

## More than Sunday: Part 1

### Your Greatest Need

If you have your Bible or phone, turn to the New Testament book of the Gospel of Mark, chapter 2. As a church, we have been walking through the book of Book of Exodus since the beginning of the year. We've followed the Israelites all the way into the wilderness—and we're going to leave them there for a little while. After all, they were there for 40 years. They'll be fine until we return after Easter.

In the meantime, we are beginning a new series titled **More Than Sunday**

This phrase captures something we deeply desire as a church: not just a Sunday faith, but a faith that extends into Monday, Tuesday, and every day in between. Sunday is powerful. We sing praises, hear God's Word, gather in fellowship, and often leave renewed and refreshed. But then Monday comes. As the week progresses, doubts can creep in. We drift. We struggle with sin. Faith feels challenged.

This series will wrestle with important questions:

- What do I do with my doubts?
- What am I holding onto that keeps me from fully following Jesus?
- How do I avoid drifting into dry seasons or patterns of sin?

These questions apply to everyone. If you are not yet a follower of Jesus, what might be keeping you from crossing that line of faith and trusting Him? And for those who already follow Christ, what habits, fears, or attachments are inhibiting full obedience?

To help us answer these questions, we will examine six stories from the Gospel of Mark as we move toward Easter. Mark is the shortest of the four Gospels and is fast-paced and direct. Today, we begin in Mark 2:1–12—a story about four men bringing their paralyzed friend to Jesus. It contains a surprising twist that reveals our greatest need.

Two key questions rise from this passage:

1. What is our greatest need?
2. Who is your one?

If you are a follower of Jesus, you are called to help others find and follow Him. So begin thinking now: Who is one person in your circle of influence—a family member, friend, coworker, or classmate—you can intentionally pray for and invite as we approach Easter?

## **The Setting: A Crowded House in Capernaum**

In Mark 2:1, we read that Jesus returned to Capernaum, which had become His home base after growing up in Nazareth. By this point, His public ministry was underway. He had been teaching and healing, and His fame was spreading rapidly. Wherever He went, crowds gathered.

When word spread that Jesus was home, people flooded the house—likely the home of Simon Peter. The house was so packed that there was no room left inside or even at the door. Jesus was preaching the Word to them.

These homes were modest in size—perhaps accommodating 60 to 70 people at most. The scene would have felt overcrowded, exceeding any reasonable capacity. And it was into this environment that four men arrived, carrying a paralyzed friend on a mat.

Their hope was simple: that Jesus would heal him.

But there was a problem—they couldn't get through the crowd.

## **Determined Faith: Tearing Through the Roof**

Rather than give up, the four friends found another way. They climbed the external steps to the roof.

First-century Palestinian roofs were flat, constructed with wooden beams laid across the top, covered with branches, and sealed with a hardened mixture of mud and clay. Once dried, these roofs were sturdy and often used as living space—similar to how we might use a deck today.

These men began digging through the roof.

Imagine the scene. Dust and debris begin falling from the ceiling. People look up in confusion. Perhaps Simon Peter is thinking, “Not my roof!” Jesus, accustomed to crowds and interruptions, likely pauses as debris falls around Him.

Then a hole opens. And through that opening, a paralyzed man is lowered on a mat—directly in front of Jesus.

Consider what these friends were willing to do:

- They located Jesus.
- They carried their friend through the streets.
- They pushed through a packed crowd.
- They climbed to the roof.

- They dug through it.
- They interrupted Jesus.
- And presumably, they returned later to repair the damage.

Their faith was determined, creative, sacrificial, and bold. They were willing to inconvenience themselves—and others—to bring someone they loved to Jesus.

That raises an important question for us:

*What are we willing to do to bring people we love to Christ?*

Are we willing to be uncomfortable? Persistent? Creative? Even risk irritation or rejection?

If we believe Jesus transforms lives—if we've experienced that transformation ourselves—are we willing to act with the same determination?

### **When Jesus Saw Their Faith**

In verse 5, we read a powerful statement:

“When Jesus saw their faith...”

Faith here is not merely internal belief. It is visible. It acts. It moves. It carries. It climbs. It digs. Faith reveals itself through action.

Then Jesus speaks—not to the four friends, but to the paralyzed man.

He calls him “son.”

This term was deeply compassionate in that culture—an expression of tenderness and care. Before addressing his physical condition, Jesus reveals His heart.

And then comes the surprising response.

Instead of saying, “You are healed,” Jesus says,

“Son, your sins are forgiven.”

After all that effort—after the roof is torn open and the man is lowered down—we might expect immediate physical healing. Surely that is why the friends brought him.

But Jesus addresses something deeper.

The scene is shocking. Perhaps the friends thought, “That’s great—but it’s his legs. He can’t walk.”

Yet Jesus’ response is intentional. It forces everyone in the room—and us today—to consider something profound.

And that leads us directly to the question Jesus wants us to wrestle with:

*What is our greatest need?*

### **Our Greatest Need: Forgiveness and Reconciliation**

Jesus’ unexpected response to the paralyzed man was intentional. He wanted the crowd—and He wants us—to be startled. By declaring, “Son, your sins are forgiven,” Jesus redirected attention from the visible physical problem to a deeper spiritual reality.

Our greatest need is not political stability, economic security, educational reform, or even relief from personal struggles. While those concerns are real and important, they are not ultimate. At our core, we stand before a holy God condemned because of sin. We have run from Him. We have rejected our Creator. Our deepest need is to be forgiven and reconciled to God so that we may become His sons and daughters for eternity.

If asked, “What is your greatest need?” how would you respond? Many would point to global issues—politics, the economy, cultural division. Others might mention strained marriages, parenting challenges, financial pressure, or a longing for acceptance. These are significant concerns, and Jesus cares about them. His compassion is real. He will, in fact, heal the paralyzed man.

But He does not start there.

He begins with forgiveness.

Jesus makes it unmistakably clear: spiritual reconciliation with God is our greatest need.

### **The Religious Leaders Recognize the Claim**

As this dramatic moment unfolds, the religious leaders—identified as teachers of the law—begin reasoning in their hearts. They think, “Why does this fellow talk like that? He’s blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone?”

Throughout the Gospels, these leaders frequently oppose and challenge Jesus. Yet here, they are correct in their theology: only God has the authority to forgive sins.

That is precisely the point.

By declaring the man forgiven, Jesus is making a profound claim. He is claiming divine authority. If He is not God, then this is blasphemy. If He is God, then He possesses the authority He claims.

The stakes are high.

Rather than retreat from the tension, Jesus presses into it.

### **“Which Is Easier?”**

Jesus, knowing their thoughts, addresses them directly: “Why are you thinking these things? Which is easier—to say, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Get up, take your mat and walk’?”

At first glance, the answer seems obvious. It is easier to say, “Your sins are forgiven,” because forgiveness is invisible. There is no immediate outward evidence. Anyone could claim it.

But commanding a paralyzed man to stand and walk? That is measurable. Visible. Either he rises—or he does not.

Jesus raises the stakes intentionally.

He continues, “But I want you to know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins.” Then He turns to the paralyzed man and says, “I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home.”

Immediately, the man rises, takes his mat, and walks out in full view of everyone.

The crowd is amazed. They praise God and declare, “We have never seen anything like this.”

Jesus proves His invisible authority through visible power. If He can do what they can see—heal physical paralysis—then He can do what they cannot see—grant spiritual forgiveness.

### **The Significance of “Son of Man”**

In verse 10, Jesus refers to Himself as the “Son of Man.” This was His favorite self-designation, and it is loaded with meaning.

On the surface, “Son of Man” emphasizes His humanity. Jesus fully entered our world, our weakness, and our suffering. But the title carries deeper Old Testament significance.

It points to divine authority and fulfillment of prophecy.

When Jesus uses this title, He is declaring that He is both fully human and fully divine.

The prophet Isaiah foretold a coming servant who would be despised and rejected, who would bear our griefs, carry our sorrows, be pierced for our transgressions, and have the iniquity of us all laid upon Him. Jesus identifies Himself as that promised One.

Healing the paralytic required no struggle. There was no agony in speaking restoration into his body.

But forgiving sin would require far more.

### **The Cost of Forgiveness**

Fast forward in the Gospel of Mark and across the other Gospels. We see that forgiving sin would lead Jesus to profound suffering.

On the night of His betrayal, He was in agony. He prayed to the Father, asking if there were any other way. He sweat drops like blood. Yet there was silence—because there was no other way.

He was arrested, betrayed, abandoned by His friends, mocked, beaten, flogged, and crucified.

If you ever wonder whether sin is truly that serious, look to the cross. The cross reveals both the severity of our sin and the depth of Christ's love. It exposes how desperate our condition is—and how willing Jesus was to meet our need.

Jesus Christ is our greatest hope because He alone meets our greatest need.

For all who cross that line of faith and place their trust in Him, forgiveness is granted.

### **Faith That Acts**

Return again to the paralyzed man. Jesus commanded him, "Get up, take your mat and go home." The man had to act. He had to believe that Jesus possessed the authority to heal him physically and forgive him spiritually.

He stood. He picked up his mat. He walked.

His faith was not passive; it was responsive.

The same call stands before us.

If you are not yet a follower of Jesus, do you recognize your need for forgiveness? If you sense conviction, will you respond? Repentance simply means turning—turning away from a life moving from God and turning toward Him in trust and surrender.

Admit your sin. Fall before Him. Rely on what Christ has done.

And for those who already follow Jesus, the question returns: Who is your one?

### **Who Is Your One?**

As we move toward Easter, who is one person you can intentionally pray for? Write their name down. Keep it before you. Ask God to soften their heart and draw them to Himself.

Take intentional steps. Share your story. Extend an invitation—to church, to a small group, to a conversation about faith.

Most believers came to Christ because someone cared enough to share or invite. Sometimes the life-changing moment began with a simple question: “Would you go with me?”

There may be obstacles. It may feel uncomfortable. The four friends in Mark 2 faced barriers and awkwardness, but they remained committed.

May we demonstrate that same determination.

So ask yourself honestly: Where are you with Jesus? If you have been resisting, why continue when you have a Savior who endured the cross for you—who was bruised, pierced, and crucified so you could be forgiven?

If you are ready, confess your sin. Believe that Jesus is the Son of God and the Son of Man, that He lived a perfect life, died on the cross, and rose again. Scripture promises that all who call upon the Lord will be saved.

And as you pray, bring before the Lord the name of your one. Ask for boldness. Ask for courage. Ask for opportunity.

Pray, “Lord, they are far from You. Soften their heart. Bring them to Yourself. Give me boldness to invite, to share, to get uncomfortable for someone I love.”