul, [Mark](#), First Edition., St. Andrew's Expository Commentary (Orlando, FL: Reformation Trust, 2011), 40.

Now here's the catch: The Q/A includes a trick question. Cuz let me ask you/Jesus asks the Scribes: "*Which is easier, to say to this paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or 'Rise, take up your bed and walk'?*" **How would you answer that?**...I mean obviously for us, it's way easier to say, "*Your sins are forgiven*" right? I mean we can't heal people AND if we could forgive em, there'd be non way to validate it one way or the other...**But let me ask you: What about for Jesus/ Which is easier for Him?** For Jesus you gotta see, it's actually easier for Him to make this man walk. And that's essentially what He's saying: "*If I can do the lesser thing/the physical miracle of healing, then I can certainly do the greater thing/the spiritual miracle of forgiving.*" It's easier for Jesus to heal this man. Because the great irony here is that minute Jesus does/the minute He says, "*rise, pick up your bed, and go home*" and this paralytic "*goes out before all of em, so that they're amazed and glorifying God*" - THAT'S the minute Jesus puts Himself in danger. Because it's the minute His own people now start plotting to kill Him. And so in THAT sense it's a lot harder for Jesus to forgive this man's sins, cuz what's that gonna ultimately entail? The Cross! Jesus is pointing you to the Cross, as if to say, "*Any miracle worker can say, 'Get up and walk.' But only the Savior of the world can say to you/me/anyone, 'your sins are forgiven.'*" But to be your Savior, Oh, that's gonna be so much harder than just healing a body. It's gonna mean the destruction of Jesus' body"...which incidentally is why commentators say, it's at THIS point/as early as **Mark chapter 2**, that the shadow of the cross begins to fall ACROSS Jesus' path.<sup>6</sup>

#### **APPLICATION:**

**Amazing** account isn't it?...So what do we learn? Cuz obviously, there's a ton of what I'd call "secondary truths" here right? Like the value of friendship/need for persistence and creativity in ministry, as evidenced by these 4 friends...Or that, like these friends, God uses us to help those we love encounter Him...Even the truth that blessings often come in disguise right, since were this man not to have been paralyzed, He might've never had his sins forgiven and his eternity transformed...Or how bout that Jesus is the kind of God who does immeasurably more than we ask or imagine. Just a lot of "secondary truths." But I think there's really only one "primary truth" here. And that is/write this down: **Jesus Wants You To See That Your Need For Him Far Surpasses Your Need For Anything Else:** Let me explain: Almost all of us first come to Jesus because we understand have problems for which we need help right? And if this passage teaches us anything, it teaches us that Jesus welcomes that! He's ok with you needing to get FROM Him. But ULTIMATELY He knows you need to get...Him! He wasn't content merely healing the paralytic's body. He went deeper and healed His soul. He wasn't content letting the Scribes sit there and question, He powerfully revealed Himself to them. And wasn't content ONLY "*preaching the word*" the crowds. He also displayed it! Because see, Jesus knows that apart from Him/apart from relationship with Him because you've had your sins forgiven through faith in Him, you'll never have what you truly need. I'll give you 2 examples: **First**, a **Practical** one, which we see with the Paralytic and his friends. They come to Jesus thinking physical healing is what they need most right? And you and I have things like that don't we? Practical things we believe are really urgent and if we DON'T have em, it'll hurt us in some way? Maybe for you it

<sup>6</sup> Explanation adapted from insights in "The Healing of Forgiveness - King's Cross: The Gospel of Mark, Part 1: The Coming of the King - March 12, 2006 - Mark 2:1-12" - Timothy J. Keller, *The Timothy Keller Sermon Archive* (New York City: Redeemer Presbyterian Church, 2013). + R. Kent Hughes, *Mark: Jesus, Servant and Savior*, vol. 1, Preaching the Word (Westchester, IL: Crossway Books, 1989), 62.

IS something physical OR maybe its something with your job, finances, housing, or just some other real-world practical need. And we think, *“THAT’S my most urgent need.”* ...But Friends, what Jesus is saying to you is, *“It’s not! Your most urgent need is relationship with me and trusting me in relationship with you.”* Cuz see, even if you get that thing/and to be sure, like with the paralytic, Jesus loves to give good things/as a Good Father, God loves to give His children good gifts. But you understand, you can always LOSE that thing. Even if you get healing today; you’re still gonna get sick again. Even if you get that house; over time it’s gonna get old. You can always be fired from that job, lose that relationship, or deplete that savings account...And if you don’t have Jesus/relationship with Jesus whereby in having your sins forgiven, you KNOW He’s forever for you; then you’re just gonna whipsaw back and forth between things like fear and anger or despair, when you lose or don’t have that thing...BUT when you have relationship with God through the forgiveness of your sin - like a child with their Father - THEN you can handle the problems of life by simply falling back into the arms OF your Heavenly Father! **Practically**, what you most need is Jesus.

But **Two, Emotionally**, what you most need Jesus. Cuz I know some of us might be thinking, *“forgiveness of my sin/relationship with God/that sounds good/want that, but Pastor you don’t understand; it’s not MY sin that’s the real problem. It’s someone else’s/someone sinning against ME!”* In other words, maybe you’re like the crowds here, who’d likely been wronged/really wronged by the Romans...And without wanting to be insensitive, Jesus says to you too, *“you also need me most!”* Cuz think about it: If you’ve been really wronged/like really wronged, there’s one thing you need more than anything else right? And that’s to NOT become bitter. Cuz we all know bitterness, cynicism, un-forgiveness has this way of just eating you alive. It’s like poison. You THINK in being bitter/holding something against somebody, you’re getting back at them. But the more you ingest that bitterness, the more toxic it becomes for YOU<sup>7</sup>...And you understand, the only way you can really fight against the bitterness of having BEEN hurt, is if you see yourself as one who HURT Jesus, but has BEEN forgiven!...I love the way Karry Shook says it: *“Forgiveness is just recycled grace!”*<sup>8</sup> Friend, when you take-in the grace that Jesus extends to you in the forgiveness of your sins, by His death on the Cross, it allows you to begin recycling that grace toward others who’ve sinned AGAINST you!

***So don’t you see? Your True Need/Practically/Emotionally*** - is Jesus/relationship with Him and learning to trust Him in relationship with you...And you know what’s so great? Jesus has already done everything necessary for you to enjoy that relationship. All YOU have to do is/like the paralytic, lower yourself before Him, and watch as He helps you walk into all kinds of newness WITH Him! Cuz to be sure: He’s ready to pounce with love. **Let’s Pray (NO Keys Underneath)**

- As you take a moment to consider God’s Word tonight, let me ask you: Do you see more clearly now that Jesus is what you AND those around you need most?...If so, would you acknowledge that to Him right now and simply thank Him for making Himself available to you?... **“Father...Amen”**

<sup>7</sup> Insight about bitterness adapted from A Paralytic Forgiven - Light in the Darkness - February 1, 2015 - Mark 2:1-12 - Timothy J. Keller, *“A Paralytic Forgiven,”* in *The Timothy Keller Sermon Archive, 2014–2015* (New York: Redeemer Presbyterian Church, 2015), Mk 2:1–12.

<sup>8</sup> Karry Shook, *“One Month to Live”*