



The Son of Man and Sin

Key idea:

Jesus has the authority not only to heal physical illness but also to forgive and heal sin, restoring people to God's favor.

Key text:

Mark 2:1-12

A few days later, when Jesus again entered Capernaum, the people heard that he had come home. ² So many gathered 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 paralytic, 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 and, after digging through it, lowered the mat the paralyzed man was lying on. ⁵ When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, "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? ⁹ Which is easier: to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up, take your mat and walk?' ¹⁰ But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins. . . ." He said to the paralytic, 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!"

Key points:

1. When Jesus returned to Capernaum crowds again gathered around Him and He followed His priority to proclaim the Word of God to them.
2. Jesus recognized great, resilient faith in the actions of the four men to get their paralyzed friend to Jesus for healing, even if they had to resort to digging through the roof to lower their friend down to Jesus.
3. Jesus begins by forgiving the man's sin. He does this for several reasons:
 - a. The forgiveness of sin is actually the far greater need.

- b. Sin, sickness, forgiveness, and healing were linked in Scripture and Jewish culture.
 - c. Forgiveness and healing of sin is the heart of the new covenant.
 - d. Sometimes sickness is directly related to a specific sin (and this may be the case in this instance, though it may not be).
4. The teachers of the Law were scandalized by Jesus' proclamation that the man's sins were forgiven, for such a statement was at a minimum a claim to be a prophet of God - and it was possibly a claim to even more than that!
 5. Jesus displays His Divine authority in three ways to the teachers of the Law:
 - a. He forgives the man's sin
 - b. He reveals their secret thoughts
 - c. He heals the paralytic
 6. Jesus heals the paralytic to prove He has the authority to personally, directly forgive sin.

Questions for discussion/application:

1. What part of Sunday's teaching stood out most to you? Why?
2. When I read about the crowds gathering again, what is my reaction? Am I surprised? Why do the crowds keep coming? What do I think about the tension around the "crowds" in Mark's Gospel - that Jesus tries to avoid them but they keep finding Him? What is Mark communicating to me regarding "crowds"?
3. What do I learn about the nature of true faith from the four men who bring the paralytic to Jesus? Why does Mark say that Jesus "sees" their faith?
4. What do I think is the relationship between faith, the Sovereignty of God, and healing?
5. Bret listed four possible reasons Jesus begins with the forgiveness of sins rather than the obvious desire for physical healing (see key point 3 above). Which of these do I think is the primary reason Jesus begins with forgiveness in this story?
6. What do I think is the relationship between sin and sickness? What potential misunderstandings do I need to avoid?

7. On Sunday Bret quoted David Garland as commenting that “We are no longer scandalized by Jesus’ announcement of forgiveness, which we take for granted; it is the hint that our sin brings physical consequences that causes us to stumble.” Do I agree with this assessment? If so, what does it reveal about the assumptions of our own age?
8. Why does Jesus use the title “Son of Man” for Himself? What are the advantages of using this term rather than “Messiah”?
9. What is the most important thing I learned from this passage? How can I apply it in my life this week?
10. Who will I call or see to invite to gather with the church this week?