



## World Christian Fellowship

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### Jesus forgives sin!

**Mark 2:1-12,** *And again He entered Capernaum after some days, and it was heard that He was in the house. <sup>2</sup>Immediately many gathered together, so that there was no longer room to receive them, not even near the door. And He preached the word to them. <sup>3</sup>Then they came to Him, bringing a paralytic who was carried by four men. <sup>4</sup>And when they could not come near Him because of the crowd, they uncovered the roof where He was. So when they had broken through, they let down the bed on which the paralytic was lying. <sup>5</sup>When Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytic, "Son, your sins are forgiven you." <sup>6</sup>And some of the scribes were sitting there and reasoning in their hearts, <sup>7</sup>"Why does this Man speak blasphemies like this? Who can forgive sins but God alone?"*

*<sup>8</sup>But immediately, when Jesus perceived in His spirit that they reasoned thus within themselves, He said to them, "Why do you reason about these things in your hearts? <sup>9</sup>Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven you,' or to say, 'Arise, take up your bed and walk'? <sup>10</sup>But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins"—He*

said to the paralytic, <sup>11</sup>“I say to you, arise, take up your bed, and go to your house.” <sup>12</sup>Immediately he arose, took up the bed, and went out in the presence of them all, so that all were amazed and glorified God, saying, “We never saw anything like this!”

### **What is the most distinctive benefit that Christianity offers?**

There is one benefit that transcends all other realities, a benefit that directly corresponds to man’s greatest need.

### **What is man’s greatest need?**

Let us hear the answer to that question from the lips of Jesus.

**John 8:21**, *Then Jesus said to them again, “I am going away, and you will seek Me, and will die in your sin. Where I go you cannot come.”*

**John 8:24**, *Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins.”*

Three times Jesus says, “You are going to die in your sins, and you are not going to be able to come to heaven, unless you believe in Me.”

## **What sends people to hell?**

Not sin!

Unforgiven sin!!

Christianity answers the compelling question, “**Can I be forgiven?**”

## **Can I be forgiven?**

If you are giving a faithful message concerning the Christian message, the Christian truth, the Christian gospel, what you are telling people is, the good news is that you can be forgiven.

*Acts 13:38-39, Therefore let it be known to you, brethren, that through this Man is preached to you the forgiveness of sins;<sup>39</sup> and by Him everyone who believes is justified from all things from which you could not be justified by the law of Moses.*

Now, the story is full of people.

It is all about people.

The characters that play roles in this incident.

The crowd.

The paralytic.

The Savior.

The leaders.

The people who brought the paralytic.

Setting, action, and reaction.

## **1. Setting.**

The setting is the curious crowd.

**V 1-2,** *And again He entered Capernaum after some days, and it was heard that He was in the house.<sup>2</sup>Immediately many gathered together, so that there was no longer room to receive them, not even near the door. And He preached the word to them.*

“When He had come back to Capernaum” indicates to us that He had been somewhere. He had been somewhere for a period of time, several days had passed.

We know where Jesus has been.

**Mark 1:45,** *However, he went out and began to proclaim it freely, and to spread the matter, so that Jesus could no longer openly enter the city, but was outside in deserted places; and they came to Him from every direction.*

The man that He had healed from leprosy had been told not to say anything but to be quiet and go all the way to Jerusalem and show himself to the priests and go through the necessary

cleansing and sacrifice to reenter society from being an outcast as a leper.

**Mark 1:44**, *and said to him, "See that you say nothing to anyone; but go your way, show yourself to the priest, and offer for your cleansing those things which Moses commanded, as a testimony to them."*

He didn't do that!

He went everywhere and just told everybody about the healing. It stirred up the excitement of the crowds because leprosy was the worst of the worst.

Instead of obeying Jesus, he spread it everywhere to the extent that Jesus could no longer publicly enter a city, stayed out at an unpopulated area.

People were coming to Jesus from everywhere. He couldn't go into a city because the crush of the people was so overwhelming.

Jesus was certainly willing to heal, and He did.

But what was more important to Him.

**Mark 1:38**, *But He said to them, "Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also, because for this purpose I have come forth."*

He was in Capernaum but then He said let us leave from here.

**Why?**

**Mark 1:36-37**, *And Simon and those who were with Him searched for Him.<sup>37</sup>When they found Him, they said to Him, "Everyone is looking for You."*

After His healings there, healings of masses of people, as well as Peter's wife's mother, there was just an inundation of people into His life, and it made it hard for Him to preach. Everybody was clamouring to be healed.

Jesus went into their synagogues throughout all Galilee, all around the lake, preaching and casting out demons.

For months, Jesus has been away from Capernaum.

He has been healing and casting out demons.

He has been preaching the glorious gospel of salvation, repentance, and faith in God's grace and forgiveness.

Things have cooled down a little bit because He has been out in the wilderness for so long.

Jesus thinks He can re-enter Capernaum.

Several days after completing this tour of the lake area.

He comes back to what was home.

The home for Jesus during His Galilean ministry, which lasted as long as a year and a half, was Capernaum.

Most likely, He stayed in the home of Peter and Andrew. That was His home base. He comes back to this, the largest town on the lake, trade centre north and south, east, and west, busy place. Roman garrison there, tax office there. Significant place. He comes back.

What had He done while He had been gone?  
Preached and cast out demons.

When He arrives at the home of Simon and Andrew many were gathered together there. It was a mob scene. There was no longer any room for anybody, not even near the door. It was just completely jammed.

Crowds were no measure of ministry success.  
Crowds were no measure of spiritual success.

Never does Mark say the crowds were coming to Jesus in repentance and faith.

Generally, they are curious.

They are spiritually passive.  
They are spiritually uncommitted.  
They want the healing.  
They want the food.

But they really are not seeking anything spiritual from Jesus in general.

Of course, are some true believers, but they are a small minority.

The crowd really functions to obstruct Jesus more than anything, to make it difficult for Him to teach because of the commotion of the people who want their physical needs met, because of the crush.

They make it hard for Him to minister and to teach.

Even when He is teaching, the interruptions must have been constant.

As this amazing interruption where people start opening through the roof in the middle of your lesson.

The curious crowds are drawn by the desire for more miracles. They are generally indifferent to Jesus' teaching.

Jesus was speaking the Word to them the Word from God, the Word about salvation, the Kingdom, entering the Kingdom through repentance and faith.

**Luke 4** records that He went to Nazareth, His own hometown, gave one message there, told them it was the favourable year of the Lord.

He had come to proclaim the glorious liberty of salvation. At the end of that sermon, they try to throw Him off a cliff and kill Him.

They had no interest in the spiritual message.

They were very deeply offended by it because it was predicated on them recognizing their own wretchedness and sinfulness, spiritual poverty, blindness, lack of liberty, spiritual oppression.

They didn't want to see themselves that way, they thought they were the holy.

Jesus preached that same message surely in Capernaum.

They didn't try to kill Him in Capernaum, so He made it His home and stayed there. So, there is the curious crowd.

Luke adds, the Pharisees were mingled in. Comes from a word meaning separated.

Pharisees are the guardians of the populist form of apostate Judaism. They are the fundamentalists, legalists, architects, and promoters of salvation by works.

They believed in the coming of Messiah, the Messianic Kingdom. They were non-priests.

They were devoted to keeping the people loyal to the Old Testament law, and more importantly, the tradition.

There were only about **6000** of them, at this time, but they were pervasive in their influence in the synagogue system throughout the land of Israel.

They began after they returned from the Babylonian captivity in the time of Ezra. They had developed for 400 years this system of legalistic Judaism that was nothing but apostate.

The Pharisees were mingled in the crowd that day in the house because they had started to follow the steps of Jesus because they were already so concerned with what He was saying.

They saw Jesus as their threat. They wanted to trap Him in some blasphemy, so they would have a reason to execute Him.

Within the group of the Pharisees, there was also a group called scribes.

**V 6,** Scribes were also sitting there.

The scribes were the theologians that belonged to the Pharisees' system.

The Pharisees were the preachers and teachers of the system. They were the scholars.

- Not all scribes were Pharisees.
- Not all Pharisees were scribes.
  
- There were Pharisees that were not scribes.
- There were scribes that were not Pharisees.
  
- There were scribes of the Sadducees.
- There were independent scribes as well.

Jesus would even have been considered a scribe, who was completely independent of any of those orders or sects.

But the New Testament makes several references to the scribes of the Pharisees. Each religious system, whether it was the Essenes or the Sadducees or the Pharisees, had their scholars that put their system together and certainly the Pharisees had theirs.

**Luke 5:17**, *Now it happened on a certain day, as He was teaching, that there were Pharisees and teachers of the law sitting by, who had come out of every town of Galilee, Judea, and Jerusalem. And the power of the Lord was present to heal them.*

The scribes were the teachers and theologians and they were there as well. They were all there, wanting to trap Jesus.

The Holy Spirit was there in full power to heal, and so that's why the people were there, they were there for the healings. But Jesus was teaching the curious crowd.

## **2. Action:**

The believing sinner.

**V 3-4**, *Then they came to Him, bringing a paralytic who was carried by four men. And when they could not come near Him because of the crowd, they uncovered the roof where He was. So when they had broken through, they let down the bed on which the paralytic was lying.*

Luke tells us also they wanted to get the man in to Christ. They couldn't get him in. They couldn't get him through the door because it was jammed.

Being unable to get him in and they tried.

**Luke 5:18-19**, *Then behold, men brought on a bed a man who was paralyzed, whom they sought to bring in and lay before Him. <sup>19</sup>And when they could not find how they might bring him in, because of the crowd, they went up on the housetop and let him down with his bed through the tiling into the midst before Jesus.*

A lot of different ways to do it.

The crowd forms a barrier.

The crowd is always seen as some kind an obstruction to what must happen. Unyielding, without compassion, indifferent. But these are determined people.

They removed the roof above Him. When they had dug an opening, they let down the pallet on which the paralytic was lying.

You must have heard this incident many times, it has a certain amount of familiarity.

This is a shocking event. To say nothing of a very disturbing one if you are trying to make a point.

Anybody who teaches in public knows that you like as few distractions as possible. You are trying to maintain people's

attention so that they can stay with you in the process. Here is Jesus and they have gone up on the roof.

### **How were houses made in those days?**

One-story house.

It would have a large centre room but one story, flat roof, external staircase. This is the way they did it, not internal.

Go up the external stairs. The roof was made from large beams in the roof, and then between the larger beams there would be smaller pieces of wood, sticks, and then there would be thatch. It would be thatch that was made.

Then there would be mud, and mud after the thatch was thick. Mud would be laid there as well. On top of the mud would be some kind of tiles. That's the roof.

That is why it says they dug through the roof because they would have to remove the tiles and then start digging through the combination of mud and thatch to find a place where they could pull some sticks apart and a large enough place to lower a man on a bed through the roof.

They went up on the roof. They had to determine exactly where Jesus was because they didn't want to lower the man somewhere else in the room.

So, they figured exactly where Jesus was. If they lowered the man anywhere else in the room, then they would have to work their way through the immovable crowd.

They made a good assessment of where that was. Lord teaching the gospel of the Kingdom. Suddenly mud starts falling on His head, thatch starts coming down all over the place. People are looking up. This is a horrible distraction.

We don't know how long it would take to dig hole in a roof, but that's what they did, to lower the man down.

It is certainly dangerous.

Luke says they calculated accurately and dropped the man right in front of Jesus.

The crowd must be focused on this, transfixed by it, certainly agitated by it.

We know this about those five men.

They believed Jesus could heal. They went to some very extreme points to get him down there.

They had to believe. Certainly, the paralytic had to believe it. He would be embarrassed to be seen in public anyway because any such kind of infirmity was deemed as a judgment

of God against the man, and people like that didn't tend to go out in public.

The paralytic man really believed Jesus could heal him, and his four friends believed it to some degree, and we know they did because in verse 5 Jesus sees their faith.

### **The believing sinner, to the forgiving Savior.**

*V 5, When Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytic, "Son, your sins are forgiven you."*

They all had faith.

They all had faith that Jesus could heal.

### **How did they have that faith?**

Because He had been doing it. This is natural faith. This is human faith.

The same faith that allows you to go into the hospital and have surgery.

### **Why do you let somebody put you asleep?**

They wheel you into a room and somebody slices you open and messes around.

You don't know the doctor.

You don't know how he treats his wife, his kids, his friends, his enemies.

### **Why do you do that?**

Because you have experienced that hospitals are designed to be safe places, and doctors are designed to be safe people.

All the people that surround them, like nurses and anaesthesiologists and everybody else, are highly trained and highly experienced. They have done this kind of operation many times. You can put yourself in their hands and you can trust it's human faith.

The same faith you exercise when you go to eat in a restaurant.

You have never been in the kitchen in your life and probably shouldn't ever go to the kitchen. But there is something about human experience that teaches you that this is something that can be counted upon.

There is evidently faith that Jesus can heal.

Strong faith because they think He is going to heal this man, or they wouldn't go through all of this.

They are going to have to pay for the repair of the whole roof. They are going to have to embarrass the man if it doesn't happen. They have such confidence.

### **Why?**

Because Jesus not only could heal, but He healed everybody.

Obviously, they had whatever that human faith is that drew the masses to Him, confident that He could heal them.

*“Jesus seeing their faith”.*

Jesus could see that they had this kind of faith in His healing ability because of what they did.

James put it this way, *“Faith without works is dead.”*

- Faith acts.
- Faith overcomes.
- Faith pursues.
- Faith strives to its object.

Jesus said specifically to the paralytic, *“Son, your sins are forgiven.”*

Not the rest, but yours.

Jesus saw in him a faith that was not visible to everybody else.

Jesus doesn't forgive sins unless the sinner repents and believes.

**What did Jesus see in this man?**

**What kind of faith?**

Not a natural faith, not a human faith, but a spiritual faith. This is more.

This is not just healing, this is salvation.

This man's faith was not limited to believing in Jesus' healing power. This man believed that Jesus was the One who offered salvation to those who repent. Jesus saw the real deal.

**John 2:25**, *and had no need that anyone should testify of man, for He knew what was in man.*

Jesus saw the real kind of faith, the faith that saves, the faith that doesn't come from experience but comes from conviction and that comes from sovereign regeneration.

Jesus said in a very endearing expression, "*Son.*"

Jesus knew what he really wanted.

He wanted healing but far more than that, he wanted forgiveness.

The sinner who is paralyzed may have a different view about his own wretchedness and may see that paralysis as a judgment.

Certainly, they did in that culture. They just connected those and so did the people who were ill.

But whatever the motivation or whatever the stimulation, the man knew himself to be wretched on the inside as much as wretched on the outside.

He wanted not just a healing, but he wanted forgiveness. He believed that this was the One who could bring him forgiveness from God.

Jesus at this moment based on His own personal authority absolved the man of all his sins.

The man's heart must have been like the Publican in **Luke 18** who said, "God, be merciful to me, a sinner." That man went home righteousness.

### **3. Reaction.**

#### **What the hostile leaders were looking for?**

**V 6-7**, *And some of the scribes were sitting there and reasoning in their hearts, "Why does this Man speak blasphemies like this? Who can forgive sins but God alone?"*

They were exactly right.

Now, here is just the kind of blasphemy they are looking for, a claim to do what only God can do, forgive sins. This is out of bounds, this is blasphemy.

They weren't saying this.

They were just thinking it.

The heart is equal to the mind in the Hebrew thought.

We talk about the heart, we usually think about emotion, but they thought about thought.

Jesus was reading their minds. They were saying in their minds, not out loud, why does this man speak that way? He's blaspheming. "Who can forgive sins but God alone?" And they're right. And so here's their conclusion: He's a blasphemer. He's a blasphemer and that is correct. He is either a blasphemer or He is God.

Main point of the whole incident.

Either Jesus is a blasphemer, or He is God.

There is no middle ground.

Jesus is either the One who can forgive sin or He is not.

If He can, He is God.

If He cannot, He is a blasphemer.

Jesus is saying that He can do something that He cannot do and is a fraud and a deceiver. There's no middle ground.

Now, in their minds, He is a blasphemer, and they knew what the Levitical law said.

**Leviticus 24:11-16**, *And the Israelite woman's son blasphemed the name of the Lord and cursed; and so they brought him to Moses. (His mother's name was Shelomith the daughter of Dibri, of the tribe of Dan.)<sup>12</sup> Then they put him in custody, that <sup>[9]</sup>the mind of the Lord might be shown to them.<sup>13</sup> And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying,<sup>14</sup> "Take outside the camp him who has cursed; then let all who heard him lay their hands on his head, and let all the congregation stone him.<sup>15</sup> "Then you shall speak to the children of Israel, saying: 'Whoever curses his God shall bear his sin.<sup>16</sup> And whoever blasphemes the name of the Lord shall surely be put to death. All the congregation shall certainly stone him, the stranger as well as him who is born in the land. When he blasphemes the name of the Lord, he shall be put to death.*

**Leviticus 24:23**, *Then Moses spoke to the children of Israel; and they took outside the camp him who had cursed, and stoned him with stones. So the children of Israel did as the Lord commanded Moses.*

We now have blasphemy out of His mouth.

We have the Levitical law, which sentences Him to death.  
We got what we want.

Now, Jesus knows they were thinking this, so He speaks to them.

**V 8**, *But immediately, when Jesus perceived in His spirit that they reasoned thus within themselves, He said to them, “Why do you reason about these things in your hearts?”*

### **What a shock that must have been?**

Jesus read their minds.  
He was aware of their thoughts.

Now, if you are debating whether Jesus is a blasphemer or God, you can start here.

Blasphemers don't know what people are thinking, only God does.

**1 Samuel 16:7**, *But the Lord said to Samuel, “Do not look at his appearance or at his physical stature, because I have refused him. For the Lord does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.”*

**1 Kings 8:39**, *whatever prayer, whatever supplication is made by anyone, or by all Your people Israel, when each one knows*

*the plague of his own heart, and spreads out his hands toward this temple:*

**1 Chronicles 28:9**, *“As for you, my son Solomon, know the God of your father, and serve Him with a loyal heart and with a willing mind; for the Lord searches all hearts and understands all the intent of the thoughts. If you seek Him, He will be found by you; but if you forsake Him, He will cast you off forever.*

**Jeremiah 17:10**, *I, the Lord, search the heart, I test the mind, Even to give every man according to his ways, According to the fruit of his doings.*

**Ezekiel 11:5**, *Then the Spirit of the Lord fell upon me, and said to me, “Speak! ‘Thus says the Lord: “Thus you have said, O house of Israel; for I know the things that come into your mind.*

So, if you are wondering whether He is a blasphemer or whether He is God, those men had first-hand proof on the spot when He read their thoughts.

**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’?*

**Which is it easier to say, is it easier to say believably so, your sins are forgiven?”**

No.

**Why?**

**How do you prove it?**

**What's the evidence of that?**

**How do you know when someone's sins have been forgiven?**

That's not verifiable.

You can't say it with evidence that it is true.

On the other hand, Jesus says, "Is it easier to say, 'Get up, pick up your pallet and walk' and be believable?"

It is because if He does it, then you have proven it.

Prove you have the power to make it happen, and everybody will affirm that what you said is true.

If the man does what Jesus tells him to do, if he gets up, picks up his bed and walks out - guess what? He is God.

Jesus is not a blasphemer.

If Jesus is God, who can create and, in a moment, to be completely well then, He is God.

If Jesus is God, then He can forgive sin, something only God can do. If He displays the power to heal, if He displays the power to do creation miracles, He must be God.

If Jesus is God, then He has the authority to forgive sin.

When Jesus said, “Take up your bed and walk,” and the man takes up his bed and walks, that is evidence that He is God. It validates the fact that He said, “Your sins are forgiven.”

That also becomes reality. Only God can do both!

- ✓ Jesus forgives sin and He also has the power to overrule the effects of sin.
- ✓ Jesus has authority over the consequences of sin.
- ✓ Jesus has power over demons.
- ✓ Jesus has power over death.

All of that is power over the forces of evil, and the one who has power over the forces of evil also has power over the evil itself.

Later Jesus delegated His power over the effects of evil to His followers, gave them healing power and the ability to cast out demons, but never delegated to anybody the power and authority to forgive sin.

Jesus is proving that He can forgive sin by proving He is God by doing this miracle.

**V 10-12**, *But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins*—He said to the paralytic, <sup>11</sup>“I say to you, arise, take up your bed, and go to your house.” <sup>12</sup>Immediately he arose, took up the bed, and went out in the presence of them all, so that all were amazed and glorified God, saying, “We never saw anything like this!”

**Are you still asking the question?**

**Is He God or is He a blasphemer?**

Blasphemers don't read minds.

Blasphemers don't create new limbs, new bodies.

Jesus must be God. If He is God, it is not blasphemy for Him to say, “Your sins are forgiven.”

*“Get up, pick up, go home.”*

He did it. He got up, picked up, and went home.

Instant, total, unmistakable display by the Creator God.

Luke adds that as he left, he was glorifying God.

A new body and a new heart!

He must be eager to make any contribution he needed to do the repair of the roof.

**V 10**, *“Son of man.”*

**Why did Jesus call Himself that?**

**Why not Son of God?**

**Why not the Anointed One?**

**Why not Son of David?**

**Why Son of man?**

Son of man is a Messianic title.

**Daniel 7:13-14**, *"I was watching in the night visions, And behold, One like the Son of Man, Coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, And they brought Him near before Him. <sup>14</sup>Then 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 the one Which shall not be destroyed.*

The only time the Son of man ever refers to Messiah.

Every other time you see Son of man in the Old Testament, it means just man.

**Psalm 8:4**, *What is man that You are mindful of him, And the son of man that You visit him?*

**Psalm 144:3**, *Lord, what is man, that You take knowledge of him? Or the son of man, that You are mindful of him?*

**Psalm 145:12**, *To make known to the sons of men His mighty acts, And the glorious majesty of His kingdom.*

**Ezekiel 2:1**, *And He said to me, "Son of man, stand on your feet, and I will speak to you."*

**Ezekiel chapter 2**, about four times Ezekiel is referred to as Son of man, meaning He is just human.

### **Why would Jesus choose to use that term?**

It is used 80 times in the New Testament, 14 times in Luke.

It really was our Lord's favourite term for Himself.

### **Why? Why did He not call Himself Son of God?**

### **Why did He not call Himself Son of David, Messiah, Anointed One, Christ?**

Some people say it's because He was humble.

It was a title of humility.

But it was a title of humility because it wasn't necessarily associated with being the Messiah.

It provides cover for Him so as not to inflame His followers or inflame His enemies if He went around constantly referring to Himself as the Son of God.

He really doesn't want to exacerbate the unnecessary, undesirable, political elements tied to Messianic expectation.

In Mark that He told people, "Don't say anything about this."

**Mark 3:12**, *But He sternly warned them that they should not make Him known.*

Mark points it out repeatedly that Jesus is trying to slow down the rush. He was trying to be able to do what He needs to do, to go to town to town to town to preach the message of salvation, the Kingdom.

Crowds as they get bigger and bigger it becomes obstruction.

They get Messianic expectations out of proportion to reality, and sometimes they even try to force Him to be a King and He has to escape.

Son of man was a title that certainly had a Messianic indication in the seventh chapter of Daniel, but for the most part didn't heighten the Messianic expectation, and it did demonstrate His wonderful humility.

They were all amazed, were glorifying God, saying, “We have never seen anything like this,” the astonished crowd. That’s all we ever seem to get out of them.

## **Conclusion:**

Man’s greatest problem is sin!

Man’s greatest need is need is forgiveness of their sin.

God’s greatest gift is Mercy.

## **Application.**

### **How do we apply this passage?**

*V 3, Then they came to Him, bringing a paralytic who was carried by four men.*

#### **Who are these four men?**

They have understood and enjoyed the freedom of forgiveness of their sins from Jesus.

#### **What did they do?**

They went out of their comfort zone!

They took great risk.

Willing to pay any price.

Not forced succumb to the pressure of circumstances.

Focused to get the paralytic right in front of Jesus.

Willing to join with others to do the mission what the Lord had given them.

**Are you willing to do?**

Humility!