**When Jesus Sees Your Faith**

**by Pastor Fee Soliven**

**Mark 2:1-12**

**Wednesday Evening**

**August 22, 2018**

**1 And again He entered Capernaum after some days, and it was heard that He was in the house. 2 Immediately many gathered together, so that there was no longer room to receive them, not even near the door. And He preached the word to them.**

Saints, Jesus returned to Capernaum, which had become his base of operations while he was in Galilee. Everyone in Capernaum had been looking for him, so when the people heard that he was back, they packed the house. Instead of healing, however, this time he preached the word to them.

**Luke 4:42-44**

42 Now when it was day, He departed and went into a deserted place. And the crowd sought Him and came to Him, and tried to keep Him from leaving them; 43 but He said to them, "I must preach the kingdom of God to the other cities also, because for this purpose I have been sent." 44 And He was preaching in the synagogues of Galilee.

**Acts 10:34-43**

34 Then Peter opened his mouth and said: "In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality. 35 But in every nation whoever fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him. 36 The word which God sent to the children of Israel, preaching peace through Jesus Christ--He is Lord of all—

37 that word you know, which was proclaimed throughout all Judea, and began from Galilee after the baptism which John preached: 38 how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him.

39 And we are witnesses of all things which He did both in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem, whom they killed by hanging on a tree. 40 Him God raised up on the third day, and showed Him openly, 41 not to all the people, but to witnesses chosen before by God, even to us who ate and drank with Him after He arose from the dead.

42 And He commanded us to preach to the people, and to testify that it is He who was ordained by God to be Judge of the living and the dead. 43 To Him all the prophets witness that, through His name, whoever believes in Him will receive remission of sins."

Saints, the basic message remained the same: The long-awaited Messiah had come to break the power of sin and begin God’s personal reign on earth. The miracles Jesus performed served as a sign to Jesus’ identity, as well as revealed his compassion and love for the people he had come to save.

**3 Then they came to Him, bringing a paralytic who was carried by four men. 4 And when they could not come near Him because of the crowd, they uncovered the roof where He was. So when they had broken through, they let down the bed on which the paralytic was lying.**

Saints, as Jesus was preaching, four men arrived carrying a paralyzed man. The crowd had filled the house and the doorway, so the group couldn’t get to Jesus.

But these friends would not be deterred. Determined to get their friend to Jesus, they dug through the clay roof above his head. In Bible times, houses were built of stone and had outside stairways that led onto flat roofs.

**Hebrews 11:6**

“But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him”

Roofs were made with joists covered with a mixture of mortar, tar, ashes, and sand. Thus they had to “dig” through the roof (see also Luke 5:19).

**Luke 5:19-20**

19 And when they could not find how they might bring him in, because of the crowd, they went up on the housetop and let him down with his bed through the tiling into the midst before Jesus. 20 When He saw their faith, He said to him, "Man, your sins are forgiven you."

They attached ropes to each corner of the pallet and carefully lowered the paralyzed man in front of Jesus.

**5 When Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytic, "Son, your sins are forgiven you."**

Saints, we might expect a popular preacher in the middle of speaking to an expectant crowd to be annoyed at this intrusion. Obviously, several minutes were spent as the crowd watched these men take apart the roof above them. But Jesus saw their faith acted out in their determination. If they could but get their friend within Jesus’ touch, they knew their friend would be restored.Among the first words Jesus said to the paralyzed man were “My son, your sins are forgiven.” The man needed spiritual healing, so Jesus forgave his sins. Then Jesus healed the man.

**Matthew 14:34-36**

34 When they had crossed over, they came to the land of Gennesaret. 35 And when the men of that place recognized Him, they sent out into all that surrounding region, brought to Him all who were sick, 36 and begged Him that they might only touch the hem of His garment. And as many as touched it were made perfectly well.

**6 And some of the scribes were sitting there and reasoning in their hearts, 7 Why does this Man speak blasphemies like this? Who can forgive sins but God alone?"**

Saints, these teachers of religious law were the legal specialists in Jesus’ day. Jesus’ teaching and his popularity had prompted special investigation by the powerful leaders of the Jewish faith.

These teachers had been dispatched from Jerusalem to Capernaum and had made their way into the crowd that filled this house. Jealous of Jesus’ popularity and power, these men hoped to find something to criticize or even condemn in Jesus’ teaching.

When they heard Jesus tell the paralyzed man that his sins were forgiven, they were shocked. For Jesus to claim to forgive sins was considered blasphemy, defined as claiming to be God or to do what only God can do. In Jewish law, blasphemy was punishable by death.

**Leviticus 24:16**

“And whoever blasphemes the name of the LORD shall surely be put to death. All the congregation shall certainly stone him, the stranger as well as him who is born in the land. When he blasphemes the name of the Lord, he shall be put to death”

Saints, the religious leaders were correct in their statement that only God can forgive sins (Exodus 34:6-7; Psalms103:3; Isaiah 43:25; Daniel 9:9), and they also rightly understood that Jesus was claiming to be God.

**Psalm 103:1-3**

1 “Bless the LORD, O my soul; And all that is within me, bless His holy name! 2 Bless the LORD, O my soul, And forget not all His benefits: 3 Who forgives all your iniquities, Who heals all your diseases…”

**Isaiah 43:25**

"I, even I, am He who blots out your transgressions for My own sake; And I will not remember your sins.”

**Daniel 9:9**

“To the Lord our God belong mercy and forgiveness, though we have rebelled against Him”

Saints, but in labeling Jesus’ claim to forgive sins as blasphemy, the religious leaders showed they did not understand that Jesus was God. Jesus had God’s power and authority to heal bodies and forgive sins.

Forgiveness of sins was a sign that the messianic age had come.

**Joel 2:32**

“And it shall come to pass That whoever calls on the name of the LORD Shall be saved. For in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be deliverance, As the LORD has said, Among the remnant whom the LORD calls”

**Micah 7:18-20**

18 Who is a God like You, Pardoning iniquity And passing over the transgression of the remnant of His heritage? He does not retain His anger forever, Because He delights in mercy. 19 He will again have compassion on us, And will subdue our iniquities. You will cast all our sins Into the depths of the sea. 20 You will give truth to Jacob And mercy to Abraham, Which You have sworn to our fathers From days of old.

Unfortunately, it did not occur to these Jewish leaders that perhaps this man was their Messiah.

**8 But immediately, when Jesus perceived in His spirit that they reasoned thus within themselves, He said to them, "Why do you reason about these things in your hearts?**

Saints, Jesus knew what they were discussing, and their hostility and anger at Jesus’ words could not be hidden. Jesus asked them,

**“Why do you think this is blasphemy?”**

Would the teachers of religious law respond, or did they too believe this man to be the Messiah? Jesus knew the teachers’ dilemma and offered to prove his authority. Plus He knew their hearts!

**Jeremiah 17:9-10**

9 "The heart is deceitful above all things, And desperately wicked; Who can know it? 10 I, the LORD, search the heart, I test the mind, Even to give every man according to his ways, According to the fruit of his doings.

**9 Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven you,' or to say, 'Arise, take up your bed and walk'?**

Saints, the teachers of religious law knew about Jesus’ ability to heal, and they probably had expected Jesus to immediately heal the paralyzed man. Instead, Jesus forgave the man’s sins. To the teachers, this sounded like blasphemy, and it also sounded like an easy out.

Anyone can just say someone’s sins are forgiven, but it would take someone with great power and authority to heal a paralyzed person. Jesus asked them the question that they were asking themselves. He wanted to show that he had the power to forgive sins by showing that he had the power to make a paralytic pick up his mat and walk.

**10 But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins"--He said to the paralytic, 11 I say to you, arise, take up your bed, and go your way to your house."**

Saints, by recording this incident, Mark hoped to prove to his audience beyond any doubt that Jesus was the Messiah. The Son of Man has the delegated authority of God the Father to forgive sins. The teachers asked, “Who but God can forgive sins!”.

The answer is,

**“No human except one delegated that authority by God himself. And the Son of Man has that authority.”**

However, people cannot “see” sins forgiven; they can see physical healing. Therefore, Jesus turned to the paralytic, still lying on the mat in front of him, and told him to stand up on his previously useless legs; take his mat with arms that may also have been previously useless; and go on home.

**Matthew 28:18**

And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.”

**12 Immediately he arose, took up the bed, and went out in the presence of them all, so that all were amazed and glorified God, saying, "We never saw anything like this!"**

Saints, the man did not doubt Jesus’ words; when Jesus told him to get up, he did so—before the stunned onlookers including Jesus’ critics. The healing unmistakably showed Jesus’ power and authority. The teachers of religious law who questioned Jesus’ ability to forgive sins saw the formerly paralyzed man get up and walk.

Jesus’ question in 2:9 forced their answer: Jesus had the power to make the paralyzed man walk; thus he also had the authority to forgive his sins. The people in Capernaum had already seen numerous healings by Jesus on his previous visit. But the crowd’s amazement is expressed in Mark’s words, they all praised God.

While the religious leaders questioned and debated, the people recognized God’s power and realized that Jesus had been given authority by God.

**Luke 16:19-31**

19 "There was a certain rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and fared sumptuously every day. 20 But there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, full of sores, who was laid at his gate, 21 desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table. Moreover the dogs came and licked his sores.

22 So it was that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died and was buried. 23 And being in torments in Hades, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. 24 Then he cried and said, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.'

25 But Abraham said, 'Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted and you are tormented. 26 And besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, so that those who want to pass from here to you cannot, nor can those from there pass to us.' 27 Then he said, 'I beg you therefore, father, that you would send him to my father's house,

28 for I have five brothers, that he may testify to them, lest they also come to this place of torment.' 29 Abraham said to him, 'They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.' 30 And he said, 'No, father Abraham; but if one goes to them from the dead, they will repent.' 31 But he said to him, 'If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead.' "

**Let’s Pray**

**Benediction**

**"May The LORD bless you and keep you, May The LORD make His face shine upon you, May The LORD be gracious to you, May The LORD lift up His countenance upon you, and give you His (Shalom) peace.” In Jesus Name!**