

#41  
September 23, 2018  
Good News  
The Roof Is Not The Most Important

Mark 2:1-12

After a few days, Jesus went back to Capernaum, and people heard that he was at home. <sup>2</sup> So many gathered that there was no longer space, not even near the door. Jesus was speaking the word to them. <sup>3</sup> Some people arrived, and four of them were bringing to him a man who was paralyzed. <sup>4</sup> They couldn't carry him through the crowd, so they tore off part of the roof above where Jesus was. When they had made an opening, they lowered the mat on which the paralyzed man was lying. <sup>5</sup> When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, "Child, your sins are forgiven!"

<sup>6</sup> Some legal experts were sitting there, muttering among themselves, <sup>7</sup> "Why does he speak this way? He's insulting God. Only the one God can forgive sins."

<sup>8</sup> Jesus immediately recognized what they were discussing, and he said to them, "Why do you fill your minds with these questions? <sup>9</sup> Which is easier—to say to a paralyzed person, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up, take up your bed, and walk'? <sup>10</sup> But so you will know that the Human One<sup>[a]</sup> has authority on the earth to forgive sins"—he said to the man who was paralyzed, <sup>11</sup> "Get up, take your mat, and go home."

<sup>12</sup> Jesus raised him up, and right away he picked up his mat and walked out in front of everybody. They were all amazed and praised God, saying, "We've never seen anything like this!"

We have finished chapter 1st of the Gospel of Mark. Only 15 is left. I am so grateful for God's Spirit, for your open hearts and willingness to grow. I am inspired by the Spirit and your encouragement. It is good to be part of God's kingdom. It is so good to have faith in Jesus and being able to witness His healing and His forgiveness. I have been blessed as I have studied and meditated on this book. May we all have a heart who is open and willing to be moved by the Spirit.

It would be so nice, if I could just have a good dinner and will not be hungry for the rest of a week, It would be so nice if I would just get one good night sleep and will not need to sleep the next 24 hours. Wouldn't it be nice if you just heard one good sermon, had one good prayer and you need no more -- at least for a month or two? Just as we need food and sleep every day, we need God's presence, we need prayer and the word of God in our lives, every day. The more I think about it, the more I am convinced that in my every breath I am dependent to God. I am realizing how much I need God and how much God loves and delights when my mind and my thoughts are in his Word and in fellowship with other Christians through the Holy Spirit.

Today we come to this well-known story. Mark says Jesus had just come to comes back home to Capernaum. Did Jesus have a home? Was it Simon's home where he stayed or is own place or where his mother now lived?

It is very interesting that the place where the action occurs is called home. People gathered in such a large number that there was no room left. Can you picture that happening in your house? Your dwelling is filled with so many people that you are packed like sardines?



It reminds me of riding public buses in Lithuania. The majority of people do not have cars. The only transportation for most of us in town and between towns were public buses. You need to get to school, get to work and be in places on time. So people would squeeze in even you know and feel there is no more place in this bus. If you are in the bus you think there is no more room but there are those who are not in the bus and want to get in. They think there is still place just for him or her. Isn't that interesting. Your view of the situation depends on where you are.

Last Sunday I talked about touching and hugging not wanting people to touch you. On these buses you have no choice. You hardly have room to breathe.

In this very packed home Jesus preached. He probably was saying again "God's kingdom is here. Repent and believe!" I like everything to be scheduled and everything would go according my plan. I always like to be on time. So for me not to receive the Bible study books that I ordered at least 3 weeks ahead of time is a catastrophe. It is drives me to distraction when I cannot control or do much about it. My plans are interrupted and I have no control. I feel horrible that I cannot change things.

I develop a good plan and figure out the best time 😊 I am not very good when I have to be somewhere and something unexpected happens. I need to go and I cannot find my car keys. I am very upset.

Many of you know serenity prayer. “God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and wisdom to know the difference.” It certainly is my prayer.

What happens next is much more than just a little disruption. “Some people arrived, and four of them were bringing to him a man who was paralyzed. <sup>4</sup> They couldn’t carry him through the crowd”.

What do you think? This crowd of people is mean, aren’t they? How could they not let the needy come closer to Jesus? How often are we like them? Do we like people who cut in line? We went to eat out last weekend. It was a popular place. Plus, it was Saturday night. There were people waiting to get a table. As we are getting out of the car, other people are getting out their car. It was funny, they made sure they would beat us going through the door. The competitive nature in me wanted to race them. The argument was head for a moment. After all, we pulled in first. It could easily get ugly, especially when you are hungry. Praise God for that still voice, and the wisdom. I did not fight or start to run.

How do you react to the slow driver ahead of you or the car that is trying to merge into the traffic?

This crowd wanted to hear Jesus, be close to Him. I bet they knew about His healing and about this different kind of teaching.



These four people, carrying a paralyzed man, could not come close enough to Jesus. Let's stop and consider. What is faith? What is faith for you? Is it a belief or is it is believing? Is it something you have in your own heart and in your mind, that helps you through the days and rough times? Maybe faith is something pushes you so that you cannot help but bring people to Christ. Perhaps it is something you want so much for others? Could faith be that something which enables you to suddenly see all those people who are paralyzed, sick, outcast, lonely, powerless and disenfranchised. Maybe faith is that which forces you to no longer have a focus on you, but your heart moves with compassion for others – If only they could just meet Christ, if only they could experience that healing touch.

They could have gone home. Yes, they tried. They did their very best. Too bad it did not work. How much you are willing to do because of your faith and the need you see around you? When the Holy Spirit moves there is a mess involved. There will always be people who will not like you. There will be people who will think you are crazy. You are not supposed to do it. In the Global Leadership Summit I heard the phrase. If you dream and people like your dream is not a good dream. If you dream and people think it is impossible and crazy, it is a good dream because you know who can do it. You trust God.



These four men, did a horrible thing.

“They couldn't carry him through the crowd, so they tore off part of the roof above where Jesus was”.

Who would ever think of destroying the roof? That is not a good idea at all. It wasn't even their own house.

What is more important? I think it is crucial for us to ask today: "What I am protecting? What is most important?" Please know that I do get it that roofs are important. The church roof is important. I am grateful of the parsonage roof over my head. Your home roofs are important. I had a house with leaking roof. I know all about it. We had to fix it. I get it. We need to be good stewards of what we have.

The question remains: what is most important for the church? For Jesus? It is very easy, logical, "normal" to get all our focus on the roof, on the carpet and the lists goes on. What is the church for? It is so easy and so dangerous to be focused on what is good but not most important. I look around where we are. I see the need around us. Do people see our faith? Or just our roof? Do people know in anyway of God's love because of us? I am super excited for this church, for all of us. God will open and is opening opportunities when we can bring God's kingdom to our community.

I think Jesus was probably the only one in this whole scenario who was not mad. Who appreciates dust falling on them? He saw their faith. I imagine that it took them a while to dig and get a big hole enough to lower a mat with friend on it. In the very beginning of all this, I would say, please, stop, we get it, we will let you in to have your turn. They were unstoppable and Jesus did not stop them. People around them were probably mad. Suddenly all attention is on these guys. They probably thought, we have sick people we brought, too.



Jesus said: "Child, your sins are forgiven!". You have a major interruption and total chaos and all Jesus says is: "Your sins are forgiven." -- Including the destroying the roof.

On the other hand, you wonder what sins a paralyzed man could commit. Was it his thoughts and the words he spoke?

Child, Son, daughter – That’s how Jesus sees this man and how he sees us. Child, I forgive you. Isn’t that what each one of us needs? We need to truly know that we are forgiven. Jesus wants our relationship to God be restored.

We need to know God is not angry or punishing us and that sin is no more separating us from our holy God? Even more than bodily health we need our soul to be in close and perfect relationship with God? Deep inside we long for it? We all will leave these bodies, but we will forever be with God. Jesus says, “The kingdom of God has come.” It is possible for us to experience the true forgiveness through Christ and grow in that holy relationship with God.

Not everyone liked what Jesus did. “Some legal experts were sitting there, muttering among themselves,<sup>7</sup> “Why does he speak this way? He’s insulting God. Only the one God can forgive sins.”

<sup>8</sup> Jesus immediately recognized what they were discussing, and he said to them, “Why do you fill your minds with these questions?<sup>9</sup> Which is easier—to say to a paralyzed person, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Get up, take up your bed, and walk’?

Jesus is asking: What is easier to say:” Your sins are forgiven or get up, take your bed and walk.”

In all honesty I do not know which is easier. I cannot do either of these. They are both impossible to me. I am sure, that what Jesus is saying, that He is God. He can forgive the sins.

I suddenly feel the weight, the heaviness, of sins. How big it is to say to the paralyzed man: “Get up and walk?” Huge. Jesus is saying something much bigger: “Your sins are forgiven” How much of your life is weighted down by your sins?

“Jesus raised him up, and right away he picked up his mat and walked out in front of everybody. They were all amazed and praised God, saying, “We’ve never seen anything like this!”

We have here a second reminder of Jesus’ resurrection. Last week Jesus raised Peter’s mother-in-law. This week it is the paralytic man was raise from the mat and from his sins.

Jesus is at work. This person is immediately healed physically and spiritually. He picks up the mat and walks out. There are some who are asking what Jesus is doing. Who does He think He is? There are people who are thinking about the roof and others who feel angry and just not happy. There are also people who are amazed and praise God. May we all be like these four men who had faith that made them do unstoppable

things – go to the friend, bring him to Jesus and not be distracted with little obstacles like roofs.