

## Authority to Forgive

Mark 2:1-12

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## Mark 2:1—3:6

- A series of five short narratives
- The key issues
  - 1) Jesus' claim to forgive sins (2:1-12)
  - 2) Jesus' companionship with sinners (2:13-17)
  - 3) Jesus' unwillingness to keep their traditions (2:18-22)
  - 4) Jesus' violation of their Sabbath regulations (2:23-3:6)
    - The disciples picking & eating grain (2:23-28)
    - Jesus heals on the Sabbath (3:1-6)

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## The Growing Opposition

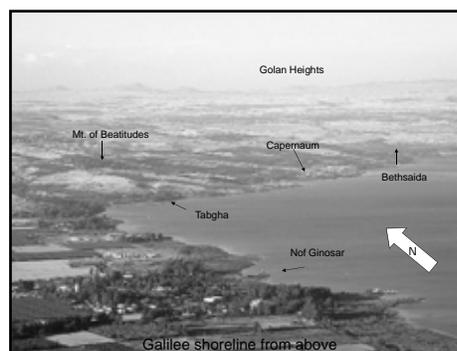
- 1) The scribes reason against Jesus in their hearts (2:6-7)
- 2) They complain about Jesus to the disciples (2:16)
- 3) They complain to Jesus Himself because of what He allows His disciples to do (2:24).
- 4) They conspire against Him to destroy Him (3:6).
- 5) They accuse Him of being in league with Satan (3:22).
- It was all about losing their power and influence.
  - E.g., Matt. 27:18; John 11:48; 12:19

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## I. The Healing of a Paralyzed Sinner (1-5)

- A. The Capernaum Context (1-2)
  - 2:1 – When He had come back to Capernaum several days afterward.
    - Cf. Matt. 9:1 - Getting into a boat, Jesus crossed over *the sea* and came to His own city.

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  - 2:1 – When He had come back to Capernaum several days afterward.
    - Cf. Matt. 9:1 - Getting into a boat, Jesus crossed over the sea and came to His own city.
    - Several days after Jesus returned home from His first Galilean preaching tour (1:39), and the healing of the leper (1:40-45)
  - 2:1 – it was heard that He was at home.
  - 2:2a – And many were gathered together, so that there was no longer room, not even near the door.
  - 2:2b – and He was speaking the word to them.
    - Cf. 1:14-15, 21, 38-39

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- A. The Capernaum Context (1-2)
- B. Five Desperate Men (3-4)
  - 2:3 – And they came, bringing to Him a paralytic, carried by four men.

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## The Man on the Pallet...

- 1) He was paralyzed.
- 2) He was poor.
  - Greek for *pallet* = normal word for a poor man's bed.
  - A thin, straw-filled mattress
- 3) He had some extraordinary friends.
  - A) Selflessness
  - B) Compassion
  - C) Sacrifice

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  - 2:4a – Being unable to get to Him because of the crowd,

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## First Century Roofs

- They were used like decks.
- Favorite sitting area in the evening (1 Sam. 9:25-26; Acts 10:9).
- Flax and other produce was spread to dry (Josh. 2:6).

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## First Century Roofs

- Other examples in contemporary literature
  - E.g., *Midrash Rabba* to Leviticus (in a story about Jeconiah's wife): "they opened the ceiling and let him down to him."
  - E.g., Cicero in *M. Antonium oratio Philippica* mentions letting a man down through the tiles.
- Construction
  - Flat and not much over 6 feet from the ground.
  - Large beams of cedar or palm trees were laid across to give support.
  - Then smaller timbers or rafters were spaced out to about 3 foot centers on the support beams.
  - Over those rafters they laid brushwood and palm branches.
  - The final covering was mud, mixed with chopped straw.
  - The top of that layer was rolled with a stone roller to provide a hard surface to repel the rain.
  - Sometimes they would add crushed rock to the very top.
  - The entire roof could be up to two feet thick.

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- B. Five Desperate Men (3-4)
  - 2:4 – Being unable to get to Him because of the crowd, they removed the roof above Him; and when they had dug an opening, they let down the pallet on which the paralytic was lying.
  - 2:5a – And Jesus seeing their faith...
- C. An Unexpected Outcome (5)
  - 2:5b – [Jesus] said to the paralytic, "Son, your sins are forgiven."
  - The Greek word order is: "Forgiven are your sins."

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## Why Forgive Rather Than Heal?

- So why does Jesus, instead of heal this man, forgive his sins instead?
  - 1) Jesus knew this man's illness was directly caused by his sin.
  - 2) The man believed that his illness was directly caused by his sin.
  - 3) Jesus knew that this man's illness was not caused by his sin, but he did it strictly to raise the issue of His authority with the Pharisees.

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## A Couple Implications

- 1. Jesus still responds to faith in Him with forgiveness.
  - E.g., John 1:12— as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, *even* to those who believe in His name,
  - John 3:16— whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.

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## B.B. Warfield

- "It is not faith that saves, but faith in Christ...It is not strictly speaking, even faith in Christ that saves, but Christ that saves through faith. The saving power resides exclusively, not in the act of faith or the attitude of faith or the nature of faith, but in the object of faith; ... we could not more radically misconceive the biblical representation of faith than by transferring to faith even the smallest fraction of that saving energy which is attributed in the Scriptures solely to Christ Himself."

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## A Couple Implications

- 1. Jesus still responds to faith in Him with forgiveness.
- 2. True faith manifests itself with determination & action.
  - 2:5 is the very first mention of faith in Mark.
  - And he immediately connects faith not just with knowing or feeling, but with action.
- Cf. Jam. 2:14ff (especially 2:26)

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## A Couple Implications

- 1. Jesus still responds to faith in Him with forgiveness.
- 2. True faith manifests itself with determination & action.
- 3. Those who truly have faith in Christ will, like these men, try to get their friends to Christ.
  - Why?
    - Because they love them.
    - And because they believe only He can help them.

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