

Our focus today is ***“Reaching Jesus by FORCE”***

But . . . there **ARE** - **Two lessons** in this text

The **other lesson** is

This is the **first time**,

in the **gospel** of **Mark** - that we **see Jesus**

Go **head-to-head** with the **Religious Leaders** of the day

Which, of course, he **ends up doing** thru-out the **Book**

& In this text - **Jesus Electrifies the Air**

& then just **STRIKES** the **Religious Leaders** with **LIGHTNING**

So – **we get** to **jump** into **2 great parallel events** here today

Let's Pray

We **begin** with our **PRIMARY FOCUS**

“Reaching Jesus By FORCE”

Can I Ask you – to start

How much EFFORT do we **really EXERT**

In order to reach Jesus – In a Real, Tangible way?

In a way that can Actually Transform our lives?

To what lengths are we Really willing to go

**To REACH JESUS – in a way
that he can Truly HEAL us & RESTORE our lives?**

AND – **If NOT for US** personally – then

**How much EFFORT do we Really put in ?
& to what LENGTHS are we Really willing to go**

**To Help SOMEONE ELSE – REACH Jesus
so that THEIR lives can be Healed & Restored?**

Those are **The QUESTIONS** today

Here is God's Word – with The CHALLENGE

Mark 2:1 (NLT)

1 When Jesus returned to Capernaum several days later, the news spread quickly that he was back home.

**Remember – After HEALING MANY People
at the door of Peter's house**

Jesus went away, Alone – To Pray

& when the **disciples found him** – He said (in **Mk 1:38**) –
we must go to other towns & preach to them too

& **now** – after **some days** – ***Jesus returned "HOME"*** (to Capernaum)

**But – News about Jesus returning - travelled fast
& so we read in**

Mark 2:2(a) (NLT)

2 Soon the house where he was staying was so packed with visitors that there was no more room, even outside the door . . .

Most Scholars assume, Jesus was back at Peter's house

**where there had already been – a Miracle Commotion
last time Jesus was there**

**& so this time – all who COULD FIT INSIDE
CAME INSIDE the house**

It was Standing Room only – Inside AND Outside the House

Everyone wanted to SEE Jesus

To be NEAR Him – *for One Reason or Another*

But – the truth is – A Relative FEW – actually REACHED Jesus

You can go to Israel with us

& **SEE the remains of THIS HOUSE**

& - It's NOT that big

But – this DOES provide a Great Spiritual Truth

On THAT day – the CROWDS were all AROUND the house
SOME even got IN to the house

But there was a Relative FEW

who got close enough to Jesus
to BE in his Presence - & to HEAR him speak

& That - is JUST as TRUE today – Spiritually
as it was on that day – Physically

**The Crowds were ALL AROUND – But only a Small Number –
Managed to get close enough to Jesus
to BE IN his PRESENCE - & HEAR him SPEAK**

What did it take for that Relative FEW

to get Close enough to Jesus
to HEAR him speak to them?

Hear me, Spiritually, please

It took EXTREME EFFORT
it took SACRIFICE
it took FORCE

IN order to GET CLOSE Enough to Jesus

to Be IN his Presence - & to HEAR his VOICE

**Listen guys - 1 day a year – BEST BUY has a Big Sale
& they take \$200 off a Big Screen TV**

**& people will wait in line in the parking lot for a WEEK
to get CLOSE to that TV – to be 'in its presence'**

BUT – would we consider coming to church 15 minutes early

just to SIT - & Prepare our hearts - in order to
Get CLOSE to Jesus, & be ready to hear his voice?

When was the last time you used Extreme Effort

to FORCIBLY get close enough to Jesus – to hear his voice
& be changed by his presence?

What do you mean Dave?

**What kind of Extreme Effort would we have to use
to FORCIBLY Get that Close to Jesus?**

I'm glad you asked

Let's see God's Illustration - from His own Word

Mark 2:2(b)-3 (NLT)

***2 . . . While [Jesus] was preaching God's word to them,
3 four men arrived carrying a paralyzed man on a mat.***

Allow me to say – Politely – Here's your Sign

There is a SIGN – IN these 4 men

of what it Looks Like – to Exert Extreme Effort
& to FORCIBLY Get to Jesus

Jesus is inside this house

speaking the words of God into the lives
of the few who had gotten close enough to hear him

& these four men – had decided
to pick up their Paralyzed friend - & bring him to Jesus

& you know the story – these guys show up with their friend
they see that it's much too crowded
& so they take their friend to BEST BUY
to wait in line for a sale on that New TV

NO – WRONG – that's NOT what happens

These 4 Men – AND the Man who was Paralyzed

Were NOT going to STOP – Until they reached Jesus

Have YOU been there?

Have you been in the place where you say

No Matter **WHAT**

No Matter **THE COST**

No Matter **THE SACRIFICE**

I am **going** to **GET CLOSE** to **Jesus**

& NOTHING is going to

DISTRACT me,

or **DISCOURAGE** me,

or **KEEP** me from Him!

Guys – **Please SEE** in **these Vs's**

A PICTURE of **YOU & ME**

Reaching Jesus by Force

This is ABOUT US – **FORCIBLY** Getting **Close to Jesus**

No Matter What

Mark 2:4 (NLT)

4 They (the 4 friends) couldn't bring him to Jesus because of the crowd, so they dug a hole through the roof above his head. Then they lowered the man on his mat, right down in front of Jesus.

This is NOT about the **Architectural Design**

of **homes** in the **1st century**

This is a CHALLENGE - ABOUT how Easily We
GIVE UP
GET DISCOURAGED
GET HINDERED

When we set out - to Get CLOSE to Jesus

**BUT – there ARE two things – that are helpful to know
about homes in that time**

**#1 – on many homes, there was a stairway on the OUTSIDE of the
home, leading to a FLAT roof – which was used often by the family**

**#2 – this flat roof was a combination of timbers & branches
covered with reeds or clay tiles, & then dirt on top**

So you could Literally DIG thru it

**So – you make Your commitment to GET CLOSE to Jesus
OR – a commitment to get a friend CLOSE to Jesus**

& you try – But the world is keeping you away

The crowd of world
stands between You & Jesus

Seemingly Insurmountable Circumstances
LOOM in your way

& Your natural instinct is to say – “*well I tried*”

Which is exactly WHAT those who are
standing outside this house would've said

*“Hey, you can't reach Jesus,
you might as well stay out here with us”*

But – your faith drives you
You're determined to find a way

You commit - to Reach Jesus - whatever it takes

& Because of that commitment – you see a way

& you GET to Where you need to be
& then - you go to work

for these guys – In Mark Ch 2
that meant - digging thru a roof

What does it mean - for you?

What Circumstances & Obstacles
DO YOU have to get thru?

What level of determination do YOU NEED?

How Resourceful - DO YOU have to be?

WILL YOU - Reach Jesus By Force

Or will the circumstances of this world – KEEP you from him?

These men were UNSTOPPABLE

In their FAITH - Displayed by their ACTIONS

& **so - Those inside heard the commotion on the roof
& dirt & debris started falling on them**

& the **Pharisees** are **getting Indignant**
That dirt might fall on their “Righteous Clothing”

& **Then – looking up**
everyone begins to see SKY - & then more SKY

& **then the view of the sky is blocked – *by . . .*
a stretcher of some kind – a cot on ropes**

& **4 men – lower this stretcher down - & suddenly
this man was laying in front of Jesus**

& - **while everyone else was concerned about**

who's **gonna pay** for this **roof**
& who's **gonna clean up** this **mess**

Jesus was focused on JUST ONE THING

it's in Mark 2:5 (NLT) → →

Mark 2:5 (NLT)

5 Seeing their faith (the only thing Jesus was focused on), **Jesus said to the paralyzed man, “My child, your sins are forgiven.”**

Now – **Remember** I said there are **two great lessons** here?

We'll - **V.5 sets** the **SECOND Lesson** – **in motion**

WHY – **After all** this **incredible display** of Faith of **Reaching Jesus at ANY Cost**

WHY would **Jesus** say, **“My child, your sins are forgiven.”**

Is it because this **GREAT EFFORT**
EARNED this **man** his **salvation**?

OF COURSE NOT

Jesus was **USING** this **Radical Faith Event**
to **Set up** the **Religious Leaders** who **were** there **‘investigating’**

This is **something Jesus does** – **A LOT**
& it's **something** that **eventually** gets him . . . **“To the Cross”**

So – in **v.5 Jesus says** to this man
“My child, your sins are forgiven.”

& then we read in Mark 2:6 (NLT)

6 But some of the teachers of religious law who were sitting there thought to themselves,

notice first – that in a “Standing Only” room

These pompous religious teachers – are SITTING

The WORST of the Religious Teachers - in Jesus’ day
Thought they deserved special treatment

& The WORST of the Religious Teachers - TODAY
Think they deserve special treatment

But – the real point here is

Is THE PROD that Jesus sticks them with

In V.5 – Jesus told this man - *his sins were forgiven*

Then V.6 says the pharisees were *thinking to themselves*

& WHAT they were thinking – is in

Mark 2:7 –(NLT)

7 “*What is he saying? This is blasphemy! Only God can forgive sins!*” (to which Jesus thinks to himself – EXACTLY)

Mark 2:8-9 (NLT)

8 *Jesus knew immediately what they were thinking, so he asked them, “Why do you question this in your hearts?”* (Jesus knowing)

9 *Is it easier to say to the paralyzed man ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or ‘Stand up, pick up your mat, and walk’?*

Wait a minute – Which IS easier to say?

Maybe you would say it's, "*Your Sins are Forgiven*"

Because you don't have to PROVE that

**But – in that time – physical handicaps were often thought
to be the result of some sin**

**So – IF Jesus first forgives this man of his sin
& THEN heals him physically**

The Physical Healing would MEAN
that Jesus actually had the authority to Forgive Sin

& THAT – is a Perfect SET UP – to PROVE to
the Religious Leaders - Just WHO Jesus Christ IS

So – the Pharisees say, "*Hey - Only God can forgive sins!*" (v.7)

& then we read in Mark 2:10-11 (NLT)

10 So I will prove to you that the Son of Man has the authority on earth to forgive sins." Then Jesus turned to the paralyzed man and said,

11 "Stand up, pick up your mat, and go home!"

**Finally – the words this man, and his Four Faithful Friends
were Waiting to HEAR**

They had the Faith – to Reach Jesus BY FORCE

They would not let ANY Circumstance or Situation
prevent them from getting into The Presence of Jesus

& now – they hear the words they fought so hard to hear

& R. KENT HUGHES says here
St. Elmo's Fire must've been in the air at this moment

St Elmo's fire is when the air around something
becomes SO Electrified – you can SEE IT

& this room was Spiritually Charged – it was Electrified

& then – the ELECTRIFIED ATMOSPHERE
became LIGHTING

Mark 2:12 (NLT)

12 And the man jumped up, grabbed his mat, and walked out through the stunned onlookers. They were all amazed and praised God, exclaiming, "We've never seen anything like this before!"

& BAAM – The Thunder ROLLS IN - & OUT
& the Lessons are over – at least for now

The Pharisees SAW – that Jesus WAS the MESSIAH
He HAD to be God in EXPRESSION on Earth

Because only GOD can Forgive Sin - & HEAL so miraculously

BUT - They **WOULD CHOOSE** - **NOT to Believe it!**

They **COULD HAVE CHOSEN** to Believe
But their **Religious Pride** - **Kept them from it**

& **for** the **Paralytic** & his **four Friends**
I pray – that **we would learn** - **what they learned**

That – **at times** – we Must **Reach Jesus BY FORCE**

We must **KNOCK DOWN** every **Obstacle**
We must **IGNORE** every **Circumstance**
We must use **EVERY MEANS POSSIBLE**

To **REACH Jesus** – **No Matter What!**

So - LAST Question

What does it LOOK LIKE – when we DO REACH Jesus ?

THE LONG ANSWER IS

Get the **Alone With God** series (**6 msgs** – **wbm.com**)

THE SHORT ANSWER IS

This is **when** our **Relationship with Jesus**
Has **grown to the point**

that we can **Sit Down - With His Word**
& Maybe **Some Worship Music**

& we **can MEDITATE** on **His Word**,
& **Maybe in Worship**

& We end up **COMMUNING with Him**
in a **PRAYER Conversation**

We have GOT to LEARN – to Truly REACH Jesus

To **SENSE his Presence**

To **HEAR his Voice** - &

To **Be TRANSFORMED – BY IT**

& **OFTEN** – **We MUST**

Reach Jesus By Force – **To GET** to **This Place**

Let's Pray