

Unit II: Jesus and Calls in His Ministry

Healing for the Whole Person

DEVOTIONAL READING: Psalm 103:1-14

BACKGROUND SCRIPTURE: Mark 2:1-12

PRINT PASSAGE: Mark 2:1-12

KEY VERSE: Whether is it easier to say to the sick of the palsy, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk?
(Mark 2:9, KJV)

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“Which is easier: to say to this paralyzed man, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Get up, take your mat and walk?’”
(Mark 2:9, NIV)

Lesson Aims

As a result of experiencing this lesson, you should be able to do these things:

- Study Mark’s account of Jesus’ healing the man who was paralyzed.
- Appreciate how one’s physical, emotional, social, and spiritual needs are intertwined.
- Pray for God’s healing grace to touch you at your particular point of need.

*Key Terms

Crowd (verse 4)—Greek: *ochlos* (okh’los): a multitude; the common people; “press” (KJV).

Faith (verse 5)—Greek: *pistis* (pis’-tis): conviction of the truth; belief; trust; confidence; fidelity; faithfulness.

Forgive (verse 7)—Greek: *aphiemi* (af-ee’-ay-mee): to let go, leave alone, remit.

Hearts (verse 8)—Greek: *kardia* (kar-dee’-ah): the hearts, minds, characters, inner self; wills; intentions; centers.

Sins (verse 5)—Greek: *harmartia* (ham-ar-tee’-ah): sins; failures; faults; “missing the mark.”

Word (verse 2)—Greek: *logos* (log’-os): a word (as embodying an idea); a statement; a speech.

*(Word Study Supplement—Refer to page 2)



The Biblical Context

Some might find it interesting that Jesus chose Capernaum rather than Jerusalem, or His hometown of Nazareth, as the central location for His ministry (see Matthew 4:13). Jesus and His disciples travelled frequently throughout Palestine but consistently returned to Capernaum for regrouping and refreshing. On at least one occasion, Jesus was chased out of Nazareth by persons who intended to shove Him off a cliff for refusing to perform miracles among them (see Luke 4:16-30). Jesus ministered in Capernaum because His ministry was well-received there. This week's lesson features Jesus' ministering in a private home. The village houses had flat roofs that were often used as an outside room. The space could be used for various reasons, including entertaining guests. The roofs were covered with clay bricks or tiles and would be accessible by a ladder which usually leaned aside the house from the ground to the roof. When Jesus healed the man by the Bethesda Pool, He made a connection between physical disability and sin (see John 5:14), as He did for the paralytic whose friends brought him to Jesus by lowering him through a roof. Although it was common to blame physical disability on sin, Jesus clarified that personal sin was not always the cause of infirmity (John 9:1-3). Jesus used miracles to affirm the divine authority and origin of His ministry (see Mark 1:22, 27; 2:10). Jesus' healing of the paralytic at Capernaum also affirmed His authority to forgive sins and confirms that the Lord's focus is never one-dimensional. He has always been concerned for our social, emotional, mental, and physical well-being.

Introduction

In recent years, holistic healing has become increasingly popular. The holistic movement includes the use of natural medicines, herbs, dietary supplements, and other alternative approaches to wellness. The movement approaches the body as a whole unit. In order to treat one component, you must treat other parts of the body—thus treating the whole body. Approaches to maintaining body balance include exercise, meditation, and eating right. Many have gotten rich from teaching on holistic practices and pushing certain products or routines as being better or healthier than another. The emphasis on wellness is seen throughout the Bible, from Genesis to Revelation. God has always been concerned about the well-being of His creation. In Genesis, God addressed Adam's aloneness. The ministries of Elijah and Elisha, Jesus and the apostles were marked by notable healing miracles; and the Wisdom Literature and several of the epistles tackle topics of joy, peace of mind, and fear. The holistic approach to taking care of the mind, body, and soul is prevalent throughout the Word of God. The challenge for the Christian, especially in America, is applying a holistic approach to ministry—helping people to live better lives. The church is called to follow Jesus' example of ministry to the whole person, teaching believers

to adopt holistic methods of self-care and to help promote such care and healing in others. Holistic healing can begin with demonstrating God's love in our homes and within our families. The focus on healthy ways of relating to others should extend beyond the family to neighbors, the community, and beyond. Jesus displayed holistic ministry at its best—ministry focused not only on gathering souls for the kingdom of God, but also on meeting the everyday needs of the oppressed, the hungry, the imprisoned, the sick, and the outcast. With a renewed emphasis on ministry to the needs of the whole person, the church would fulfill its mission, glorify God, reach more souls, and truly heal the land.

ANALYSIS OF THE BIBLICAL TEXT

A Desperate Plea

(Mark 2:1-4)

KJV

AND AGAIN he entered into Capernaum after some days; and it was noised that he was in the house.

2 And straightway many were gathered together, insomuch that there was no room to receive them, no, not so much as about the door: and he preached the *word* unto them.

3 And they come unto him, bringing one sick of the palsy, which was borne of four.

4 And when they could not come nigh unto him for the *press*, they uncovered the roof where he was: and when they had broken it up, they let down the bed wherein the sick of the palsy lay.

NIV

A FEW days later, when Jesus again entered Capernaum, the people heard that he had come home.

2 They gathered in such large numbers that there was no room left, not even outside the door, and he preached the *word* to them.

3 Some men came, bringing to him a paralyzed man, carried by four of them.

4 Since they could not get him to Jesus because of the *crowd*, they made an opening in the roof above Jesus by digging through it and then lowered the mat the man was lying on.

The news of Jesus' healings circulated throughout Capernaum. The people found hope and comfort in Jesus' ministry during the oppressive days of Roman rule and generally corrupt spiritual leadership within the Nation of Israel. Jesus freely offered healing without respect of social status, gender, or reputation; and without demanding payment or favors. Mark 1:32-33 notes that people brought many sick and demon-possessed people to Jesus and He healed them all. Mark 2, **verse 1a** records Jesus' entering Capernaum after preaching throughout Galilee. As the people heard (**verse 1b**) that Jesus had returned, they began to gather in the house where Jesus was ministering. As Jesus preached, the crowd grew to the point that there was no room for anyone to squeeze through the crowd to get close to Jesus—no room inside the house, nor anywhere near its doors or windows (**verse 2**). Desperate to get to Jesus and unwilling to be denied by the presence of such a tight crowd, four men brought a paralyzed man to Jesus (**verse 3**). The men were so determined to get to Jesus that they carried their friend to the roof of the house and made an opening big enough to gently lower the man directly into the presence of Jesus (**verse 4**).

? **What Do You Think?** How far have you ever gone to help a friend in crisis?

A Discerning Plea

(Mark 2:5-8)

KJV

5 When Jesus saw their *faith*, he said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, thy *sins* be forgiven thee.

6 But there was certain of the scribes sitting there, and reasoning in their hearts,

7 Why doth this man thus speak blasphemies? who can *forgive* sins but God only?

8 And immediately when Jesus perceived in his spirit that they so reasoned within themselves, he said unto them, Why reason ye these things in your *hearts*?

NIV


5 When Jesus saw their *faith*, he said to the paralyzed man, “Son, your *sins* are forgiven.”

6 Now some teachers of the law were sitting there, thinking to themselves,

7 “Why does this fellow talk like that? He’s blaspheming! Who can *forgive* sins but God alone?”

8 Immediately Jesus knew in his spirit that this was what they were thinking in their *hearts*, and he said to them, “Why are you thinking these things?”

Imagine Jesus and those in the room looking up to see debris falling and four men intently lowering someone down into the room on a mat. Seeing the men’s effort and fierce determination, Jesus spoke directly to the man, telling him that his sins were forgiven (verse 5). Jesus’ words were not just unexpected but shocking as well. The four men said nothing. The paralytic man said nothing. Instead of saying a single word about the man’s infirmity or the roof damage, Jesus only said, “Son, your sins are forgiven” (verse 5, NIV). Mark records Jesus’ words as well as the reaction of those present in the room, including teachers of the Law (verse 6a). Jesus knew that they were already skeptical and hostile to His ministry, yet they had come, despite themselves, to listen intently to Jesus’ preaching and teaching in hopes of finding some point of disagreement or objection. Picture their outrage at Jesus’ offer of forgiveness (verses 6b-7). Although they had not addressed Jesus directly, He immediately knew their thoughts and challenged them (verse 8). The text confirms Jesus’ ability to discern the sentiments of a person’s heart, whether devotion, doubt, or disdain.

 **What Do You Think?** When you are present for worship at church, what is on your mind? How can you focus your thoughts strictly on worship and the Word?

A Divine Plea

(Mark 2:9-12)

KJV

9 Whether is it easier to say to the sick of the palsy, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk?

10 But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (he saith to the sick of the palsy,)

11 I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy bed, and go thy way into thine house.

12 And immediately he arose, took up the bed, and went forth before them all; inso-much that they were all amazed, and glorified God, saying, We never saw it on this fashion.

NIV

9 “Which is easier: to say to this paralyzed man, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Get up, take your mat and walk’?”

10 “But I want you to know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins.” So he said to the man,

11 “I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home.”

12 He got up, took his mat and walked out in full view of them all. This amazed everyone and they praised God, saying, “We have never seen anything like this!”

Jesus addressed the scribes’ disdain and resentment by asking a direct question. He asked them which is easier—to tell someone that his/her sins are forgiven or to tell a paralytic to pick up his mat and walk (**verse 9**)? Jesus was not seeking a real answer from them; He was simply making a point. Jesus went on to tell them that the Son of Man (a Messianic phrase they would have fully understood) had the authoritative power to forgive sins—then He turned and spoke to the paralytic, commanding him to take his mat and go home (**verses 10-11**). The man immediately followed Jesus’ command (**verse 12a**). As a response to the miracle, many began to praise God (**verse 12b**). Most had never seen such a miracle. Jesus saw the men’s faith and their desperate plea for divine help, even if they did not say a word. Can you hear Jesus’ call for true believers to worship Him and acknowledge what He has done on earth? That day in Capernaum, the people worshipped Jesus for healing a paralytic. We should take every opportunity to celebrate and praise God. He is the one who heals all our diseases (see Psalm 103:3).

What Do You Think? Can you recall and share with the class a personal experience of healing—mental, social, emotional, physical, or spiritual? Testify so that others can praise God for what He has done for you.

A Closing Thought

God continues to heal today. He is healing minds, bodies, and souls. It is important for us to assist those who need God’s touch by doing what we can to help guide them to Jesus. The Gospel will spread when those who have been impacted by its power begin to boldly share it with others.

Your Life

This week, reflect on your memories of God’s healing in your life. Share the memory with someone close to you. Post it on social media or record it in your personal journal.

Your World!

This week, pray and look for an opportunity to encourage someone who is struggling by sharing your testimony of healing (medical, emotional, spiritual, etc.).

Closing Prayer Lord, help us to accept and acknowledge Your healing power. Let us not overlook or fail to acknowledge Your grace and power, even in bringing wellness by way of a healthy diet or physician’s care. We can do nothing without Your help. We have nothing that we did not first receive from Your hand. You are our healer, and we are thankful. In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen.

Conclusion

(Preparing for Next Week’s Lesson)

While reading the Background Scripture, consider this thought: “Are you standing in the gap for someone else?”

Home Daily Bible Readings		
MONDAY, January 18	“Prayer for Peter in Prison”	(Acts 12:5-11)
TUESDAY, January 19	“Pray for a Successful Ministry”	(Romans 15:22-33)
WEDNESDAY, January 20	“Pray for Inner Strength and Power”	(Ephesians 3:14-21)
THURSDAY, January 21	“Pray the Prayer of Our Lord”	(Matthew 6:7-13)
FRIDAY, January 22	“Pray for Your Abusers”	(Luke 6:22-33)
SATURDAY, January 23	“Pray to Avoid Trials”	(Luke 22:39-46)
SUNDAY, January 24	“Jesus Prays for His Disciples”	(John 17:13-24)