

stand-alone sermons



OPENING COMMENT

The account of the paralytic man and his four friends is probably a familiar story. 4 guys grab their buddy and head to Jesus to see if he can heal him, or at least that is how we might be tempted to see this narrative. Instead, we should see this event as 4 guys so convinced that Jesus could help that they put their reputation on the line to affiliate so closely with this paralytic. It is in understanding all of the obstacles these men conquered in order to help that we see the outworking of a true encounter with Christ. The call to gospel faithfulness and Christ centeredness required radical abandonment to self.

READ THE TEXT: Mark 2:1-12

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. 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. ⁵ And when Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, "Son, your sins are forgiven."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?" 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? ⁹ Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Rise, take up your bed and walk'? 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." 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!"

UNDERSTANDING THE TEXT

1. What is the first thing Jesus addresses? (vs. 5)
2. Whose faith is Jesus responding to when he addresses the paralytic? (vs. 5)
3. What is the presupposition of the scribes? (vs. 7) Are they correct in their assessment?
4. Based on Jesus' question, which action (healing or forgiving) is perceived as more difficult? (vs. 9)
5. Why does Jesus heal the paralytic? (vs. 10)
6. What is the response of the crowd? (vs 12)



APPLYING THE TEXT

1. The 4 men brought the paralytic to Jesus because of his physical need, yet Jesus addressed his spiritual need first. How might this change the way we address needs around us?
2. The 4 men were convinced that the paralytic's physical salvation was in an encounter with Jesus. How might their disposition inform our interaction with those around us?
3. In what ways are we attending to our own faith in Christ before we bring those around us to him?
4. Jesus' priority is to heal the paralytic spiritually by forgiving his sin and then confirms his spiritual wholeness by physically healing him. How might we adjust our prayer lives to reflect the priority of Christ as shown here?
5. It is important to recognize that both needs (physical and spiritual) are not neglected by Christ. He does not leave the paralytic in his state of disability but heals him completely. How might this inform our interaction with those around us who are hurting and in need?
6. The response from the crowd was to glorify God. Our call as ambassadors for Christ is to bring glory to him. How might we engage with those around us in a way that minimizes our greatness and emphasizes his?

BIBLICAL THREAD

1. Genesis 1 – 2 – Biblical starting point is God of creation
2. Matthew 25:31-46 – feeding, clothing, and ministering to the poor is a part of service to Christ.
3. 2 Corinthians 2:14 – 17 – we are the aroma of Christ.
4. 2 Corinthians 5:16 – 21 – we are ambassadors of Christ.
5. Ephesians 2:1- 10 – we are spiritual dead and in need of Christ.
6. James 2 – Faith without works is dead. It is not good to say to a poor person “go and be well fed” without actually addressing the need.

CONCLUSION

The questions that should be left ringing in our minds center on who we have to bring to Jesus and how we will accomplish that audacious task. Instead of worrying about how they will react or if they will embrace Christ, we should be focused on getting them front and centre with the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. Our energy, resources, talents, time and conviction should be poured into bringing those around us into the presence of Christ. The rest is up to Him.

SHARE & PRAY

LIFE GROUP VISION:

The goal to meeting together around the word of God is three fold. First, we want to more clearly understand what God is saying to us through his Word and apply it to our own hearts and minds. Secondly, we want to build a loving community with each other to disciple one another toward maturity in Christ. Thirdly, we desire each of us, as ambassadors of Christ, to look outwards to our community and ask how we can bring the truth of the gospel to bear on those whom God has placed in our lives.

