



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Forgiveness

Mark 2:1-12

1. Read Mark 2:1-4. **A few days later, when Jesus again entered Capernaum, the people heard that he had come home. ² They gathered in such large numbers that there was no room left, not even outside the door, and he preached the word to them. ³ Some men came, bringing to him a paralyzed man, carried by four of them. ⁴ Since they could not get him to Jesus because of the crowd, they made an opening in the roof above Jesus by digging through it and then lowered the mat the man was lying on.** Jesus' reputation was spreading, and four men were determined to get their paralyzed friend to Jesus to be healed. They encountered a significant obstacle when the large crowd would not allow them to get to Jesus. Kent Hughes comments on this by saying, *"When the four friends encountered an obstacle, none of them said, 'well, the door is closed. I guess this is not God's will.' They did not send it to a committee or just walk away. They kept the faith and found a way."* One commentator notes the significant amount of work that this would have taken: *"They gained the roof by an outer staircase, such as the fugitives from Jerusalem should hereafter use, not going through the house. Then they uncovered and broke up the roof, by which strong phrases St. Mark means that they first lifted the tiles which lay in a bed of mortar or mud, broke through this, and then tore up the poles and light rafters by which all this covering was supported."*

Tell the story of a time when you encountered opposition, but you kept the faith and found a way.

2. This is the second time in the book of Mark that Jesus is teaching and he is interrupted. The first time it's a very noisy evil spirit (Chapter 1). Now it's a man being lowered from the roof. All of us face interruptions. Sometimes our interruptions are a small annoyance like a flat tire or an unexpected needy neighbor. Some interruptions are huge, like a job loss or an unexpected diagnosis. Jesus is a good model for us in our interruptions. In the sermon we discussed how interruptions are a part of life. Following the example of Jesus we need to see God and serve God in the interruption. How do you deal with interruptions? How do you think one would see God and serve God in their interruption?

3. Read Mark 1:5-8. **When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralyzed man, “Son, your sins are forgiven.”**
⁶ Now some teachers of the law were sitting there, thinking to themselves, ⁷ “Why does this fellow talk like that? He’s blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone?”⁸ Immediately Jesus knew in his spirit that this was what they were thinking in their hearts, and he said to them, “Why are you thinking these things?
What stands out to you from these verses? What do we learn and see in these verse about Jesus and who he is?

This section highlights the growing conflict between Jesus and the ruling religious class of his day. They are generally small-minded fault finders, but I think, in this case, they have a point. Jesus is making a big statement when he says **“Son, your sins are forgiven.”** Put yourself in the shoes of the teachers of the law. How would you feel if you were them?

Verse eight informs us **⁸ Immediately Jesus knew in his spirit that this was what they were thinking in their hearts.** David McKenna has an interesting take on how Jesus knows what they were thinking in their hearts. He says, *“Jesus is fully present in this situation, he is tuned to the people around him. Jesus has learned to listen as well as speak; to not just look but to see. A fully present mind is sensitive to God’s voice in the moment.”* In our modern times, being fully present seems to be getting more and more difficult. Do you agree with this quote from David McKenna? Do you struggle to be fully present? How might you become more like Jesus and be fully present and more sensitive to God’s voice? Consider Psalm 46:10, **“Be still and know that I am God.”**

4. The story has a dramatic conclusion Mark 2:9-11. **Which is easier: to say to this paralyzed man, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Get up, take your mat and walk’?** **¹⁰ But I want you to know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins.”** So he said to the man, **¹¹ “I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home.”¹² He got up, took his mat and walked out in full view of them all. This amazed everyone and they praised God, saying, “We have never seen anything like this!”** Jesus proves his power and his position by dramatically healing the paralyzed man. There is a lot going on in this final section of the story. What stands out to you?

How do these verses make you feel?

5. All those in Christ would affirm that Jesus has the power to forgive sins. It is easy to read verses like Colossians 2:13 **You were dead because of your sins and because your sinful nature was not yet cut away. Then God made you alive with Christ, for he forgave all our sins.** But reading it and believing it deeply in your heart are not the same thing. Be honest. Do you struggle to deeply know that all your sins have been forgiven? Do you struggle to feel good enough for God? You may need to seriously meditate on this idea that Jesus has authority to forgive sins and all those in Christ have been fully forgiven.