

Mark 2:1-12

THE PREACHER AND THE PARALYTIC

- I. The conflict brewing
- II. The challenge hurled
- III. The charge given
- IV. The conquest obtained
- V. The cure celebrated

INTRODUCTION

One afternoon, while cruising around the local Capernaum Dairy Queen, 4 cool teenagers were discussing the coming of Jesus to their town.

- they talked about His words & work & miracles.

Well, when the day came, just before Jesus was going to speak, the 4 teenagers met at Dairy Queen sipping their cokes & eating blizzards.

- all of a sudden 1 exclaimed how wonderful it would be if Johnny, the 5th member of their group & a crippled friend, could go with them to see Jesus.

We see then that these young people were **CONCERNED**.

- but that's not enough, for being concerned doesn't necessarily get you involved with people.
- th'fore to reach people for Christ we have to get beyond concern.
- & that's what those 4 from Capernaum did as they moved into action & split out for Johnny's place in their 2 horse-power chariots.

Now they were really grooving as their concern turned to **COMPASSION** because, you see, love puts you where need is, while concern only talks about it.

- so the 4 friends burst into Johnny's room, grabbed the corners of his sleeping mat.
- & then they proceeded to carry him down the street to where Jesus was.

Pretty soon their arms began to ache due to Johnny's weight, but their concern & compassion turned to **CONVICTION** that at least they wouldn't have to carry a heavy load home.

- they believed Jesus would heal him so that Johnny seemed to weigh less & less as they neared the place where Jesus was.

Well, when they got there, they found the place packed, “surrounded by newsmen & reporters from the JERUSALEM JOURNAL, the BETHLEHEM BUGLE, & the CAPERNAUM CLARION.

- Mk.2:4 says, 'And they couldn't get near unto Him for the press.'”
- but they didn't give up, tell Johnny how sorry they were, picked him up, & took him home.

No, but their concern & compassion & conviction also gave them COURAGE to carry on.

- they found a ladder & some rope & climbed up on the roof & started to tear it up.
- meantime “below”, as someone describes the scene, “Jesus was addressing an austere group. Pharisees & Sadducees were in the front row. With their Hart, Schaffner, & Marx togas all pressed & proper, they waited to catch Jesus on some theological point. Suddenly a piece of tile hit 1 of them right on his head. Then a pile of dust & straw nailed another one. More tile. Can't you just picture that scene—Pharisees coughing & ducking tiles while muttering, ‘This is very unorthodox; we don't do this in our church.’

The Guy who owned the house ran to get his insurance policy to check on a 'hole-in-roof' coverage. Then 4 perspiring faces were looking down through the hole in the roof. They lowered Johnny. Now get this! Jesus seeing their friend said, 'Son, your sins be forgiven you.' But He left him lying there while He chewed out the Pharisees. Finally, He looked into the eyes of 5 young guys, who didn't know the word 'quit', & said, 'Pick up your mat & walk!'

Before Johnny could turn his eyes down the shaking had stopped. His legs were filled with new muscles. He whipped off the mat, the guys on the roof dropped the ropes, the people fell back saying they had never seen anything like it! I'm sure the 4 guys didn't bother using the ladder to get off the roof & nobody had to carry Johnny home either."

Well, let's look more closely at what God is teaching about Jesus & us in **Mk.2's**, as well as in **Matt.9's** & **Lk.5's**, story of **THE PREACHER & PARALYTIC**.

- **1st** we will notice the conflict brewing, **2nd** the challenge hurled, **3rd** the charges given.
- **4th** the conquest obtained, & **5th** the cure celebrated.

I. THE CONFLICT BREWING

Now here in **Mk.2** & the healing of the paralytic Jesus begins to show what His real mission is, namely, to heal from a more serious sickness & the greatest evil of all: sin.

- but, when Jesus did reveal that, soon opposition began to what He said & did.
- th'fore, ch.2-3 record narratives that show this controversy & conflict.
- & it begins with the rulers' reaction to what Jesus did with the paralytic.

We see then there is **CONFLICT START'ING** or a battle brewing as **Luke 5** sets the scene.

- **ch5:16** says: “One day as he was teaching, the Pharisees & teachers of the law, who had come from every village of Galilee & from Judea & Jerusalem, were sitting there. And the power of Lord was present for him to heal the sick.”
- Mark says it happened when Jesus was in Capernaum in a house, probably provided by His friends.
 - a) & we are told the house was so crowded with people that flowed out of it & all around it on outside blocking all avenues to & into house.

And that crowd included Jesus' disciples & friends & others, including those who were burning with curiosity.

- but there were also the poker-faced Pharisees & Teachers of the law & the Scribes.
- they all sat in the front row, as unfriendly observers & heresy hunters to see & hear it all.
 - a) they were cool & critical of the whole situation for they felt no need for themselves & others that Jesus could fill, thinking it was all a waste of time.
 - b) they were envious & hateful & deeply disturbed about the large crowds Jesus was attracting & about the content of His teachings.

We see then the battle taking shape in which on 1 side there were the Scribes & Pharisees filled with the desire to destroy.

- but on the other side was Jesus filled, Luke says, with power to heal physically & spiritually.

And, you know, this is the battle that has really been raging ever since time began between God & Satan, good & evil, Christians & non-Christians—the battle of life & death.

- & that brings up the question as to which side are you on?
 - a) the side of destruction or real life?
- well, that depends on if you are deeply conscious that you need Lord.
 - a) & you are putting your trust in Him praying for His healing, strengthening presence & power.

II. THE CHALLENGE HURLED

Now in this battle, we see there is **THE CHALLENGE HURLED** when, as **Mark & Luke** record it.

- Jesus was speaking, He was interrupted by a commotion on the roof & a person being let down by ropes in front of Him.
- a person severely sick with a wretched, painful disease that made his muscles unable to function so that he couldn't walk or maybe couldn't talk either.

And how we must admire the courage & the resourcefulness, the earnestness & determination, & the faith & trust these 5 guys had that Jesus would hear & heal.

- for when they saw the mob in & around house making it impossible to get to Jesus, they didn't let such an obstacle discourage & deter them.
- but, with all the efforts & energies they could muster, & at a cost too, they fought through the crowd & the roof to get to Lord.

Now this exceptional determination & eager & earnest faith of the 5 in Jesus & His healing power is real challenging example for us.

- for it rebukes us who say we are concerned about others, but do so little to bring people to the saving, healing influence of Jesus.
- & indeed, unlike the 5, we are so often willing to help people if it doesn't involve a sacrifice & exertion & facing obstacles.
 - a) & when it does, we become discouraged & so easily give up.

But, you see, “cannot” is the word of cowards while “must” is the attitude of a real faith.

- & if we are really conscious of ours & others need to get to Christ & have the true desire to get there, then no obstacle or cost will keep us back.
- then all the means & efforts to bring people to Jesus will be characterized by a determined earnestness & a firm conviction that He alone is the hope & power for salvation.

And to come to Christ & to bring others to Him will cost us.

- it sure will just as that “Capernaum caper cost those 4 cool teenagers something: like comfort (they didn't get in), effort (Johnny wasn't light & the roof was tough), popularity (the Pharisees, the homeowner & citizens were ticked off), & money (I think the next morning those 5 guys went down to the Capernaum Hardware, got some tile & clay & Elmer's glue & fixed the hole in the roof); but was it worth it? Just ask Johnny!”

Indeed, it is a wonderful work worth risking a great deal to come to Jesus in faith because true faith brings great gifts as we see in our **passage**.

- for all 3 gospels say that Jesus took note of the 5's firm faith that was seen by their determination to seek Him for healing at all odds & cost.
- if it wasn't real faith, they wouldn't have taken all trouble they did.

But there was the lame man in front of Jesus & the 4 friends looking down from roof saying **nothing** to Jesus.

- yet by their actions the 4 friends were saying they were persuaded He would heal the paralytic.
 - a) & lying there, the lame friend was saying he believed he would be favored by Christ.
- & so, though they didn't talk, they did the thing that truly mattered most: they trusted.

Well, their firm faith & confidence touched Jesus' heart & caused Him to respond with words of tender love, according to **Matt.9,**” Son, take heart, have courage, be cheerful.”

- why? -because He says: “Your sins are forgiven.”
- & note: Jesus isn't only declaring God forgives, but that He Himself was actually canceling the lame person's debt & making him acceptable to God.
- note too: the tense of verb is saying that all his sins have been forgiven for the past,

they are forgiven for present moment, & they will remain forgiven in the future. That is to say, all the sins of person's youth & adulthood, of everyday of his life, all the sins of thoughts, words, & deed, no matter how many or big they are, they are all tied up into 1 bundle & forgiven completely & forever.

- all sins are taken away so that a huge load is taken from our heart & life.
- & God embraces a person in His saving, protecting love as His own so we have genuine gladness & life.

Now how unexpected Jesus' words are & that He didn't 1st cure the paralyzed condition, which was bad enough.

- but, you see, Jesus knew that person suffered from a far worse situation: sin.
- &, though there is no direct connection between sin & certain sickness, yet it is true that disease & death are the consequences of humankind's sinful condition.
- th'fore Jesus realized sin produces sickness & sorrow so He spoke words of pardon & peace.

We see then, from Jesus' dealing with the paralytic, that He didn't come into the world 1st of all to heal physical ailments & help us overcome a few bad habits.

- no, but He knew there is something more serious to be dealt with so that He deals with the root of all of our problems of pain & paralysis, sickness & death, & that is sin.
 - a) He never takes that lightly because He knows our sinfulness & that sins separates us from God & real joy & life which make for human misery.
- th'fore He offers the only solution He has procured & now proclaim & provides: forgiveness.

Well that also means Jesus is telling us that salvation & forgiveness of a person's sin & the possession of eternal life is more important than the healing of the body & the extension of physical life.

- that social evils & physical ills are less serious than spiritual, moral sickness which causes the others.
- & so He is teaching that really we can't change a person or the world & heal its physical sufferings & moral evils by just changing the outside.
 - a) that's like giving a person medicine for pimples when she has cancer.
- instead we must go to the source of it all--our sinful hearts & nature which must be redeemed & renewed by Christ, as we seek to heal physically & socially & spiritually.

We see then, with Jesus' response to the paralytic, He also claims for Himself that He has the divine right to forgive sins & the power to actually to do it, for He is showing He is God Himself.

- He is then challenging His hearer, & us too, to believe that so we are forgiven.
- He is also challenging us, who know the joys of salvation, to bring to Him for healing,

without counting cost, the spiritually paralyzed in the slavery & stranglehold of sin.

And where Lord finds authentic faith in Him, a faith that is alive & active,--

- a faith that takes hold of Him & lives for Him only. --
 - a) a faith that produces the works of missions & mercy in bringing others to Jesus,
--
 - b) a faith that knows no obstacles & overcomes all difficulties & sacrifices all, --
- where Lord finds such a true faith He will declare His words of power & love: “You are forgiven. Rise Up, Walk, Live in real comfort & courage & cheer.”

Well, what is your & my response to Christ's challenge?

- may it not be the responses of the Scribes & Pharisees that we see in the next truth of our text.

III. THE CHARGE GIVEN

For in **Mk.2:6,7** we are told that “Now some teachers of the law were sitting there, thinking to themselves, 'Why does this fellow talk like that? He's blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone?’

- “Who does He think He is anyhow. The audacity of it all to think He is God Himself!”
- you see, the religious leaders of that day had come to find fault with Jesus so that there was no room in their hearts to share in the joy of the paralytic's forgiveness & healing.
- & so, no doubt out of envy & pride, they cried, “Foul!”
 - a) they silently attacked Jesus accusing Him of claiming only what God can possess & do.
 - b) the right & power to forgive & remove sins.

Well, the Scribes & Pharisees were correct that only God can forgive & remove sin.

- & they were right that Jesus was blaspheming unless He is God Himself.
- th'fore we can draw only 1 of 2 conclusions: either Jesus is who He says is by implication: Almighty God Himself.
 - a) or He is blaspheming because He wrongly claims what only God is able to do.
- & in their hearts the religious leaders chose the latter, denying Jesus is Lord & Savior.

But what about us, even though we may pride ourselves about never saying anything against Christ or profane Him in our looks & words.

- yet, if we don't accept Jesus as God Himself, call Him our Lord., claim Him as our only Savior.
 - a) believe He forgives sin, then we too are accusing Him of blasphemy.
- & we will never know the joys of God's forgiveness & favor, His fellowship & family.

IV. THE CONQUEST OBTAINED

Now in vs.8ff we see Jesus gaining a CONQUEST & winning a victory by refuting Pharisees' accusation & annihilating their false conclusion.

- for here He demonstrates that He is God so that He can forgive sin.
- He does that 1st by reading the thoughts of His enemies, which He couldn't do if He weren't God, so that He declares they were wrong in their thinking & reasoning.
- & He wants them to examine their hearts & see they were really the evil ones.

2nd our Lord proves He is God by His question & action in vs.9-12 where He asks:

- “Which is easier: to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up, take your mat and walk?’”
- & then He says, 'But that you may know the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins,' He said to paralytic, 'I tell you, get up, take your mat & go home.' He got up, took his mat & walked out in full view of them all."

Now what Jesus is saying is that, in a sense, it is easier to say to person that his sins are forgiven than to tell a cripple to walk.

- that's because there is no way to prove 1's word is true when comes to forgiveness.
- but to command a person to get up & walk is harder because it can be proven to be true & powerful & visibly verified by all when real healing happens.
- if it doesn't happen, then our words have no value & proves we don't have the right & power to do it.

To be sure, when it comes down to it, both forgiveness of sin & the healing of a paralytic are possible only to God & by His almighty power.

- but the religious leaders were saying it is all well & good to pretend to do what can't be tested, like taking away sin.
 - a) let Jesus do a miracle that we can see to prove He is God.
- th'fore Jesus decides that, if it takes performing a miracle in the physical realm that can be seen & certified to prove that He, the Son of Man, is also the Son of God with the right & power to perform the invisible miracle of forgiveness in the spiritual realm, then He will do the seemingly harder thing.
 - a) so He turns to the paralytic & commands him to get up, take his mat, & go home.
- & the man believed the One, who ordered him to do that, & would enable him to obey.
 - a) th'fore, for all to see, he immediately got up, rolled up his mat, & walked out of the place.
 - b) & Matthew & Luke add: “And he went home glorifying God.”
- & so with that miracle Jesus triumphs over His enemies by proving He is God, able to forgive sin.

V. THE CURE CELEBRATED

But to possess & experience this forgiveness & healing, our response must be more than how people of that day reacted in CELEBRATING THE CURE of the paralytic.

- 1st we see that those preachers weren't convinced & changed because as we read further in Bible their hearts became harder & harder until they finally crucified the Christ.
- as for the rest of the crowd, Mark & Luke report they were amazed as having never experienced anything like it before.

Matthew says they also praised God because He had given such authority to a man.

- that means the multitude just saw for a moment a flicker of divine glory in Jesus.
- but it was just a glimpse that they failed to see Him as very God Himself & Savior.

Th'fore the people were astonished & glorified God & recognized they seen something new.

- they realized they were in the presence of Lord, but that was all.
- they didn't turn to Jesus & submit to Him in faith to receive forgiveness & salvation & life He offered.

CONCLUSION

So Jesus is right; He is really God Himself come to heal & to save.

- & that means He is the only real Savior, who is full of love & grace.
- He is the only 1 who knows our deepest needs--sin.
- He then is our only Hope & Help for forgiveness, as the only One who is ready & waiting, willing & able to truly & totally save people from sin & death.

Th'fore we must come to Jesus & be united to Him by faith.

- only then we will rise & walk again spiritually which is the best of all.
- only then we will know & experience without a doubt, that we are forgiven & saved, body & soul.
 - a) that all our sins are taken away so that we are no longer separated from God.
 - b) & we will possess real freedom from evil & death & experience genuine joy & peace & life.

And then we will be walking or living as those forgiven: in love & obedient service to Lord.

- & we will be bringing others to Him at costs & sacrifice.
- & we will be bringing God all the gratitude & glory for so great a salvation.

AMEN