

The Man Who Had His Sins Forgiven

Mark 2:1-12

Pastor Jeremy Cagle, March 10, 2024

Good morning, everyone. Why don't we go to the Lord in a word of prayer, and we'll begin our time in the in the Word together.

Heavenly Father, as we open up the Scriptures today and we turn once again to the life of the Lord Jesus Christ, we're always reminded that this is a life that we understand, in some ways because He was fully man; but in other ways, we will never completely understand Him because He was fully God. And His ways are always higher than our ways. And we always come to a time in studying the Lord Jesus Christ when we just have to say we don't understand because He is so much greater than us. Especially when it comes to this text today, as we discuss the forgiveness of sins, and the power of Christ, to take a man that He just met and tell him he's pardoned. Would you help us as we study this, Lord, that our hearts and our minds would be fixed on You and that Christ would be glorified, and You would teach us new things in Your Word. I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

Well, in the 1950s, a major London newspaper asked a question in the editorial section, "What is wrong with the world today?" One person wrote back, and they said one word, "sin." They quoted Romans 3:23, "For all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God." What would happen if they did that in The Progress, right? Which caused an explosion in the press, as you can imagine, because people started asking, "Well, okay, if that's the case, then how are we forgiven of sin? What do we have to do?" And this is in the editorial section. So they, one person said one thing, one said another. One individual said, "Well, you need to be a good person and give to charity and do nice things for your neighbor." Then another person wrote back the next week and said, "No, that's not enough. You need to get religious. Pick one, doesn't matter which one. Be a Muslim, Buddhist, Hindu, whatever you got to do." And the person wrote back afterwards and said, "No, you got to go further. You need to have an experience with God and get a burning in the bosom," and all this type of stuff. And finally, the newspaper had enough, and they wrote a section and said, "We'll end the discussion there because I don't think we will ever find an answer to the problem of forgiveness."

I bring that up in order to ask you the question: do you think the newspaper was right? Do you think we'll ever find an answer to the problem of forgiveness? I ask you that because I've talked to some people who it seems like they don't. They tell me their sins are too much for God to forgive. There's no way He would ever show pardon to them; they're too wicked. If that describes you this morning, I want to tell you that you're wrong. The Bible didn't say that. The Bible says forgiveness is possible.

You see it in a story in the Gospel of Mark, and so if you would, please open your Bibles with me there. Please turn to the Gospel of Mark, where it tells us a story about a man who was completely forgiven of

his sins. In Mark chapter two, I just want to read this story to you or a part of it anyway. And then we're going to talk about it. If you look in Mark 2:1, it says.

When He had come back to Capernaum several days afterward, it was heard that He was at home. And many were gathered together, so that there was no longer room, not even near the door; and He was speaking the word to them. And they came, bringing to Him a paralytic, carried by four men. Being unable to get to Him because of the crowd, they removed the roof above Him; and when they had dug an opening, they let down the pallet on which the paralytic was lying. And Jesus seeing their faith said to the paralytic, "Son, your sins are forgiven."

And that doesn't come across in all its fullness in English, but it really means Son, your sins are completely forgiven. Son, your sins are permanently forgiven. Son, your sins are immediately forgiven, both now and forevermore. They are cast into the sea of forgetfulness. Amen?

It makes you wonder why. What did he do to deserve this? And if you look in verse five that just says that he had faith when forgiven because he was a good person, and it didn't happen because he was a Muslim. It happened because he put his faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, not a little bit, but a lot. This guy's faith was enough to bring the house down. His friends showed they were willing to do anything to get him to the Saviour. Tear the roof off? Sure. Dig a hole through it? Absolutely. Make a scene in front of everyone so you embarrass yourself because you're acting like a redneck on the ceiling? Absolutely, no problem. There was nothing they wouldn't do to bring him into the Lord's presence.

I mentioned this story because to be honest, for some of us, this sounds strange to us because there are people in our congregation who grew up in a church that told you, you can't have assurance of salvation like this. And there's no way Jesus could ever tell you your sins have been forgiven with confidence. Instead, the only thing you can do is try real hard and hope for the best. Go to church, pray, read your Bible and then live a life where you say, "Am I saved or not? Saved or not? Saved or not? All the time. Maybe God's pardoned me now, but I don't know. Maybe He'll forgive me today because I've done enough. It's a mystery. I want you to notice Christ doesn't say that. He removes the mystery altogether from this man and He says, "You're forgiven." Stop, period, end the discussion. Because he laid himself at Jesus' feet. How are you forgiven? Lay yourself at Jesus' feet. How are you saved? Make yourself eye level with Him on the ground.

This is why there's so much confusion on this issue because so many times instead of being humble, and throwing ourselves on the mercy of Christ, we want to figure out was I good enough for God? Did I do enough? Try enough, give enough, serve enough, work hard enough to earn His favor? You can't do that. If you had a million years, you could never work hard enough for God, which is why you come through faith alone. The Bible says, "For by grace, you've been saved through faith and this not of

yourselves. It's a gift." You say, "It's not that simple. Pastor Jeremy." Yes, it is. And you might be wondering, did Jesus really talk like this. He does, and you see it right here in the story.

In this passage, Christ grants salvation to one of the most helpless people imaginable, and that was a paralytic who could do nothing but believe. He couldn't go to the temple. He couldn't go to a priest on his own. He couldn't bring a sacrifice by walking there. He couldn't walk. But he could have faith in the Saviour. That's what we all have to do this morning.

And this is what we're going to talk about with four characteristics of the man who had his sins forgiven. So if you're taking notes, this is our outline for today. If you've grown up in a church, you've probably heard this story before and it's a fascinating one. Everything about it is unusual, but we're going to talk about it with four characteristics of the man who had his sins forgiven.

The first one is that he stood out from the crowd. The first characteristic of this man is that he stands out. He doesn't act like the rest of the people around him. He and all his friends stood out. By the way, you could put them all into this point.

And as you come to chapter two, you're gonna see a word that we've already seen in our studies in Mark, and it's the word Capernaum. You see that there in chapter two verse one. This is the setting of the story. It says, "When Jesus had come back to Capernaum." Where is Capernaum? It's a city of several thousand people located on the northwest side of the Sea of Galilee, on a major highway called the Via Maris or Way of the Sea.

In fact, if you want to know how people traveled in Israel at the time, you could pull out a map from the first century, and you'd find three major highways there. There was one called the ridge route; it drove right through the center of the country taking you from Galilee in the north to Judea in the south; but it wasn't very well liked because it was up in the mountains. So there was another route called the King's Highway, which is more popular. It was an international path that took you from Syria down to Egypt, passing through Israel as you went; that's an old road some think that dates back to the time of Abraham. And then there was this one that Capernaum was on called The Way of the Sea, because it passed on the coastline of the Mediterranean, giving you a view of the water. It was 1,300 miles long and it would actually cut into Israel at one point, and that's where it would pass by Capernaum; but it connected the continents of Europe, Africa, and Asia in some ways, which is why you could find anyone on that highway. Jews and Gentiles were there, Africans and Asians, Europeans and Syrians. And they worked as merchants, slaves, soldiers, fishermen, tax collectors, tradesmen, politicians all together on this road, very cosmopolitan. In fact, Matthew 8 says there was a Centurion located in Capernaum. In Mark 1 you see a synagogue there. In Mark 2, next time you'll see Matthew's tax collector's booth in Capernaum. But all that just sort of blended together in this town.

And let me show you one more distinctive about this city and Mark 2:1 it calls Capernaum Jesus' home. See that in your Bibles? Apparently, this was the place He went to when He wasn't on the road so He could minister to the people there. It was the hub. Now the interesting thing about that statement is that Jesus, as far as we know, never owned a home. "Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head." Which has led some to speculate that this building belongs to probably a disciple, maybe a friend. Others have said this is the house of Simon and Andrew, we don't know that for sure; all that is speculation.

One thing we know is that whoever this house belonged to, they had their hands full. Verse two of Mark 2 says, "And many were gathered together, so there was no longer room in the house, not even near the door. There is standing room only. When the people heard that Christ was in town, they just came rushing over to the point they're packed in there like sardines. The picture Mark paints here is of the most crowded place you can think of. There were people sitting in the living room, sitting in the kitchen, they're standing to the wall, standing near the door. They're hanging out in the streets, hanging out in the courtyard as they often did in that part of the world. There's probably some leaning in through the windows just to catch a glimpse of the Lord Jesus Christ. Kind of like the mall at Christmas time or something like that.

And the end of the verse says that as they're doing this, Jesus took the opportunity to speak the Word of God to them, because He's preaching to them as they're there. Not in the traditional sense, where He would have His Bible in His hands and preach a sermon like I'm doing because the Old Testament was written down in scrolls, making it too heavy to carry around. So He would quote it from memory. And when He taught something from the book of Genesis, He would recite it off the top of His head. And when He would explain to them an idea from the book of Isaiah, He's just announcing that.

And I tell you that because as Jesus is doing that, Mark 2:3 tells us there's a group of men nearby who are doing something unusual. And that is that they're bringing their friend to Jesus because he's paralyzed, and he can't get there on his own. So they're helping him. You never learn their names; they remain completely anonymous. I look forward to meeting these guys one day in heaven. You find out later that there's five of them that are numbered. There might have been more, but there's four who can walk, and there's one who can't. And the idea is that as soon as they hear Jesus is in Capernaum, instead of rushing to the house like these other people did, they go get their buddy. Isn't that neat? To make sure he can join them. They don't want him to be left out. Because as Jesus preached, they didn't say to themselves, "Well, our friend can't make it. No big deal." And as the Lord was giving His sermons, they didn't reason in their heart, "Well, I'm sure he'll be okay. You know, God wants to save him, He can just save him." They had more compassion than that. They moved heaven and earth to bring this guy to the Lord.

And to be honest, Mark doesn't tell you much more about them at this point, so we won't say much right here, but I just bring them up to show you they're going to be different from the rest of the crowd. That's

why the Lord commends them, as I'll show you in a moment in verse five. He says to the paralytic, "Son, your sins are forgiven." And the interesting thing about that statement is that as far as we can tell here, Jesus didn't say that to everyone in the crowd. That's what makes it so shocking. He doesn't look at all these other people and tell them they're saved because many of them were lost. And we don't know which ones. Mark doesn't tell us all that. But we know that Lord would not have called this man out like this if there was not something unusual about him, because his faith in Christ was real.

I don't know about you, but when I read this story, it makes me say this is a revival, right? These people are coming to Jesus. They're all saved. They're all believers. Hallelujah. This is a great awakening. It's not. Many of the people at this point in Jesus' ministry would come to Him for the wrong things. I told you last time, there were hundreds of people following Jesus at this time, maybe thousands. And unfortunately, a lot of them did it just because they wanted to be healed. They wanted miracles from Jesus, not mercy. And they wanted amusement, not atonement. And they wanted fun, not forgiveness. And they wanted power, not pardon. And wonders, not worship. And signs, not salvation. So Jesus never gave them that, never saved them.

Capernaum was an interesting place, but it was pretty small. And if you were poor, you didn't have a lot to do. You could go follow Jesus. He's always interesting. That's what's happening here.

Did you know that not everyone who comes to Christ comes for the right reasons? Not everyone who follows Him is saved, outwardly. Some of them are wheat among the tares. In fact, I've had people say to me that I know what would change the nation of Canada, and that is if Jesus came back and started preaching. Have you ever heard that before? If the Lord was show up and do miracles, it would change the nation of Canada. Can I tell you this? It would not. You know why? Didn't change Israel, not spiritually. These people's hearts were so hard, they rejected Him. Many of them did. They would do it here. They would do it in the U.S. They would do it in Brazil, it doesn't matter where. A lot of these people listen to this and just went, "huh. It's interesting. I like the miracles." Jesus says you need to repent, believe. You don't want to be like that. When you come to church, you want to hear the Word of God preached and Christ speaking to your soul and receive it in your heart so that it changes the very depth of your soul.

That's what made this man different. That's what made the friends different in the story. They didn't hear Christ and go "hmm.". They were so passionate about Him, that they're going to do something outlandish. And this is where the story gets really crazy.

It brings us to another characteristic for this man and in that is that his friends took drastic steps to get him to Christ. First is that he stands out, but to show you how much he stands out, his friends are going to take drastic steps to get him to Christ because they're going to tear the roof off the house.

Now, I've been to a lot of interesting Bible studies in my life and sermons. I've never seen anything like this. Maybe some of you have. Come tell me about it afterwards, but this is how zealous they were for God.

Verse three tells you where this part of the story begins when it says, "They came to Jesus, bringing Him a paralytic, carried by four men." And that sentence is brief. So as the rest of what follows. Mark is always usually pretty brief. But it gives you some descriptions of what's going on.

First, it says this man was a paralytic. That's a Greek term that refers to someone who can't walk. He's lost control of his body, either from the waist down as a paraplegic or from the neck down as a quadriplegic. Mark doesn't tell us what put him in the condition. It could have happened because he was born that way. It could have happened because he was injured or sick or lots of different things can cause this.

And the second thing these verses are going to point out about him is that he was poor. Later on, verse four tells us that they let the man down on a pallet. That refers to a mattress made out of straw that the poor people slept on because they couldn't afford anything else. In other words, this guy is not being carried around on a stretcher, or something dignified. There's no dignity in this. He's transported on a bed that he was probably sleeping on. The way it reads, it's like Jesus shows up, they're so excited, they run into his house and just pull him out on whatever he was on.

And another thing Mark points out is that there's four people carrying him, probably one for each corner of the bed. They all took a corner and hoisted it up, maybe with ropes, maybe with their hands, those details aren't here. Which would be difficult. I mean, he would have weighed over 100 pounds. And they would have to travel some distance to get there. Probably through the sun, down the dusty streets, people looking at them wondering, "What in the world is this?" But they just keep going until they get to the house.

And look at what happens when they show up there. Verse four says when they arrived, they were unable to get to Jesus because of the crowd. So what they do, they quit. Right? And that's the end of the story. What would you do? You would say, "Well, if God wants to save him, He can just save him. Leave him at the door; let's go get lunch." No, it says they got creative. They go up on the roof and it says they removed it above Jesus. And when they had dug an opening, they let him down on the pallet on which the paralytic was lying.

Now that sounds really strange thinking about our roofs in British Columbia, but you need to know a little bit about how first century houses were built to understand what's being said here. Unlike our houses, most of the ones in Palestine at this time had flat roofs that were created by placing some large wooden beams three feet across from one end of the one wall to the other. And then the space in between was covered with a thatch that was made out of dirt and sticks and packed tightly with clay

which caused the roof to sometimes grow grass after it rained. Imagine that. In the one Bible dictionary I was reading said the Jews would keep a stone roller up there to flatten it out after it got too tall. Anybody mowed their roof lately? It's like a lawn mower on the roof. And they also had to monitor it for snakes and insects that would come in there because the Jews would sit up there and enjoy the fresh air especially at night with the stars. They would dry figs up there along with raisins. Keep goats in there, if they had some. And they would put an apartment there oftentimes, that was accessed by a staircase that ran along the outer wall.

That sheds light on what you're reading here because when it says they removed the roof, literally in Greek that says the unroofed the roof. It means that after getting blocked at the door, can't get in the door, these four men carrying this guy weighing over 100 pounds go to the staircase and go up the stairs. It was probably a one-story house, maybe two, but probably one. They start digging in to get him in. And the word for dig means pluck because they started doing this and pulling out all that dirt and sticks. They didn't pull out the wooden beams, no reason to do that. And they didn't dig up the whole roof. They just dug up a space that was large enough to put this man through and they lowered him down 10 feet, possibly, with ropes on the bed.

Which sounds straightforward when you read it here, but the reason I'm going to this detail is it had to be something to see. Wouldn't you love to be there? I don't think you would by the way, let me tell you why. One minute everyone's sitting there in the room listening to Jesus. The next minute they're hearing noises on the roof and then dirt and sticks are raining down. That's why you wouldn't want to be in there. And then lights poking through and then they see faces. When I was a kid listening to the story growing up, I often thought, "What what's the first face you would say?" And they sit back and watch as a man's body just comes down right in front of the eyes.

What do you think the crowd would have thought about? They'd probably be angry. I mean the dirt and debris fell on them, getting into their hair and face and clothes. Getting and landing all over their eyes and nose and mouth. Talk about gross. What do you think they would have done? What would you have done? You would have shouted at them, "Stop. Cut it out! Especially if you own the house. You know how much that roof cost? It took hours to put that in there, days; you're going to pay for that."

To be honest, scholars have debated why they did this throughout the years. Some have said it was probably because they didn't want Jesus to get away because there were times in Jesus' ministry in the gospels when He would almost just vanish, right? Be around the crowd, and then next minute He's gone. They didn't want that to happen, so they're acting out of desperation. Others have offered that they did this because their friend was in bad shape and he's probably going to die, which could be true as well. I think the greatest reason they did this, probably though, is because they just cared about this guy, and they didn't want him to suffer anymore. You ever loved someone and seen them suffer? You would dig a roof off for your friends. So they dropped whatever they were doing and took him over to Jesus.

I think it says quite a bit about these guys that when everyone else ran to Jesus for their own benefit, they didn't see that. I mean, what do they get out of this? Nothing. But that's not what they were doing it for. They're doing it for him. Can I ask you guys a question? Do you have any friends like this? Is there anyone in your life that would go through this much trouble to bring you to Jesus? And say, "Do I have to tear the roof off the place? I will. Dig through the ceiling? Absolutely." We all need friends like that. Can't make it on your own.

The Puritans used to say that every Christian has three circles of friends. There's a big circle that involves everyone in the church. There's a smaller circle that involves a handful. And then there's an even smaller one of just one or two people who would do anything for you. They know when you feel up; they know when you feel down. And they know when it's time to go over to your house, drag you out of bed, and say, "That's enough. Let's go to Jesus." That's the kind of fringe you're looking at here. I don't care if you're too weak to travel. I'll get you there. I don't care if you can't walk; I'll pick you up and carry you. Give me your burden. They don't just carry this guy's burden to the Saviour, they carry they carry the man himself.

And that leads to what happens next, and that is that Jesus receives the guy and tells him his sins are forgiven. There's a third characteristic of the man who had his sins forgiven and that is that the Lord receives him through faith alone. He doesn't turn the man away after his buddies tear down the house. On the contrary, He speaks with kindness to him.

That's unusual; nobody would have expected that. They would have thought Jesus would get angry with him. In fact, if you look in verse four in your Bibles, look at what it says. They remove the roof right over Jesus' head, right above Him anyway. And that means He was the first one to get dirty. They just start, maybe they knew a little bit about the house, they could understand how it was laid out, something like that. And so they just start doing this right on top of Him, so the sticks fell in His hair. And the dirt was in His eyes. He's covered in filth probably, grimy. And the most amazing part of this story is that the Lord does not do what you would expect Him to do and lose His temper at this guy. Say, "I'm preaching; knock it off." Instead, it says that "And Jesus, seeing their faith," all their faith, paralyzed man, the guys on the roof, the crippled man here and the buddies on top, He sees all their faith, but He says to the paralytic because he's lying on the ground in front of Him, "Son, your sins are forgiven."

Now at that moment, I bet you could have cut the air with a knife. They didn't talk like that in Israel. And not only did they not talk like that, they didn't talk like that after watching all this. Because after the guys tore a hole through the roof, ruined the property, lowered the man down with dirt and sticks raining on everyone, Jesus starts telling this guy he has a right relationship with God. What in the world?

Why does He do that? I think one reason He does this is because in the minds of a lot of the Jews it was this man's sins that got him in this condition in the first place. The rabbis taught that if you were paralyzed, it was your fault. It happened because you did something wrong. Which means the man bore

the stigma of that, maybe his whole life, maybe years, just as long as he was in this condition. So anytime someone would have seen him, they would have said, "He's getting what he deserves. The Lord is treating him like He should. He's a sinner. Look at him, he's pathetic." So in a moment of kindness, and mercy, and tenderness, and grace, Jesus steps into his life, and says, "You can stop that now because he is *aphiēmi*, forgiven.

That's a very important word to a Jew. You need to take note of this word because it was used in the Greek version of the Old Testament to describe the Day of Atonement. When the Jews heard that word, everyone's mind would have gone to that day when the priest would draw lots for two goats, and one would be slain while the other was sent away. That's the word here. Jesus is telling this man his sins are sent away; they're banished as far as the east is from the west. They've bought a one-way ticket out to the wilderness, like the goat.

You could look at this as if Jesus has taken out His computer and hitting "delete" on them. He's pulling out the eraser and washing them off, every single one of them. The phrase, "Your sins are forgiven," it's plural. It means all your sins, every single one of them. And it's in the present tense, which implies that it's happening now, right now at this moment. Or it's already even happened. And it's preceded by the word "son," to show that this is a tender thing. The Lord is speaking to him out of love all because of his faith. That's what the verse says.

Jesus did not do this because he was worthy. The Lord did not talk to him this way because he deserved it. If anybody deserved it at this moment in time, it was not him. After all, he just did. It was done on account of his trust in Him. I mean, what could this man do for himself as a paralytic? Nothing. How could he save himself? He couldn't eat, he can't walk, his legs don't work, feet don't work, knees don't work. There's no way for him to pull himself up by his own bootstraps. But what he can do is he can look to Christ. And Jesus says, "that's enough. I will save him on that basis."

By the way, what do you think the crowd would have thought about now? I think the silence would have continued. There's no kind of sigh of silence like church silence, right? Church quiet. What do you think they would have done? They would have said, "Forgiven? Him? Why? He can't go to the priest. What are you talking about Jesus? We don't get it." And all that's understandable. Jesus said a lot of things the Jews didn't get at this time. This is not the first one. In fact, His words are going to be so baffling that they will puzzle some of the most educated people in the room and that was the scribes or the teachers of Israel.

And that brings us to one more characteristic of this man who had his sins forgiven and that is that he's going to be healed as a testimony to the scribes. A fourth testimony of the man who had his sins forgiven is that he's healed as a testimony to the scribes, the teachers of Israel, the best of the best, the scholars because they didn't get it either.

And if you read on here, to introduce them to you, verse six says, “But some of the scribes were sitting there.” And that word “scribes” refers to the leaders of the synagogue. Throughout most of the Old Testament the Jews worshiped in the temple, but once the temple was destroyed, they began to meet in places called synagogues, where they could hear the Word of God and pray and worship the Lord and this type of thing. But the problem is that many of the Jews could not understand the word of God in Hebrew, so to help them out, the rabbis hired a person called a scribe to translate it. That's this group. The way it works is that he would open up the scroll to one place, read a few words in Hebrew and then tell the people what it meant in Aramaic. Then they would open the scroll to another place and do it again there, which made them experts. These are the seminary professors. These are the guys reading Bible commentaries, which is why if you're sitting in the house on this day, you knew who the scribes were because they would be wearing the nicest robes. They would be sitting in the nicest places.

Which makes Mark's words very telling because he says in verse six, “They were sitting there and reasoning in their hearts,” because that's what scribes did. These are reasonable people. They like to listen to sermons and say, “Hmm, let me think about it. Hmm, I'm not so sure. Hmm, let me go check it in a Hebrew Lexicon.” You don't want to preach in front of those guys. It's miserable. And as they're doing this with the Lord, Mark goes on to tell us that they said to themselves, “Why does this man speak that way? He is blaspheming; who can forgive sins but God alone?” And it says, “Immediately, Jesus, aware in His Spirit,” because He is God and He knows what men think. They didn't say it out loud, remember; they're saying it internally. He's hearing it because He's divine. He was aware they were reasoning this way and said to them, “Why are you reasoning about these things in your hearts? Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, ‘Your sins are forgiven’; or to say, ‘Get up, and pick up your pallet and walk’?”

That's one of those statements Jesus makes that's just full of meaning because on one hand, it's not easier to forgive sins, is it? It's way easier to make someone walk. How's He going to forgive sins, He's gonna go to the cross. So there's nothing easy about it. But there's a dual meaning here. And the other meaning is that it is easier to just say your sins are forgiven. It's much simpler to tell someone that they're pardoned rather than heal them. And that's what the scribes are alluding to. They're accusing Jesus of just making this up. He's just talking stuff. He's just mouthing words. He can't pronounce *aphiēmi* on someone. That right belongs to God alone. That's what they're saying. So Jesus tells them actually, “I can do that, and here's the proof.” Because He is God, it says, “so that you may know, the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins.”

And if you look in your Bibles, He tells the paralytic to do three things. First, get up. Can I tell you that he couldn't get up? That's why he's there. If that man could get up, you wouldn't have a story here. They wouldn't have brought him through the roof. He says, “Get up, pick up your pallet,” that mattress filled with straw to show that your muscles are regaining their strength. “and go home” to show the miracle is complete. Just walk right out in front of everyone's is what He's saying. And verse 12 says he does because he got up immediately, picked up the pallet, and went out in the sight of everyone.

And the way Mark writes that is just so simple, like there's nothing to it. Without any delay, without any hesitation, the man is just healed. The strength goes into his muscles, the power goes into his legs, and the parts of his body that have been wasting away are being restored instantly. And the miracle is instantaneous. Jesus just says the word and it happens. And the guy exits the building, possibly bumping into a scribe. That's how I like to think of it anyway. Walking right by he's gonna bump into somebody, the house is full of people. They probably parted like the Red Sea just to let him get out because they're all just blown away.

Verse 12 even says that they're amazed by this and glorifying God saying, "We've never seen anything like this before." I mean, no kidding, right? This was a very intimate miracle. It's in someone's house. It's in a crowded place, and there's no way they could miss it. You hear stories today of someone doing miracles far off in the jungles of Asia or Africa. This is not far off to the Jews. I bet even the guys on the roof weren't expecting this. I mean, they believed in Jesus. They knew He had the power to save, but this must have been too much even for them. I mean, they brought the guy in there. He's walking out on his own. They had to carry him and lay him down, now he's heading out on his own two feet.

And to be honest, this is where Mark stops the story because he doesn't say anything else about the guys on the roof or the scribes at this point. And it makes you wonder what happened to everybody after this. And I can't tell you how the guys on the roof ended up. I don't know anywhere else the Bible talks about them. Again, these are some of the people I'd like to meet in heaven because I've roofed a lot of houses with my grandfather in Tennessee, but I've never unroofed any of them. So I'm kind of interested as to the procedure. It's hard work roofing a house. I don't think you could tear off shingles this way.

But if you want to know what happened to the scribes, they are mentioned again, if you want to turn over to Mark 8:31. Let me show you a few places where we read about the scribes. You're going to hear about them again in our studies and Mark.

But in Mark 8:31, these guys come into the picture again. And it says, "And He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes." You see that word there? That's these guys. This group of people. Mark says on account of this miracle, and other things like it, and the sermons He would preach, Jesus says the scribes would eventually reject Christ and kill Him. Despite all the evidence, despite all the proof, despite miracles that are just in their face, they wanted to murder Him. Quite a reaction, isn't it?

And if you look at Mark chapter 10:33, it says the same thing another time. Mark, 10:33 says, "*saying*, "Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be delivered to the chief priests and the scribes; and they will condemn Him to death and will hand Him over to the Gentiles. They will mock Him and spit on Him, and scourge Him and kill *Him*," and do all kinds of

wicked atrocities. And the Gentiles will treat Jesus like an animal while the scribes look on and smile, because it's what they wanted. It was their idea.

Then if you want to write one more passage down, Luke 22 tells us that the scribes were part of the group that bribed Judas to betray Jesus after Satan entered into them. I won't read that passage for the sake of time, but that one shows you that in a sense, they start working with the devil. That's how far they fall. The devil goes into Judas. Judas works with the scribes. It makes you say, "What's going on here? Why'd they do that?" Well, they did it because they were lost. There's no better way really to explain that. These nice respectable, educated Bible scholars, seminary professors, worship leaders, elders in a church, pastors went straight to hell because they hated the Lord Jesus Christ. They never knew what it was like to have their sins forgiven. They would go to church, but they didn't believe. They would say their prayers, but they didn't mean it. They would read the Bible, see a priest, make a sacrifice, keep the rules day in, day out, day in, day out day in, day out, all the while their heart wasn't in it at all.

You know, you can do that. You can keep the rules without your heart being in it. You can read the Bible and go to church and keep laws without ever meaning a drop of it. You see it right here. If you ever want to know what it was like to do ministry or what it was like to send Christ into a Bible Belt in the first century, this is what it was like. What would happen if Jesus came back to Canada today? I think people would kill Him and they would kill Him from the churches. I mean, to be blunt, it's not the men on the roof that crucified Jesus. It's not the paralytic on the floor. It's these guys, teachers of the law because they were so proud.

It leaves me to say, you know that while there's a bunch of people in the house on this day, and they were packed in there like sardines, and some sitting in the living room, and some in the kitchen, and there's some standing of the walls, and standing near the door, leaning in through the window, let's just simplify it for a moment. There's really only two groups you need to worry about in that house. And that's the men on the roof and these guys. Those who believed and those who didn't.

And you need to ask yourself the question as you reflect on this whole story, which one do I belong to? Am I a scribe or a rooftop Christian? Because that answer will determine where you go in eternity.

In order to help you with that, I have a few questions to maybe help flesh this out a little bit in our lives today. But do you come to church so people will notice you? Then you might be a scribe. That's what they did. They wanted to be noticed all the time. They came for attention. Do you come to church so people will flatter you and say, "Wow, she's godly. Man, he's so great. He knows the Bible."? Then you might be a scribe as well. That was part of their everyday pattern. Flattery was the one motivating factor in their life. They lived for the love of self. Do you do it to show off your clothes? You might be a scribe. Do you come to church to show off your holiness? You might be a scribe. Do come to church to

show off anything? That's all scribal stuff. And it's bad. Do you want to be that way? That's the kind of thing that led them to nail Jesus to the cross.

But on the flip side, do you come to church to hear the Word of God? That's the mentality of a rooftop Christian. Do you come to listen and learn so you can see Jesus and get close to Him and lay yourself at His feet? That's the paralytic. And that's the one you want to be like because that's the sort of person that heard that his sins are *aphiēmi*, gone, banished, obliterated.

Listen, friends, that newspaper was wrong when it said that we'll never discover an answer to the question of forgiveness. We already have. We found an answer to the problem of saying, "Am I saved or not?" all the time. You get it at the cross, but you only get it when you come to Him the right way like these people did. You can't just come to Jesus, just quote unquote Jesus. You can't just show up at church and be religious. You have to realize that you are nothing. Your works are nothing. Your good deeds are nothing. All your attempts to keep the law, the only thing that matters is Him.

The story is told at the time a young man came to a pastor and he told him he was struggling with the issue of guilt. He didn't think God could ever forgive him for the sins that he did. And as they were talking and going back and forth, the pastor pointed up at the cross above the man's head that was resting on the side of the building. And he said, "Do you think He can forgive you when you look at that?" He said, "Don't look at your sin so much, young man. Don't dwell so much on your failures. There's no hope and that's a black hole. Dwell upon the One who paid for them, and you will find the forgiveness you're looking for." Amen?

Let's close in a word of prayer.

Heavenly Father, we all want to look at this story here and draw these applications to our lives. We don't want to be hearers of the word only, but we want to be doers. And in stories like this one, it can be hard to sort of take it and make it personal because it's just so miraculous Father. We don't have Jesus living among us. We don't have people tearing rooftops off in the middle of our church services and seeing a paralytic man healed. All that doesn't happen in front of our eyes, but we do know what it's like to come to church for the wrong reasons in our heart. Father, we know what it's like to struggle with the issue of guilt and sin. And so Lord, I pray that every heart in this room today would not leave unchanged by what they've heard, but that they would be drawn closer to what it means to have true saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Thank You for examples like this, Lord. I don't think anybody in that day would have looked at these guys on the roof or this paralytic on the floor and said, "That's the real thing. That's what I want to be like." They would have looked at the scribes and it shows us Father, how we get things so wrong in our hearts. We don't always see things the way You do. Our priorities are not Your priorities, Lord, and I

just I pray for forgiveness for all of us in this room today. Would You use what we've learned today to purify us, that our hearts would be right with You?

Lord, we do live in a very religious community and people go to church for a million different reasons. Some of them good, but many of them bad. We don't want to judge them, but we want to look at our own hearts, and repent. So Lord, if there's hypocrisy in us, would You help us to repent? If there is spiritual pride in our souls of coming here and knowing so much, would You help us to repent of that? Lord, if there's a focus on our own selfish ways of focusing on our own agendas when we come to Grace Fellowship, Lord in all these things, we just pray for Your mercy. We want to be saved. Lord, we want our sins to be banished. That's why we're here. There's no other reason to come. Lord, we can't do that on our own strength. Would You help us we pray to honour You? And as we come to the Lord's Supper, Father, would You especially be glorified in how we partake of this, and remember Christ. And we pray this all in His name, Amen.