

## Daily Bible Study

*“Who Can Forgive Sins but God Alone?”*

*Mark 2:1-12*

*September 20-26, 2009*

**THE LORD’S DAY** – This week we come to **Chapter 2** in Mark’s gospel and as we begin it and move through it we are going to be made aware of a contrast with **Chapter 1**. Jesus begins to receive opposition in this chapter differing from the opposition He received earlier. We saw that Satan himself as well as the demons were in opposition to Jesus in **Chapter 1** but now we are going to find that men begin to oppose Christ in various ways. If you will think back to the first chapter you will remember that the heavens were opened at Jesus’ baptism, The Spirit descended on Him like a dove, and God The Father audibly spoke from heaven saying, *“This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased”*. The people saw this confirmation from heaven upon The Son, the incredible miracles of healing and deliverance preformed by Jesus as well as His powerful and authoritative teaching and preaching and they were nothing short of *“amazed”*, *“astonished”* and filled with a sense of marvel (**1:21-27**). The people were thronging to Jesus but very soon human sinful nature is exposed for what it is; selfish and fickle and we will begin to see the attitudes of many begin to turn on Christ. In this weeks passage we see Jesus continue to demonstrate His Divine power as He heals this paralytic both physically and spiritually. He forgives this man of his sin and takes this time to teach. Read **Mark 2:1-12**.

*The Word Applied: What is one specific thing that stands out to you in reading this text?*

*Suggestion for Prayer: Father, teach me this week as I study and feed upon Your Word.*

**MONDAY** – As our text begins in **verse 1** we find that Jesus is said to have *“entered Capernaum after some days...”* The *“some days”* is most likely a reference to what were told in **verse 39** of **Chapter 1** when Mark informs us that Jesus *“was preaching in their synagogues throughout all Galilee, and casting out demons”*. The verse continues by saying *“it was heard that He was in the house”*. There is some discussion as to what *“house”* this is referring to. Many scholars see Peter’s home in view, mentioning the graphic touches of detail in **verse 2** and later in the story which they see as vivid recollections of Peter as he informs Mark as to what took place at his house. Others see this possibly as the home of Jesus, Mary, and Christ’s siblings which they owned. Still, some argue that if Mark was speaking of Peter’s place he would have been even more definitive as he was in **1:29** (*“...house of Simon...”*). Also possible is that this could have been a place provided to Jesus by friends or followers. Regardless of what or whose house this was the fact remains that Jesus was there and the word got out that He was *“back in town”*. Mark informs us that *“immediately many gathered together...”* Once again we see a house filling with individuals as they did in **Chapter 1**. The differing groups of people that had gathered must have covered a wide spectrum. There no doubt were friends and disciples of Jesus present as well as people who were just following the buzz on the street to appease their curiosity concerning this miracle working preacher. Finally and sadly it must be pointed out that there were religious leaders present; namely the *“scribes”* or Pharisees (**Luke 5:17**) who by all indications from Sacred Scripture were filled with envy and rage over Jesus, His teaching, and the crowds that were following Him instead of them. Read **Luke 3:7-9**.

*The Word Applied: Many people sought Jesus out of curiosity or selfish reasons. Why do you? What one thing from **Luke 3:7-9** did John tell those who gathered to him they should do?*

*Suggestion for Prayer: Father, help me to bear fruit worthy of repentance that glorify You.*

**TUESDAY** – We saw yesterday that another crowd was assembled and coming to Jesus. Regardless of the motives of those who *“gathered together”*, we read that there were a whole lot of them. If just for cures or curiosity the fact remained they were coming to Christ. The text says that *“there was no longer room to receive them, not even near the door.”* We can imagine the scene in our minds eye and the picture there is of a house in our vernacular, *“busting at the seams”* with people. Here in the midst of a crowded house on *“regular day”* in Jesus’ life, He takes the opportunity to continue and fulfill His *purpose (1:38)* as *“...He preached the word to them”*. This is what he had said was the purpose of His coming down from heaven to earth. I would point out that there are two different Greek words used

for “*preach*” in **1:38** and for “*preached*” in **2:2**. The word “speaking” would seem to me to be a better translation of the Greek in **verse 2**. With that being said, there is no contradiction that in “speaking” the word Jesus is still about His purpose as one must speak - *laleo* (to utter a voice or emit a sound, to speak) in order to preach - *kerusso* (to be a herald, to proclaim). Jesus was speaking to them the *word*, the “logos”. This is the word of God, the teaching of God, the revelation He came to deliver which was none other than the fact that sinful, fallen, undeserving man could be forgiven, saved and delivered from the just wrath of a holy God by faith alone in the person and work of the Savior, Jesus Christ, by God’s grace alone. Jesus was all about speaking the Gospel, “*the power of God unto salvation*”. Read **Romans 1:16-17, 1 Corinthians 1:18-25**.

*The Word Applied: The Apostle Paul call the “Gospel”, “the message of the cross” the power of God in these Scriptures. The message of Christ crucified is “the power and wisdom of God” to believers. We need to place our confidence in the message & faithfully proclaim & speak it.*

*Suggestion for Prayer: O Father, increase my faith. Help me see and cherish Your powerful gospel message. Help me be consumed by the gospel and speak it with strength and courage.*

**WEDNESDAY** – Into this scene of a mobbed house and a crowded mass of people eagerly listening to Jesus come four men “*...bringing a paralytic*”. Who were these *four men*? This detail of *four men* is particular to Mark’s account only. The other gospel writers do tell us that this man was brought by others but Mark alone mentions that it was *four men* who *carried* him. This adds to the understanding of the horrible condition of this man. He was in a desperate and miserable condition. This man was said to be a *paralytic* or one who suffered from *palsy*. This disease is one that disables a person and the nerves of the body are damaged and motion and muscle function is lost most often due to an injury affecting areas of the brain and or the spinal cord. Regardless of how this man had gotten into this state or to what degree the disease had progressed it is clear that his body had been affected by paralysis to the point that he had to be *carried* as he could not apparently move about on his own. Scripture tells us that “*when they could not come near Him because of the crowd, they uncovered the roof where he was.*” These men came to this crowded scene and we find them to be men of resource. In terms familiar to roofers by trade, they were “ripping” roof. Interestingly the modern vernacular agrees with the original language which explains how they *uncovered the roof*. It says, “*...when they had broken through...*” which is actually translated from one word which means to dig out, or dig through. The construction of the houses back then lent itself to this task being so productive. In today’s terms they ripped out the roof material between the rafters. These four men demonstrated a faith that saw through the barriers to the source of power and healing. We mentioned that we don’t know for sure the connection of the *four men* with the *paralytic* but may I suggest whatever the connection, these men were real friends. Read **Proverbs 12:26, Ecclesiastes 4:9-10**.

*The Word Applied: Are your friends the type of people who will guide you into righteousness? Scripture tells us the benefit of guidance, help, and blessing a man receives from true friends.*

*Suggestion for Prayer: Father, help me surround myself with Godly friends and also be an influence of righteousness toward others, always pointing and leading people to Jesus.*

**THURSDAY** – The *four men* worked, *uncovered the roof* and then lowered the man to Jesus. The fact there were *four men*, probably accounts for why the flannel graph or children’s story pictures we’ve seen depict this passage showing four ropes fastened on the four corners of “*the bed*” upon which this man lay. This “*bed*” defined as “a pallet” or “camp bed” was just a simple mat like “bed” for one person. This man lying helpless on his mat was getting lowered through the roof to the One who could help him. **Verse 5** begins with “*When Jesus saw their faith...*” Whose faith? The faith of the paralytic, and his friends, who appeared confident, that if they could get at Christ, a cure would be gained. All three gospel narratives of this account use “*their*” faith. This previous effort from the *four men* was visible evidence they believed Christ could heal their friend. That the sick man himself had faith, we know from the upcoming proclamation of his forgiveness from Jesus. And some would assume that these *four men carried* him to Jesus merely out of loving compassion and compliance with his request. But here we learn this must not be the case for not only did these men have the same faith as the sick man, but Jesus marked it as genuine faith; faith that wouldn’t be defeated and proved victorious. This was the type of genuine faith that we find Jesus always looked for, noticed, and rewarded. Read **James 2:14-26**.

*The Word Applied:* Jesus “saw their faith”; He saw this genuine faith because it was backed by what James the Apostle calls “works”. “Faith alone saves, but the faith that saves is never alone”. Examine your life today for “visible faith”. List what evidences you can see.

*Suggestion for Prayer:* Father, I pray You will help me possess and demonstrate genuine faith.

**FRIDAY** – In Palestine in Jesus day it was inevitable that people saw sin and suffering to be connected. It is told that the Rabbi’s had a saying, “There is no sick man healed of his sickness until all his sins have been forgiven him”. We can see this logic throughout Scripture (**Job 4:7, 22:5-10, Luke 13:4, John 9:2**) and it is believed today as well. We can say that in some sense all sickness and suffering are the results of sin. At the fall God placed the entire creation in a state of groaning under the curse (**Romans 8:19-22**) but this notion that all sickness and suffering are always linked to an individual’s specific sin is a notion that Christ dismisses. In **verse 5** Jesus now addresses the sick man and calls him, “Son”. This is an affectionate address, the same word being used by Paul the Apostle referring to his “son” Timothy (**1 Timothy 1:2**). Now, the order of the words in the next phrase is very important and in the original it reads, “Τέκνον, ἀφίενταί σου αἱ ἁμαρτίαι”, “Son, Forgiven you the sins”. The emphasis is placed on the forgiveness granted and Christ in one moment authoritatively proclaims this man’s sins pardoned. Read **Romans 4:6-8, Colossians 1:14, 2:13, 1 John 2:12**.

*The Word Applied:* If you are In Christ, as a believer your sins are forgiven. Meditate today on this blessed fact that all your sin; past, present, and future has been dealt with at the cross.

*Suggestion for Prayer:* Jesus, thank You for bearing the punishment for my sin upon yourself.

**SATURDAY** – In **verse 6** we read that some of the scribes present were “reasoning in their hearts.” They were upset that Jesus would declare this man’s sins forgiven as they rightfully knew that “Who can forgive sins but God alone”? The horror for them in eternity will be the fact they rejected Jesus as God and would not humble themselves to His rule and authority. It was an authority issue with them and Jesus confronts their hearts’ deliberations and in essence says that omnipotent power is required for both forgiveness of sins and physical healing. Then to drive home His authority as God in the flesh, “...that you may know...” Jesus commands this man to “...arise...and go to your house. Immediately he arose...and went out in the presence of them all...” The bed had carried the man, now the man carries the bed. Read **Mark 2:6-12**.

*The Word Applied:* Ask the Lord to examine your heart & mind then confess any known sin.

*Suggestion for Prayer:* Father, thank You for forgiving me for Jesus sake. Wash me clean.