

# The Gospel According to Mark

## The Authority to Forgive Sins

Mark 2:1-12

Sunday, March 1, 2020

### Introduction

There are many things that are important and even necessary for our lives. Depending on who you ask you may get a variety of answers about what people need the most, but as Christians we believe that there is one thing that every person needs more than anything else: Every person is born in need of the forgiveness of God.

While all Christians agree that every person needs God's forgiveness, the reality is that we can be inclined at times think very little about this need and instead give our attention to less pressing things. We forget the forgiveness we have received and fail to help others see their own need of forgiveness.

### Context

In Mark chapter 1 there is a lot of focus on the power and authority of Jesus, but in Mark 2:1-12 Jesus announces His authority in a much greater way as He announces His authority to forgive sins – an authority that is reserved for God and God alone.

### Jesus Returns to Capernaum (2:1-2)

- **The return to Capernaum** – After traveling throughout out the region of Galilee Jesus returns to Capernaum, a place that serves as His home during this part of His ministry. His return quickly draws a crowd; the One who heals and casts out demons has returned.
- **Preaching to the crowd** – While there's no doubt that people flocked to Jesus for a variety of reasons, Jesus is committed to His mission and to His message. Just as He has done throughout Galilee Jesus preaches the Gospel to the gathered crowd (Mark 1:14-15; Mark 1:38).
- **Application** – While people continue to come to Jesus for many different reasons, we must be faithful in helping people see their true need and what Jesus has done to meet their greatest need.

### A Display of Faith (2:3-5a)

- **Bringing the paralytic to Jesus** – Upon hearing of Jesus' return and believing in His power to heal, four men carry a paralytic man to where Jesus is. They recognize this man's need and believe that Jesus can meet his need.

- **A determined faith** – While the path to Jesus was blocked, these men were undeterred. They knew this paralytic man needed Jesus and they were willing to go to great lengths to get him to Jesus.
- **Jesus recognizes their faith** – As the men finally reach Jesus He recognizes their faith. That's not to say they fully understood who Jesus was, but they clearly believed in His power and in His ability to heal.
- **Application** – We shouldn't overlook the example of these men. There are people all around us in need of Jesus and of His salvation. We should be committed to helping those around us see their need and point them to Jesus as the One who can meet their greatest need.

### The Forgiveness of Sins (2:5-12)

- **The announcement of forgiveness (2:5)** – While the paralytic lay on the ground in front of Him, the next words from Jesus aren't the words that anyone expected; Jesus pronounced the forgiveness of his sins.
- **The question of authority (2:6-7)** – The scribes immediately recognized the significance of what Jesus said. Only God can forgive sins and to wrongly claim that authority is to commit blasphemy.
- **The proof of authority (2:8-12a)**
  - **An explanatory question** – What may seem like an odd question was Jesus' way of revealing His authority. While the validity of Jesus' pronouncement of forgiveness can't be verified, the power of His command to get up and walk is very much verifiable.
  - **The healing of the lame man** – As we've seen before, the healing power of Jesus is immediately and completely effective.
  - **The authority of the Son of Man** – Not only does Jesus reveal His authority through healing the paralytic, but He also identifies Himself as the Son of Man – a title of authority (Daniel 7:13-14).
- **Application** – Our greatest need is forgiveness and Jesus is the One through whom forgiveness is available. We must trust Him for our forgiveness and then point others to Him as the One they need.

**The Response to the Authority of Jesus (2:12b)** – While the crowd didn't have a complete understanding of who Jesus was, they were amazed and they knew that God was the One who deserved the glory. As those who have seen Jesus for who He is and have experienced His forgiveness we should likewise be amazed and give glory to God.