

“The Power to Forgive”
Mark 2:1-12
(Preached at Trinity, September 9, 2009)

I’m supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord’s Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I’ll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. Last time as we began **Chapter 2** we found that Jesus had returned to Capernaum. It’s not absolutely clear whose house he was staying in – He was probably again in the house of Peter and Andrew. After several days news began to spread that Jesus was back at the house. His presence couldn’t remain secret for long and soon multitudes were coming to hear Him.
2. Many had crowded into the house and multitudes pressed towards the door on the outside. Some were curiosity seekers seeking to know more about this man they had heard so much about. Some were sincere converts hanging on every word that Jesus spoke concerning His Kingdom. Still others were in need of physical healing as the fame of Jesus as a healer had spread.
3. While all of this was going on four men were busy trying to bring a paralyzed friend to Jesus. As they pressed towards the door they received nothing but angry stares and words of rebuke. Refusing to give up they climbed up to the rooftop.
4. Last time I directed your attention to these four faithful companions.
What love these four men must have had. They would not be denied. They would not give up until they brought this paralyzed man to Christ.
This must be our heart as we carry on our work of evangelism.
Spurgeon: “Where shall we find quartets such as these? May the Lord find them, and may He send them to some of you poor dying sinners who lie paralyzed here today!”
5. Tonight I want to look at this passage again; this time our Lord’s great statement:
Mark 2:5 – “Son, thy sins be forgiven thee.”
6. I want us to see first of all, that Jesus was speaking as Mighty God
Second, I want us to see that Jesus was speaking as Sovereign Savior
Third, I want us to see that Jesus was speaking as Gentle Shepherd
- I. First, Jesus was speaking as the Mighty God
Isaiah 9:6 – “For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.”
 - A. Jesus was speaking as God
 1. The Jewish scribes knew it
Mark 2:6-7 – “But there were certain of the scribes sitting there, and reasoning in their hearts, ⁷ Why doth this *man* thus speak blasphemies? who can forgive sins but God only?”
 - a. They knew that such was blasphemy

- b. Blasphemy deserved the penalty of death
Leviticus 24:16 – “And he that blasphemeth the name of the LORD, he shall surely be put to death, *and* all the congregation shall certainly stone him: as well the stranger, as he that is born in the land, when he blasphemeth the name *of the LORD*, shall be put to death.”
 - c. They knew that Jesus could not possibly be God
Matthew 13:55-56 Is not this the carpenter's son? is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas? ⁵⁶ And his sisters, are they not all with us?”
 - d. No mere man could forgive sin. This man must be a lunatic
Mark 2:7 – “Why doth this *man* thus speak blasphemies? who can forgive sins but God only?”
 - 2. The question is, was He guilty of claiming something that was not His
 - a. This is the great stumbling block
 It is here that the Moslems, Unitarians, Jehovah’s Witnesses stumble
 - b. It was at this very point that the Jews stumbled at Christ
John 5:17 – “But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work. Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God.”
 - c. If guilty Jesus would have submitted to the penalty of death had He been guilty of this high crime
 Was He guilty?
- B. Jesus was none other than Jehovah God
John 10:30 – “I and *my* Father are one.”
 - 1. Jesus possessed all of the attributes of the eternal God
 Omnipotent, Omniscient, Omnipresent
 - 2. He was the very Agent of creation itself
John 1:3 – “All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.”
Colossians 1:16 – “For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether *they be* thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him.”
 - 3. Most important, Jesus had the power to lay down His own life and to take it up again
John 10:17-18 – “Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. ¹⁸ No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father.”
 - 4. The Pharisees knew that no one but God can look into a man’s heart to see if his repentance is genuine. Either Jesus is God or He is a blasphemer. They made the fatal mistake of choosing the latter.

5. Jesus made it clear - He had the power to do what only God could do

II. Second, Jesus was speaking as the Sovereign Savior

- A. In this account before us tonight, Jesus demonstrates His dominion over the root cause of all human misery – our chief enemy, sin. He has the power to deliver us from sin.

1. First, there is a direct correlation between this man's sin and his sickness
2. All human misery is the result of sin; the result of living in a fallen world
3. Sin is the great plague from which we must be healed
Isaiah 53:5 – “But he was wounded for our transgressions, *he was* bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.”
4. Our chief problem is sin
It would be far better to be born blind or crippled and God use that to bring us to faith in Christ than to be born strong and perish in our sin
Jesus dealt with his sin problem first.

- B. What was the basis of our Lord's statement?

“Son, thy sins be forgiven thee.”

1. Did Jesus have the power to simply absolve this man of his sins?
Can God simply forgive us?
 - a. It is impossible for God to simply forgive – that would violate His justice. It would do nothing to deal with our sin. God would allow sinners to dwell in His presence. God would overlook the very thing by which the fallen angels were condemned. That would be injustice!
 - b. It would be impossible for Him to merely clean up the lives of men. To help them live better. That too would do nothing about our guilt.
 - c. There are many who believe God is so loving and merciful that in the end all will be saved. This would make a complete mockery of the Gospel. Why preach with passion to those who will not face God's condemnation?
2. We must be clear, all men are guilty and condemned. There had to be a way to remove our guilt – to remove the sins
Salvation demands one who knew no sin who could bear our sin and guilt as a substitute and thus satisfy God's justice. And one who would be so holy He could impart unto sinful men His righteousness and thus make us holy.
3. Of course we know that the atonement of the cross was essential – but this took place before the cross!
The cross purchased the salvation of all of God's elect for all of history.

- C. How does one receive such forgiveness

1. Did Jesus forgive this man without regard to the man himself?
The text says, “When Jesus saw their faith, he said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, thy sins be forgiven thee.”
 - a. The man was brought because of the faith of these four men.

- b. What brought these men to Jesus?
They had heard the sure word concerning Him. They knew of His power.
 - c. But we know this: at some point the paralytic also believed. How do we know? Because he received forgiveness.
 - d. He may have spent his entire life on that pallet with little contact with the outside world, but his life was still full of sin and in need of a Savior. He needed repentance and forgiveness. He received it by faith.
 - 2. This is the testimony of Scripture. Listen to the account of the sinful woman who anointed the feet of Jesus oil and washed them with her tears **Luke 7:48-50** – “And he said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven. And they that sat at meat with him began to say within themselves, Who is this that forgiveth sins also? ⁵⁰ And he said to the woman, Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace.”
 - 3. Those who come to Christ must believe Him for who He is. **Hebrews 11:6** – “But without faith *it is impossible to please him*: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and *that* he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.”
 - 4. Did their faith consist only in Jesus’ ability to bestow physical healing or that He could relieve the paralytic from his burden of guilt? It seems to be implied that the paralytic’s chief concern was his guilt.
Notice, not a word is spoken by either the paralytic or those on the roof.
But Jesus knew.
Before Jesus does anything else He assures the man of his pardon.
- D. Notice Jesus was able to look into the hearts of everyone around
 - 1. He knew the faith of the faithful four
“When Jesus saw their faith”
 - 2. He also knew the heart of the scribes and Pharisees
Mark 2:6-8 – “But there were certain of the scribes sitting there, and reasoning in their hearts, ⁷ Why doth this *man* thus speak blasphemies? who can forgive sins but God only? ⁸ And immediately when Jesus perceived in his spirit that they so reasoned within themselves, he said unto them, Why reason ye these things in your hearts?”
 - 3. He knows your heart as well
1 Samuel 16:7 – “But the LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for *the LORD seeth* not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart.”

III. Third, Jesus was speaking as the Gentle Shepherd

- A. The whole scene reeks of inconvenience for Jesus
 - 1. He had spent the previous weeks traveling throughout the region of Galilee – on foot. Surely He must have been exhausted. Surely He must have longed for rest – a vacation.
Mark 2:1 – “And again he entered into Capernaum after *some* days; and it was noised that he was in the house.”

2. Jesus didn't turn away the multitudes but preached to them all
3. This was always the heart of Christ
Matthew 9:36 – “But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd.”
Matthew 14:14 – “And Jesus went forth, and saw a great multitude, and was moved with compassion toward them, and he healed their sick.”
4. When the four men began digging through the roof we find so sign of agitation from Christ. Dirt must have been falling all around Him but we don't read that He was perturbed.
5. All that we read is - “When Jesus saw their faith”
He was gentle, patient, merciful
- B. This is the mind of our Lord – still!!
 1. He never turns away those who come humbly before Him
John 6:37 – “All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.”
 2. He does not cast away the bruised and broken
Matthew 12:20 – “A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench, till he send forth judgment unto victory.”
 3. Those who come to Him must see Him as their only hope, their last hope. He receives those who diligently seek Him.
Hebrews 11:6 – “But without faith *it is* impossible to please *him*: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and *that* he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.”
 4. Do you see your need of Christ
J.I. Packer writes, “To the question, ‘What must I do to be saved?’ the old gospel replies, ‘Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.’ ‘How am I to go about going to Christ and repenting, if I have no natural ability to do these things?’ It answers, ‘Look to Christ, speak to Christ, cry to Christ, just as you are; confess your sin, your impenitence, your unbelief, and cast yourself on His mercy; ask Him to give you a new heart, working in you true repentance and firm faith; ask Him to take away your heart of unbelief and to write His law within you, that you may henceforth never stray from Him. Turn to Him and trust Him best you can, and pray for more grace to turn and trust more thoroughly; use the means of grace expectantly, looking to Christ to draw near to you as you seek to draw near to Him; watch, pray, read and hear God's Word, worship and commune with God's people, and so continue til you know in yourself beyond doubt that you are indeed a changed being, a penitent believer, and the new heart which you desired has been put within you.’”
(Quest for Godliness: 144)

Let not conscience make you linger
Nor of fitness fondly dream;
All the fitness He requireth
Is to feel your need of Him.