

“The Son of Man Has Authority to Forgive Sins”; Mark 2:1-12

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And when he returned to Capernaum, after some days, it was reported that he was at home, and many were gathered together so, that there was no more room, not even at the door. And he was preaching the word to them and they came bringing to Him a paralytic, carried by four men. And when they could not get near him because of the crowd, they removed the roof above him. And when they had made an opening, they let down the bed on which the paralytic lay. And when Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic Son, your sins are forgiven.

Now some of the scribes were sitting there questioning in their hearts; Why does this man speak like this? He's blaspheming, who can forgive sins, but God alone? And immediately Jesus perceiving in his spirit, that they thus questioned him within themselves said to them; Why do you question these things in your hearts. Which is easier to say to the paralytic, your sins are forgiven or to say, rise, take up your bed and walk. But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins—he said to the paralytic, I say to you, rise, pick up your bed, and go home.

And he rose and immediately picked up his bed and went out before them all so, that they were all amazed and glorified God saying; We never saw anything like this.

So, as we begin in chapter two, we are going to notice a change in focus. Jesus has experienced opposition up to this point. He's, of course, experienced opposition from the demonic in the wilderness. Again, opposition from the demonic in the synagogue.

He's also experienced opposition from the crowds—the crowds who are believing and they are enthusiastic and excited about Jesus, but nonetheless, they misunderstand. And so, their enthusiastic misunderstanding becomes an obstacle for Jesus and he must leave because his message cannot get through all of their enthusiasm for his healings.

He also has experienced opposition from the disciples. The disciples who themselves, of course, believe upon Jesus, but they themselves are misunderstanding of him as well. The disciples are not Jesus's helpers, Jesus didn't assemble around him 12 helpers to help him establish his kingdom. The disciples themselves don't understand. The disciples themselves need to be taught, they need to be rebuked, and they need to be corrected. And they need to be shown what Messiah is here for.

So, he's experiencing opposition from the crowds from the disciples, even though they're enthusiastic and believing. He's also experienced the opposition from the demonic. But beginning from chapter two, Jesus will now experience opposition from the unbelieving people.

And this is a theme that will be continued from this point, to the end of the gospel. We see it here in chapter two, with these scribes and Pharisees who are questioning in their hearts saying; Who is this person to be doing this.

But let's just take just a glance to the rest of the chapter. Let me just show you how this theme is going to continue and even develop looking down to verse 16. From verse 16, and describes the Pharisees when they saw that he was eating with the sinners and tax collectors said to his disciples; Why does he eat with tax collectors and sinners?

Or look down to verse 18. Now John's disciples in the Pharisees were fasting, and people came and said to him, why did John's disciples and disciples of Pharisees fast, but your disciples don't fast?

Or look down at verse 24. You see how it just continues on. And the Pharisees were saying to him, Look, why are they doing what is not lawful for the Sabbath?

And then it all culminates in chapter three, verse six; The Pharisees went out and immediately held counsel with the Herodians against him, on how to destroy him or to kill him.

So, these unbelieving religious leaders, in their unbelief, are opposing Jesus at every turn. Why are you doing this? Why aren't you disciples fasting? Why are you saying this? Why are you picking this grain? Why are you doing this? And then all this is going to culminate when they finally decide, you know, we cannot oppose his teaching, we cannot contradict his teaching, we cannot overcome him in this way. And so, this man needs to be destroyed.

And so, I kind of think of it like this. This is for me, this is helpful as I read through the Gospel of Mark and as we go through Mark together, this is helpful for me to kind of understand how Mark is leading us along. Because if you look at chapter 15, and chapter 15, we're going to see a cross. And on this cross, of course, hangs the Messiah. And the Messiah is put on the cross in the early morning hours. And so, you know how as the sun comes up over the horizon in the early morning hours, something tall casts a long shadow and in the cross is going to cast a long shadow all the way across chapter 15, 14, 13, 12, 11, all the way to chapter two. And so, what we are beginning to see is that the edges, the beginning of that shadow, which is the cross the shadow of the cross.

Because all of this is God's plan. It is God's plan to crush his son, it is God's will that He crushed his son, however, God will not reach down from heaven with a spiritual hand and crush his son in a physical way like that. Instead, he will use human agents to do that. And the humans that he will use will be the religious leaders, God will not use the demonic to crush his son, God will not use the disciples in their confusion, or he won't use the crowds in their confusion, he will use the religious leaders to bring about what he desires, which is the sacrificial death of his Son and chapter 15.

And so, we begin to see that theme now that we trace through. Mark is going to, as you probably know, Mark is going to spend about a third of his gospel on the last week of Jesus's life, because Mark is in sort of a hurry to get us there. And he wants us to see already—these are the seeds. This is what's being planted. This is what's growing this opposition to Jesus on the part of the religious leaders, this will be what culminates in what we're going to see in chapter 15, with our Messiah hanging from the cross.

And so, we begin hearing from verse, chapter two and verse one. And we realize here in chapter two, verse one, we're told that Jesus returns here to Capernaum. We're told when he returned to Capernaum "after some days," we don't know how many of those some days were. But Jesus had to leave Capernaum, of course, because of that night of healing, some time back. The excitement was so, great, he had to leave that because his message couldn't get through all the fog of the excitement. So, he leaves for some time. And after some days, he now comes back to Capernaum, because the crowds apparently have now dissipated enough that Jesus feels that he can return.

So, as he comes here, we're also going to see here—let me just point this out to you as well as, as we're getting started. Here, we've come across this the crowds, which have kept Jesus away. Now Jesus returns, and we're going to have to deal with the crowds in the house itself. But let's just see—if you'd look with me over to chapter three, verse seven. Chapter three, verse seven, we read these words; Jesus withdrew with his disciples to the sea, and a great crowd followed from Galilee, and Judea.

And then look at verse nine. And he told his disciples to have a boat ready for him, because of the crowd, less they crashing, for he had healed many, so, that all who had diseases pressed around him to touch him.

So, here the crowds have grown so, great, and so, bold, so, to speak, the Jesus even fears for being crushed. He said, Give me a boat, before they crushed me.

And then looked down with me at chapter three and verse 20, then he went home and the crowd gathered again so, that they could not even eat. So, the crowds are crowding around Jesus to such a degree, as we're going to see in the story today, that that literally the one that Jesus wants to come to him has difficulty getting to him.

But we're going to see over and over again, that the crowd is not, it's not something that Mark pitch portrays to us as being on Jesus's side. Jesus is not happy about his popularity. Jesus, His popularity is not helping his mission, it's inhibiting his mission, because the crowds are so, enthusiastic about the wrong things. And so, Mark, again, and again, is going to portray the crowds as something that Jesus needs to overcome, as in our story today.

So, from verse one, when he returned to Capernaum, after some days, it was reported that he was at home. So, whose home was he at? Perhaps he was at Peter's home, though, I think the text is going to lend that to be unlikely for us. We'll see a little bit later on that, of course, the whole text is going to center around the need to make an opening in the roof. And we talked a few Sundays back about Peter's home there in Capernaum. And how it had that big courtyard in the middle, you remember that? And so, it seems as though, if Jesus was at Peter's house, and such a crowd was there it, it's what seemed like Jesus would be in the courtyard and there wouldn't be the need to open the roof. So, perhaps he's not at Peter's house. Perhaps he's at James and John's house. Or perhaps he's at another disciple's house, we're not told and it doesn't matter. We're just told that he's here at some home some place that he's calling home away from home. He's left Nazareth now. And so, this is a place that He's residing at. It most likely belongs to

someone else, because Jesus will tell us elsewhere, that foxes have holes and dens and everything but the Son of Man doesn't have a place to lay his head.

So, he's here. It's reported the news gets out that he's here at home. Verse two; And many were gathered together so, many, in fact, that there was no more room not even at the door. And he was preaching the word to them. So, here we see the crowd is gathered, it's so, many people in this house in this room, that literally even the doorway is packed tight. No one can come in and out, it's so, many people inside, and what Jesus is doing inside is he is preaching the Word.

So, by this point in Mark's gospel, you yourselves can teach what needs to be taught because you've seen it enough times, Jesus's main priority is—to preach the Word. We've seen it over and over already. This was his main emphasis. This was his main focus. His main focus was not the miracles or the healings, his main emphasis was on the teaching, on the preaching.

So, he's here inside this room, and he's preaching the Word to them. And there's so, many gathered together that literally there's no place to move, no place to get in and out, the doors are packed shut. The fire marshal would have had a heyday with this.

So, the house is here in Capernaum. Let's just kind of understand a little bit about what this might have looked like. The houses here in Capernaum, archaeologists tell us that they were mostly made from basalt stone, like a dark, black, gray sort of stone without mortar.

So, the inside being made from dark stones would have been very dark, maybe a window or at least an opening or two, maybe a doorway. Probably very little artificial light, maybe a few oil lamps burning, but it would have been very dark inside, and probably rather small.

The roof of these houses, we're told, were made from wooden beams, that would have thatch put over the across the beams and then on top of the thatch, they would put this thick layer of clay, and they'd pack the clay down tight and firm. So, we'll see just a little bit about how that's going to be removed in order to get access in.

But inside this dwelling, inside this home, it would have been very close quarters, very tightly cramped in here. So, Jesus wouldn't be, as I'm doing now, standing apart from those whom—he would be right there with them, they will be within arm's reach. They could reach over and touch his elbow in his arm, he will be right here in front of them speaking face to face with them.

Now, let's just think for a little bit about who would have been in the room. Because I think the natural assumption is to think that the room would be filled with Capernians—whatever people from Capernaum, whatever they will be called Capernamums. It will be filled with people who were from Capernaum, who had heard of Jesus teaching, maybe they were there in a synagogue when he did that teaching in the synagogue some weeks back. And then it made such an impression upon them. They heard that his back and so, they've they flocked to him now. Maybe people that were there for the healing the night of

healing, maybe others whom Jesus has healed at other times. Others who have heard about this man and his teaching, and they're interested, they want to hear this man, they want to see this man. And so, we would naturally assume that the room would be filled with people who are anxious to hear Jesus.

However, Mark in his, (I'm sorry), Luke in his account in chapter five, gives us an important detail, that's very helpful for us. Chapter five, verse 17, from Luke's gospel on one of those days as he was teaching Pharisees—and this is the same day that Luke is recording for us—Pharisees and teachers of the law were sitting there who had come from every village of Galilee, and Judea and from Jerusalem.

Now that changes the makeup of the room quite a bit. Because Luke tells us in this occasion, there were religious leaders and Pharisees from every village of Galilee. Now, Mark likes hyperbole. He likes literary hyperbole. So, he doesn't literally mean every single village in Galilee, there was over a thousand villages in Galilee. And even one Pharisee from each village would have meant thousands of Pharisees there. And there weren't even that many Pharisees—there's only six thousand or so, Pharisees. So, he doesn't mean every single village.

But his point is, there were so, many, the villages of Galilee were so, well represented by the religious leadership that it's as though they were there from every single village.

But not only from the villages of Galilee, we're told that they are here from Jerusalem, and even not just to Jerusalem, but all of Judea.

So, Jerusalem is about 90 miles from Capernaum. So, there are religious leaders here from Jerusalem, and even from all of Judea, so, 100 or more miles away, maybe up to 150 miles, people have come religious leaders have come to see and hear this man Jesus.

So, let's not make light of this—this in our day of easy communication and fast travel, let's not make light of this. For religious leaders from Jerusalem, to drop what they're doing and travel 100 miles to hear some upstart preacher, means that the waves Jesus has made are tidal.

The impact that Jesus has made, the word that has gotten around—probably largely from the leper who disobeyed—but the word that's got around, has rocked Israel. And it's created such a mass interest in Jesus and His teachings that there are religious leaders, Pharisees, from as far away as Jerusalem, and further who have traveled to Capernaum, just to hear this uneducated country preacher.

So, they are here, as we're going to see in the story—we all know how the story plays out, we just read it a few moments ago—they're not here because they want to be followers of Jesus. They are here because they are disbelieving, and they are here in order to gather evidence against this man. That's the extent of what's happening now in Israel.

And so, the popularity of this man, Jesus has already hit record high. And that's a popularity that's mixed between those who are enthusiastic about Jesus, and those who—we're going to read in chapter three—are making plans to kill him.

So, the room would have been packed full of people, a mix of Pharisees from as far away as Jerusalem, wearing their fine robes, and their fine headdresses, and the common people of Capernaum and the surrounding villages, who are there, working class, sort of people who've been working with their hands even that very day probably. And they're here to hear this message of life, this message of salvation, and they're sitting, probably side-by-side almost with these Pharisees in their long flowing robes.

Now, we know that elsewhere, Jesus tells us about how the Pharisees like to arrange their seating arrangements. From Mark chapter 12, verse 36, verse 37, Jesus says; You liked the best seats of the of the house, of the synagogue. You always—speaking to the Pharisees—you always claim the best seats, when you go to the feasts, you always claimed the best seats of the feasts. So, we have no reason to believe that here as they're here to hear Jesus, their seating arrangements would have been any different.

So, probably these Pharisees have the best seats in this tiny little house. So, you can imagine, here's Jesus teaching and around him would have been Pharisees with their long flowing bright colorful robes, with their long tassels. And all around them are working class people, people who work the land, people who work with animals and livestock, and they're here to hear the message of life. And here's these Pharisees here to pick apart everything that Jesus is going to say.

It gives us a little bit of a insight, perhaps, into the context, if you will—the mood in the room, as Jesus is teaching here. So, there's no more room not even at the door, and he was preaching the word to them, verse three. And that came bringing to him a paralytic, carried by four men. And as they came, bringing this paralytic carried by four men, we're not told how they carried him. Maybe it was a type of a litter with poles, but it's probably more like the bed—you've may be familiar with sort of a political rollout mat that they would call a bed, something similar to maybe what you would roll out and sleep on, if you're going to go camping or something like that. Something like that is probably how they're carrying him. And they probably two of them have the feet part. And two of them have the head part.

So, you can imagine these friends carrying this paralytic through the streets of Capernaum to get to Jesus on this, maybe a little bit more than a blanket. And you can imagine the bustling streets of Capernaum how everybody's trying to get here to see Jesus, and just dragging, sort-of dragging him along, maybe scraping along the ground or they're dragging him, his head's banging against the corners, as they turn around corners, people's legs are kicking on his head and everything.

And it gets here to the to the place where Jesus is because they just have to get him to see Jesus. The dedication, the devotion of these four friends is remarkable. They just have to get him to Jesus. And we're going to see the length that they go to in just a few minutes of what they go to, to get their friend to Jesus. What a remarkable friendship.

We know nothing about the paralytic, we know nothing about his friends other than what we're told in the story here. But what a remarkable friendship, for a man to have for people who care that much about him to go to this length to get him to Jesus. Most of us would probably consider ourselves fortunate to have one person in our life that would have a friendship such as that. This man had four, and they're going to great lengths to get him to Jesus.

So, they came bringing him—bringing to him a paralytic carried by four men. Verse four; And when they could not get near him because of the crowd...so, they're trying to squeeze him through the door. There's no way to get in there's just too many people. And the paralytic—he's been drug, and handed around. And his friends here, and he's hearing them talking, and tell each other how we can't get in there. What can we do? Go around the back, maybe we can go through a window?

But they can't get him to Jesus, because there's just too many people. Verse four; And when they could not get near him because of the crowd—see how the crowd is an obstacle—because of the crowd they removed the roof above him.

So, they go up to the roof. Houses in Capernaum or almost exclusively one-story houses. And we already mentioned the thatch roofs which are common there. Now this thatch roof is a little bit, as we said earlier, it's a little bit different from just a normal thatch roof when you think of like what you see in a National Geographic magazine, of a thatch kind of roof. It's a thatch that would have been covered with this hard-packed layer of clay. Clay that would be packed tightly and spread on top of the thatch, and they even had, we're told rollers, that they would sort of roll it out flat.

So, houses in this time, in the first century, were often houses that they would use the roof as an additional room. Think about in Acts, when Peter's on the roof, and he's he's praying on the roof. People would use the roof as a sort of an extra room.

So, it had this hard-packed clay on the top, maybe some stairs on the outside to lead up. So, here come the man they're dragging, they've dragged him all over Capernaum. Couldn't get him inside. Now they drag him up the steps, maybe his head is banging on the steps as they take him up, because they just got to get him to Jesus. And they're not exactly—they don't exactly have this rolling stretcher to carry him on there. They're getting him there the best way they can.

And they get him up onto the roof. And they're now going to make this whole to lower him down. Now, as they come to the roof here, verse four, again, they remove the roof above and literally they unroofed the roof. And when they have made an opening Mark literally says they dug an opening. So, imagine they're not—they don't have a saw, or anything like that, they just have maybe their hands, maybe some sort of hand tool, and they're just digging a hole through the through the hard packed clay. And through the thatch.

When they made an opening, they let down the bed on which the paralytic lay. So, again, we don't know exactly what the bed was like if it was more like a litter. I think it's more like, again, just a blanket in wish

they're holding both ends of the blanket. And they let him down, and Mark tells us specifically they let him down with the bed.

So, as I thought about this, I tried to think, what sort of a hole would they make? How big would this hole have been? Maybe just a minimal 18-inch, or 24-inch diameter hole to lower him down feet first, with maybe a rope under his armpits, kind of like they brought Jeremiah out of the miry pit, you know, maybe lowered him down that way. And I think that the text precludes that, because the text tells us that he's lowered down with the bed. So, I think a hole was probably bigger than just big enough to put someone down feet first. Big enough for him to at least be folded over in half in the bed and lower down maybe a rope on both ends of the blanket, of the bed, and lower him down in that way.

So, it would have been a fairly sizable hole. So, what would have taken place as they started to make this hole, because it would have taken a few minutes at least, I think, to make this hole.

So, they go up on the roof here. And they somehow, they calculate where it is they should make the hole. Maybe they can hear Jesus through the roof, and they can kind of tell where he is, because they want to make the hole near him.

Or maybe they got a glimpse through the window at where Jesus was in the room. And they sort of have an idea of where to make the hole. So, they go up there and they start making this hole. So, now you're inside the room. And you start to hear this noise on the roof—this banging scraping on the roof.

You ever been listening to a speaker, and then a distraction starts to come along and it keeps going and keeps going? And then everybody in the room you started having this all—you're having the same collective thought. And that thought is I wonder when the speaker is going to stop and acknowledge the noise that's going on? I think that was what was going on. Everybody's wondering, when's Jesus going to stop? Because everybody hears that he's getting louder.

And then sunlight bursts through—they made a hole. And as that hole was made, surely there would have been clay and bits of batch and limbs and branches that fell. Some of them probably fell on Jesus. Some probably fell on the Pharisees, making them even more indignant than they already were. Now they've got clay and twigs and things from this man's house on their nice robes.

But then as this sunlight bursts through, now they can hear the man on the roof talking. And hole gets bigger and bigger and bigger. And all this takes several minutes to take place. What was said during all that? Jesus had to stop at some point.

You know, I think most people—like you are right now listening to a preacher—I think most of time, we overestimate how easily a speaker is is distracted. People all the time will tell me, you know, sorry to distract you with coughing, or had to get up, or whatever. And I think most speakers, like myself, are not as easily distracted as people think they are. However, I've never had somebody make a hole in the roof and

lower somebody down while I was speaking. I think if that happened, I would be distracted, I think even the Son of God, now he has to stop and acknowledge what's taking place.

So, what would have been said? I don't know if Jesus was the type of person to crack jokes. But this was—maybe he cracked a joke. And maybe this, this was a good opportunity to just sort of break the ice, or say something light as this hole is being made in the roof.

Or maybe the owner of the house is there, and he's quite upset. What do you people doing? The Pharisees are grumbling to themselves—what kind of haystack town have we come to?

But all this takes place over a number of minutes, and here comes down the man from the roof. Now, it's at this point, I want to pause and take something that's not directly from the text. But it's a great application. And that's something that I just like to call facility worship. It's something that all Christians are subject to. All believers, particularly believers in the modern era, in the Western Church, we are all subject to this thing called facility worship, or property worship.

And it kind of goes like this. Sometimes—we love the church, we love Christ, we love the Bride. And sometimes that love for Christ, and that love for the church can get mixed up with worshiping the facilities that God has given to the church, in such a way that we begin to think that the facilities are more important than the people God has given us the facilities in order to minister to.

And so, we can get kind of bent out of shape about the facilities, or the property of the church. So, here's this man, the owner of the house, whoever it may be, they're making a hole in his roof to get a lost sinner to Jesus. I don't know if he was upset about that. I don't know if he was overjoyed about that. Whatever the case, you see the connection? Sometimes we can get so, uptight, in the modern church about the properties, and the things, and the buildings, and the carpets, and the chairs, and the food, and the rooms, and everything that God has given to us to use for the kingdom. We can start to think that they're more important than the people whom God wants us to use those things to minister to.

There's so, many examples that we could point to. I remember, our first church, there was a group of young teenage girls that started coming and attending our church. They were completely unchurched, completely unchurched had never been in the context of a church. And so, you we all can imagine, those who have no church background whatsoever. When you start attending church, guess what you don't know how to do. You don't know how to act. You don't know what's expected of you.

And so, these girls when they were coming, and they were absorbing. But they also had issues that they brought with them. And I mean, they would leave like bubble gum wrappers in the seats, and stuff like that, candy wrappers in the seats. And it didn't take long before some of the church started to say these young girls need to learn how to act. One of those girls eventually ended up my wife ended up stealing her camera. But that's, I mean, that's kind of what when it came to—these, they're not acting right in the house of the Lord, they need to respect the house of the Lord.

Now, take all that within reason. Yes, when God blesses His bride with facilities, we care for them. But in no way can that compare to the people that we're here to minister to.

I had a pastor friend, years ago, when we were in Burlington, had a pastor friend whose church was located in the lower socio-economic side of town. And his church decided to open a gymnasium, a basketball gymnasium, to the community. A couple of nights a week, it was open to the community to come and play basketball. And so, kids would come and they play basketball, and most of them are come on just for the basketball. But they would also get other things. And they would also meet people who were part of the church, and they were attempting to build relationships, and get to know people, and minister the Word in such ways. And it didn't take long before Guess what? A window got broken. And you can imagine what happens from there. Now, well, these people aren't caring for God's house. They're not caring for God's facilities.

The sin of worshipping the property, the things, the facilities, that God gives to the church to use—that's a sin that nips at the heels of the church its entire life. Just like Cain, how God says; it's at your door—in the same way, that kind of nips at the heels of the church, so, that we must remind ourselves consistently—nothing can compare to the infinite worth of a soul, even one. All the property that all the churches that have ever existed, have ever owned, cannot compare to the value of one soul.

So, this man here, witnesses this whole being made in his roof, and his house, not destroyed, but certainly damaged. Hopefully, he was overjoyed about this, but we don't know.

But here he is now to be lowered down. We see once again in verse five. And when Jesus (I'm sorry), verse four, they let down the bed on which the paralytic lay. Now verse five, and when Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic; Son, your sins are forgiven.

So, we're told there that Jesus saw their faith? What did Jesus see? Did Jesus see the working out of their faith? Like James chapter five, (I'm sorry), James, chapter two, verse 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, where James says to us, you know, show me your faith by your words, I'll show you my faith by how it works out by the working out of faith. Because of faith that doesn't work out in your life, if faith doesn't evidence in your life—can't be a faith that saves anybody. Those are the words of James.

So, is Jesus seeing, when he says he saw their faith, is Jesus seeing the working of their faith, the working out of their faith? Or is Jesus seeing something else? I think the answer is—both. I mean, clearly, Jesus sees the working out of their faith, everybody in the room sees the working out of their faith. Everybody else in the room sees that these people are so, bold—remember, last week, we talked about that audacious faith that sees—your back is against the wall, and your only hope is Jesus, and you ask the unaskable. They have this bold and audacious, audacious...audacious faith, in which there's no—we got to get him to Jesus, we if we get him to Jesus, Jesus can heal him.

And so, they've got this faith, it's so, bold, that they're bold enough to make a hole in someone's roof. And so,, certainly Jesus, and all the others ,see this working out of their faith. But Jesus sees more than just the

working out of their faith, because the working out of your faith and the faith itself are not the same thing. The working out of your faith is the evidence of it. It's the fruit of it. It's not the faith itself. Jesus sees the working out of their faith, but he also sees something else. He sees the faith itself.

When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic; Son, your sins are forgiven you. In your notes here, in your handout, you'll see some other instances in which we're told quite frequently that Jesus sees, or he perceives faith in other people. For example, chapter 10, verse 52; Go your way, your faith has made you well.

Matthew eight and verse 10. When Jesus heard this, he marveled and says, I tell you, nowhere else in Israel have I found such faith as this.

Matthew nine, verse 22, take heart, daughter, your faith has made you well.

Matthew 15, verse 28, woman, great is your faith. So, we see instances of Jesus seeing the faith of people. And Jesus sees the faith of these people here, he sees their faith. And as a result of that, he speaks to the paralytic and says, Son, your sins are forgiven.

So, the first main, central point that we see in this passage is something that everyone in the room can see. There's two main points of the passage, and nobody needs a biblical expositor—any student of the Bible can clearly see these two points. Number one, Jesus sees the hearts of men. Jesus sees the thoughts of men, Jesus sees the hearts of man. We're going to see that come up again, with the hearts of the Pharisees, but Jesus sees the hearts of people. He knows the hearts of people, and he sees something in here, this faith that he sees, and when he sees their faith, he said to the paralytic, Son, your sins are forgiven you.

So, this would have been, I think, quite an unexpected result, quite an unexpected response from Jesus. Here, they are going to all this effort to get this man to Jesus, and why are they trying to get into Jesus? Because his legs don't work. And they know that Jesus can heal his legs. That is the most obvious thing in the text. They want to get him to Jesus so, that Jesus will heal him. And instead, Jesus's responses, Son, your sins are forgiven.

So, would they have been disappointed? What sort of look would have come over their faces. If you were looking up to that hole in the roof, and they're all peering down just waiting for their friend to stand up and walk? And Jesus says, your sins are forgiven. Would their faces have just been downcast? Would they have looked at each other and said, Huh? Did he say what I thought he said?

What sort of response would have come from them? Because, you know, people then are just like people today, in the sense that, for us, we have this inbred, sort of ingrained notion, that physical well-being takes top priority. Don't we have that just, I mean, that's just natural. That's like the knee-jerk reaction, that physical wellbeing always takes priority. We might not say it in those words, but that's how we always feel.

Just listen to your prayers. Just listen to corporate prayers in the church, just listen to prayer requests, just listen to those things, and you will realize that physical needs always seem to take a priority.

And it's the same way for people in Jesus's day. People in Jesus's day weren't more spiritual than people today. They, too, were people for whom physical needs took priority. Just think of Job. Remember the story, Job? Take your hedge away from him, God, let me touch his body, and he will curse you. Because people then thought, just like people think today, let me touch his body. And he'll curse you. Because physical well-being is of such importance to us.

And rightly so,. What good is, are so, many of the other blessings of this earthly life. If we don't have physical health? what good are the blessings of let's say, for example, I don't know you're an art collector. And you really appreciate fine art. And you have accumulated for yourself some of the finest art, in the particular type of art that you like—what good is all that? If your eyes have gone dim, and you can't see it any longer. Or you can't enjoy it, because your health is so, poor?

So, rightly so,. I mean, physical health is important. And the Scriptures teach us that God is concerned for our physical health. Jesus in Matthew 25, will say this commendation, that these who gave a cup of cold water in my name. Or James chapter two, that same chapter in James, in his epistle, when he says, What good is it if somebody comes among you, and they have a physical need of a bodily need, and you're able to meet it, but you don't, but you sort of send them away with these well wishes and a prayer. You know, God bless you, my son, we'll be thinking about you. James says, what good is that? When there was a bodily need that you didn't meet.

So, the Scriptures teach us that there is a importance that God places on this, on this physical healing, this is why Jesus goes around healing as he does. But there is an infinitely greater importance, in the economy of God, there's an infinitely greater importance placed upon the greatest need of all, which is the need for the forgiveness of sins. That's something that's playing in the text as well.

The greatest need of all, is our need for the forgiveness of sins. And this is what makes this miracle such a remarkable miracle. Because this is the only healing miracle in which Jesus specifically and explicitly connects the two together—connects together the healing and your greatest need of all, which is the forgiveness of sins.

So, Jesus sees their faith. And he says, these words are the paralytic; Son, you know that word son, Jesus is expressing there, a certain reality about his relationship to this meaning. His expressing something about their relationship as he calls him, son.

So, he sees the faith of the friends, and he turns to the paralytic and says, your sins are forgiven? What is all that about? Have you ever wondered? Did Jesus forgive his sins, based upon his friends' faith?

Well, clearly here, that's not what Jesus is doing. Because in the Scriptures, we always see a connection. There's a plain and pure connection that is always true and always valid in the Scriptures. And that's this, the forgiveness of sins is only extended to those who are justified. The Bible knows nothing about the forgiveness of sins, that's extended to those who are not right with God, who are not justified.

God doesn't forgive the sins of those who aren't his children. So, when Jesus forgives the man's sins, he is necessarily also saying that this man is justified. Now, the Scriptures also teach us that no one in Scripture is justified apart from faith. Faith is the vehicle through which justification comes to us.

Ephesians one verse seven, this connects to us. This connects for us justification and the forgiveness of sins. In His blood. We have the forgiveness of sin, the redemption, the forgiveness in his blood that connects together for us redemption and forgiveness, justifications and forgiveness. Then just a few verses later, chapter two verse eight, connects together for us, justification and faith. Justification only comes by faith, For by grace you have been saved through faith.

So, we are only forgiven if we are justified, we're only justified if we have faith, we only have faith, we are only justified, if we repent, Acts three, verse 19. And we only repent if we're convicted of sin.

Now that sounds like that I just made a long string of connections that weren't in the text, doesn't it? But every single connection is absolutely biblically solid. Every connection there—I'm not pulling anything out of the air—the Scriptures connect all those things for us very clearly. Forgiveness is for those who are justified. Justification is for those who have faith, faith comes to those who have repented. Repentance, a gift from God, is something that comes through the conviction of sin.

So, what I'm getting at is something that's not explicit in the text, but something that's clear. What Jesus sees, as this man is being lowered into the room, is one big bag of a storm. This is, this is a storm. Because in this man's heart is turmoil. He is in turmoil, clearly over his physical condition—he's a cripple. He can do nothing. He can't care for himself, he can't provide for himself. So, clearly, his life is in turmoil over his legs that don't work.

But there's something else that Jesus clearly sees. He clearly sees a turmoil of the soul. He clearly sees that this man is convicted, not just of the state of his physical life—with his legs that don't work—but Jesus clearly sees that this man is wrestling with his own sin. And that he has this faith that's been given to him. And he's wrestling with this repentance, and this forgiveness of sin.

Jesus sees that. And he declares to him; Son, your sins are forgiven. The greatest need of all, I grant to you now, your sins are now forgiven.

So, as he's lowered down, and the proclamation is made of his forgiveness of sins, of course, everyone in the room is going to hear this and there's going to be a shockwave that travels through the room. But the Jewish person, they were accustomed to hearing priests proclaim forgiveness of sin. This wouldn't have been something totally new to their ears. They would have heard the forgiveness of sin proclaimed by the

priests. Because the priests had the authority to proclaim that according to your repentance, and according to your sacrifice, God promises forgiveness. That's what Leviticus tells us, Leviticus 19 and other places. If the sacrifice is proper, and the heart is proper, then the priest has the authority to sa—based on this, I proclaimed that God will forgive you.

But Jesus isn't proclaiming forgiveness. Jesus is conferring forgiveness. Jesus isn't declaring forgiveness. Jesus is creating forgiveness. How is Jesus creating forgiveness? In the same way that he creates forgiveness for all who have gone before this paralytic—by faith and the promise of God, that my sins will be taken away by Messiah.

So, Jesus, even though he hasn't gone to the cross yet is saying, I will pay, I will pay this, I will become this sin. And by your faith, you're forgiven of the sin.

So, he's not declaring what the priest could declare Jesus is conferring forgiveness upon him, because he has the authority. Matthew 28, verse 18, 19, All authority has been given to him, All authority in heaven and on earth. John five and verse 22, The Father judges no one but has given judgment to the Son.

This is a clear claim of divinity on the part of Jesus Christ. This is what makes this one of the greatest miracles, because it again connects together our need our greatest need, and this miracle of healing in itself.

So, now we continue in the passage, verse six, and now some of the scribes were sitting there questioning in their hearts—why does this man speak like this? He's blasphemy. So, all the opposition against Jesus, all the opposition against Jesus has come from truth. The man with an unclean spirit in the synagogue—you are the Holy One of God. You've come to destroy us. The opposition here from the Pharisees—no one can, no one can forgive sins, but God. What, of course hasn't crossed their mind is that God is in the room with them. That's what has not crossed their mind. And also hasn't crossed anybody else's mind either.

And so, they're correct to say its blasphemy to say that someone other than God can forgive sins, because only the one who sinned against can forgive those sins. And only God can forgive the sins committed against him. So, this would be blasphemy if he weren't God.

So, they're sitting here questioning in their hearts disbelieving. Jesus, of course knows this, because Jesus knows the hearts of men. And so, Jesus is preaching and his teaching to those who are actively disbelieving him, you know, all of us who stand and proclaim God's Word, all of us have, we've had occasion, if you if you're one who's taught before, or stood before God's people and open God's Word before, you know what it's like to stand before people who are disbelieving what you say. That just sort of goes along with it. And sometimes you can proclaim God's word and you can just sense, you can just know, that there's there are people who are listening to you that they're not listening to learn or to grow or to receive blessing. Instead, they're listening in order to gain ammunition, to hear where you're going to falter, to hear where you're going to trip up. And they're just listening for that.

Jesus is teaching and preaching to those who are doing just that, but the difference is, he knows their hearts, He knows their very thoughts. He sees into their hearts, and he sees how they are completely disbelieving.

Verse six again, some of the scribes were sitting there questioning in their hearts. Why does this man speak like this? He's blaspheming, who can forgive sins but God alone? And verse eight, and immediately Jesus perceiving in his spirit that they thus question within themselves said to them; Why do you question these things in your hearts. Verse nine, which is easier to say to the paralytic, Your sins are forgiven, or to say, rise, take up your bed and walk?

So, Jesus's question to them switch would be easier to say, your sins are forgiven or rise, take up your bed and walk. So, Jesus here, he's not saying that to forgive sins is easier than to heal. What he's saying is, one is really easy to verify. One claim would be really easy to quantify, to qualify, and that's the claim of healing. Jesus is subjecting himself to the same standard, that Deuteronomy subjects the prophets to—a false prophet is one whose words do not come to pass. Jesus is subjecting himself to that same standard. And he's saying—well, the easier one is to say your sins are forgiven because there's no clarification of that. Who's to know? Who's to know if the sins really are forgiven or not. But if I say get up and walk, everybody in the room is going to know whether that is something that came true or not.

So, Jesus sees into their hearts, he peers directly into their hearts, knowing their thoughts, knowing their disbelieving thoughts. Again, he is the one who sees people's thoughts sees into men's hearts, as we see so, often in the Scriptures how Jesus will know what they're thinking. Or he'll know how they're doubting him here, he'll know how the disciples are talking among themselves about which one is greatest or he'll, he'll know that the disciples are talking about how they forgot to bring the bread. He knows these things, we're told in John chapter two—that's the reason he didn't entrust himself to people, because he knew their hearts.

But here's something else that we're told in the book of Revelation. Chapter two and verse 23. And the churches will know that I am He who searches mind and heart, Jesus is still the one who searches minds and hearts. Jesus is still the one who knows our thoughts and knows our hearts. And here's why that's important to see. Because when we realize that God knows our thoughts and knows our hearts, that is a powerful vehicle for spiritual change. When the last person realizes that God sees their heart and knows their thoughts, that can be, oftentimes, the first human trigger for conversion.

Look with me the words of Albert Martin as he says it this way. "The first step to a sinner's conversion is when he takes seriously that God sees his heart." And by first step there Martin means the first human step. The first human step to conversion, oftentimes is when a person realizes—I can't hide. My heart is open. God sees my thoughts. He knows my thoughts. He knows my heart. I cannot hide. That oftentimes is the first impetus, the first push into that person's conversion, from a human standpoint speaking,

But then also for the one who is converted look at Martin's words as he goes on. "And this can be the foundation of all godliness, when we take seriously that God sees our hearts." So, for the believer, the converted, the regenerate believer, who begins to take seriously the reality that God sees our hearts, God knows our thoughts, that can be the impetus for true spiritual growth. Because when we sort of hold on to this false narrative that we can hide from God, that we have the deepest parts of our soul, the deepest parts of our heart, and our thoughts really are not something that God has access to—when we do away with that, when we finally get serious and realize God sees everything, that can be a powerful spiritual motivator, not only for godliness in the believer, but even for conversion in the unbeliever.

Look with me at Hebrews chapter four and verse 12. Now we all know the theme of the book of Hebrews is that there's this group of believers who have failed to progress to spiritual maturity. And the writer is concerned for their souls, because they have been, not just lazy, they have been absolutely delinquent in their spiritual growth. And so, we know the warnings that come through the book of Hebrews to those how they must progress on to spiritual maturity. But we often don't think of chapter four, verse 12, as one of those warnings.

But Hebrews chapter four and verse 12 fits right along with all those stern warnings for the believers who have not progressed to spiritual maturity, when chapter four, verse 12, says this; The Word of God is living and active, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and spirit, of joints and marrow, (and here it is) discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

The writers purpose here is to say, you must progress on to godliness, because God sees your heart, because God knows your thoughts. Nothing is hidden from him. So, you cannot just remain in the spiritual condition of juvenile faith, of infant faith. Because God sees it all. And becoming serious about that, getting serious about the fact that God sees our hearts and knows our thoughts, that is a powerful pushing mechanism for the believer to move on to maturity.

So, we see here once again, how Jesus sees their hearts. Now for seven, why does this man speak like this? What they're saying, He's blaspheming, who can forgive sins, but God alone? Verse eight, and immediately perceiving in his spirit that they questioned thus within themselves, he said to them; Why do you question these things in your hearts. which is easier to say to the paralytic, your sins are forgiven, or to say, rise, take up your bed and walk? But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority to forgive honor to forgive sins.

So, here we come across this title, Son of Man. Fourteen more times in Mark's gospel, we're going to come across this title, Son of Man. It was by far—by far—Jesus' favorite way to refer to himself—Son of Man. Some 83 or 84 times, Jesus refers to himself as Son of Man.

Now, I don't want to go through all the drawing out of what that title means, the Son of Man, mainly because we spent some time in a couple other messages doing that. And so, if you want to go back and sort of review those, it was the Good Friday message—remember that Good Friday service, we had? The Good Friday message of this past year, you can find it online. It's called 'What Further Witnesses Do We Need?'

We spent a lot of time in that going through what Son of Man is. Also in that message, remember, it's from some time back, from Numbers 21 and John three, 'Everyone Who Looks Will Live.' In that message, we also spent a good deal of time talking about what the Son of Man means.

So, for those reasons, I won't go back through all of that. But I do want to just draw from that the main point, the main point of this title, Son of man. Jesus has two natures. Jesus is fully God, Jesus is fully man. And so, the default is for us to think that when Jesus is referring to his divinity, he's referring to—Son of God. Son, God means Jesus is talking about the fact that he's God. Son of Man means he's talking about the fact that he's also human.

And so, 'Son of Man' is sort of this humble way of characterizing himself—I'm just a son of man. That's the default.

And that's the complete opposite of what Jesus means. The complete opposite of what he's saying when he calls himself Son of Man. Son of Man comes from Daniel seven and eight, in which Jesus is saying, just like the Son of man there is sent from the Ancient of Days, and returns to the Ancient of Days. Jesus is referring not to his humanity. Jesus is referring specifically to his Messianic Deity. So, as we come again and again across this title, Son of Man, we realize, here when Jesus uses that title, he's speaking about something specifically related to his deity. We can even see in the context here. He says, just so, you know that the Son of Man has, what, authority to forgive sins on earth. So, he's speaking of his divinity of his messianic divinity, so, that's all that will say about Son of Man for now.

But so, that you know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins—he then turns to the paralytic, I say to you, rise, pick up your bed and go home. Now, this is stunning.

If we think for just a moment about what just happened, what just transpired this is absolutely stunning. Because they are disbelieving, the Pharisees are disbelieving in their hearts, right? They're disbelieving what Jesus is saying and who these people are thinking he is. Now doubt of the Lord's Christ is wicked. It is wickedness to doubt the Lord's Christ. Look at Hebrews chapter three and verse, verse 12. Take care of brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving spirit, unbelieving heart. So, doubting the Lord's Christ is wickedness and it's evil. And our God—Jesus—takes their evil and makes it the occasion to healing this man.

It's almost like Jesus wants it to play out like—was he really going to heal him, until they started doubting in their hearts? I mean, I don't think that was the case, Jesus knew. Jesus knew what was going to happen. He knew what he was going to do. But Jesus does it in such a way—he pronounces his sins forgiven. And then he confronts their wicked hearts who are doubting. And then he takes their wickedness as the occasion to turn around and then heal the man. Isn't that stunning?

That the man got new legs, in essence, because of their doubt of Jesus. God is the God who takes evil and uses it for good, right? We know that Scriptures tell us that emphatically. Genesis chapter 50, verse 20,

you meant this for evil, but God meant this for good. Romans eight, verse 28. We know that for those who are called according to His purpose, that all things work together for our good.

So, we know that God is the God who doesn't just overcome evil. He instead takes it and uses it for good. Here, he even uses evil thoughts. Isn't that amazing? He even uses evil, unbelieving, doubting thoughts as the occasion to restore this man back to health.

But why do you suppose that Jesus chose to pronounce forgiveness upon the man first? Why do you suppose Jesus did it that way? Isn't it interesting that he did it like that? Isn't it interesting that he first pronounced his sins forgiven? He first confers forgiveness upon this man he now calls son. And only then, afterwards does he then pronounce the healing upon him? Isn't that interesting?

Well, I think that, one thing would be absolutely sure this—that how Jesus healed him first, what would have happened in the room? Wouldn't there have been a clamor? Had Jesus told the man to rise, stand up and walk, and he did, can you imagine the room? The gasps. The shouts. The 'praise the Lord's.' The man himself leaping and jumping and laughing. And then Jesus is going to preach this powerful spiritual truth after that?

Jesus does this because he knows that if he healed him first, the truth of what he really wanted to say would have been lost in the clamor. Now, is it too much for us to look into that and just to see something? Just to see something that God's showing us? How it is that Jesus, even we could say, extends the man's misery, extends his paralysis, even for a short time? Because he has a spiritual truth. That's far more important. Can we see in that something of how God works all the time, of how God works through sickness and suffering, and trials, and tribulations, and difficulties, because there's a far more important spiritual reality for us to learn?

And can we see just even in the sequence that Jesus does things here, how he's saying, the most important thing comes first, so, that it's not lost in the excitement of the physical healing.

But his power, of course, knows no limit he pronounces the man to be whole again. Verse 10, but so, that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on her to forgive sins, all authorities given to him. He said to the paralytic, I say to you rise, pick up your bed and go home. And he rose, and immediately picked up his bed and went out before them all, so, that they were all amazed, and glorified God saying, We never saw anything like this.

What were the Pharisees? What was their reaction? A moment ago, they were disbelieving. Now this man walks out. They were all amazed. And of course, like all of Jesus' miracles, like every single one, this the healing is immediate. It's not a process. There's no process of relearning his balance, of re-strengthening his legs. There's no process of sort of walking and stumbling a little bit—first rise, pick up your bed, go home. The healing is immediate, as though he was never paralyzed. We don't know how long he was paralyzed, maybe for years, maybe his whole life. But the healing is instant, and immediate, and complete. He gets up, he takes his bed and goes home.

Now the last thing for us to see and then we'll be done is this. Just this—that the paralytic had to do what? He had to act on what Jesus said. Rise, take up your bed, go home—three commands, three imperatives. Three things that Jesus told him to do. The paralytic had to hear, understand, and he had to do it. He had to obey it. He had to move his legs, his brain had to tell his legs to move. He had to take his arms and push himself up. And he had to stand up. And he had to bend over and pick up his bed. And he had to walk out the door. He had to act on what Jesus told him to do.

So, in his acting, let's imagine for just a moment what might have gone through his head. Because what did the paralytic, just hear? He just heard Jesus, tell everybody in the room, what the most important religious leaders in Israel were thinking—and that's that this Man can't do that.

That's the last thing ringing in his ears, is Jesus himself saying, the people that you've been taught to respect and listen to your whole life, these religious leaders, they don't think this can be done. .

He had to hear that. And his faith had to be stronger than their doubt. And he had to act upon that. Now the point that I want to leave us with is this. Their doubt, was something that his faith had to be stronger than he had to overcome it.

Do you know that all of us here in the room, do you know that our faith affects everybody else in the room? Do you know that that's how the body of Christ works? Do you know that, just like a body, whose heart is ill, is sick, that the rest of your body cannot go unaffected. In the same way, the faith of one in the body impacts everyone in the body.

You do not live your faith in a bubble. You do not have your struggles with doubt and unbelief, and then just take them home to yourself, and struggle with them on your own. Your struggles—your faith growth, your faith struggles—all of those things are not in a bubble. They're in the body. And all of us have faith that impacts the faith of others in the body.

In the body, our faith is either strengthening or weakening the faith of others around us. So, we need to leave behind this notion that our individualistic, western, modern culture has taught us is that you're just a world unto yourself, you're just an island unto yourself. We need to reject that in the light of what the Scriptures teach to us, that we are not an individual in the economy of God. We are the church. We are the body, and our faith impacts one another.