



THE PURSUIT OF JESUS

Can Jesus Forgive Me?
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The Crossing Church
Las Vegas, Nevada

OPENING

We are spending this entire year walking through the life of Jesus. Our focus right now is on His power as we continue in Mark Moore's Quest 52 series this quarter. In Chapter 23, we are looking at limited perspectives that cause us to be focused on the wrong things in our lives.

SCRIPTURE¹

Mark 2:1-12 A few days later, when Jesus again entered *Capernaum*, the people heard that he had come home. They gathered in such *large numbers* that there was no room left, not even outside the door, and he *preached* the word to them. Some men came, bringing to him a *paralyzed* man, carried by four of them. 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. When Jesus saw *their faith*, he said to the paralyzed man, "Son, *your sins are forgiven.*" Now some teachers of the law were sitting there, *thinking* to themselves, "Why does this fellow talk like that? He's blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but *God alone?*" 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? Which is *easier*: to say to this paralyzed man, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up, take your mat and walk'? But I want you to know that the Son of Man has *authority* on earth to *forgive sins.*" So he said to the man, "*I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home.*" 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!"

Isaiah 53:5 (NLT) But he was pierced for our *rebellion*, crushed for our *sins*. He was beaten so we could be *whole*. He was whipped so we could be *healed*.

Ephesians 1:7 In him we have *redemption* through his blood, the *forgiveness* of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace

OBSERVATION

In our Mark's scriptures this week we see Jesus ministering in the town of Capernaum. It was and is located on the north shore of the Sea of Galilee where today we can see the ruins of a Jewish synagogue. Underneath it, archaeologists have found the ruins of an even more ancient synagogue where it is believed that Jesus walked and taught two thousand years ago. But in our story, he was teaching inside a house with crowds of people trying to get close to Him and not only hear what He has to say, but be healed. The typical house in those days had a flat roof made of grass, mud and sticks which made a hard thatch covering. To reach the top, a ladder would probably be leaning against an outside wall. So, Jesus is teaching in the living room when suddenly the

¹ Scripture is NIV unless otherwise indicated.

crowd around Him heard a scratching sound. Sunlight started to shine in and a hole in the roof got bigger and bigger. A paralyzed man was being let down on a mat through the hole by four of his friends who had the faith to believe that Jesus would heal him. They were stunned when Jesus said, “Your sins are forgiven.”

QUESTION: Which four of your friends would do the same for you? Why did you choose each of them?

In those days, forgiving sins required the penitent to buy an animal, take it to the temple, wait in a line to see the priest and, after the priest sacrificed the animal, he declared sins were forgiven **temporarily**. This process must be repeated over and over again, but when Jesus died for forgiveness of our sins, Satan was defeated and sins were forgiven forever.

QUESTION: The priest represented God in this process, so what is Jesus saying? Is this blasphemy? Define blasphemy.

QUESTION: Why does Satan keep fighting if he was defeated at the Cross?

What about healing? The man’s friends were disappointed because they were looking for a miracle – they just didn’t realize that Jesus had shown them the most important one. Making a man walk is easy – forgiving his sins – that will cost something!

QUESTION: What limited perspective are you dealing with today?

APPLICATION

Jesus knew that this man’s pressing need was not his primary need. His physical need was not his deepest need. We can relate to this because our priorities are not that much different. We think our most pressing needs are: **1) Health**. This is at the top of our list. We will pay almost any price to get our health back; **2) Resources**. We want enough financial means to take care of our needs and even more for our wants. We believe that when we have money, we have options. **3) Companionship**. Loneliness can range from intense to unbearable. We need the right people in our lives to breathe life into us. **4) Recognition**. People want to do something with meaning and purpose and to be recognized and appreciated for it. However, often pride intervenes and ultimately ruins the experience for us.

QUESTION: Which of the four needs listed above is most important to you? Why did you select that one?

What doesn’t show up on our list is **forgiveness**. It isn’t urgent or even a pressing need. The people in our story were concerned about the paralyzed man’s **physical** problem and Jesus was concerned about his **spiritual** problem.

QUESTION: What physical problem is going on in your life today? What spiritual problem?

Jesus has the authority to reverse the consequences of sin with a word – perhaps He could forgive sin with a word as well. Our deepest need is to be reconciled with our Heavenly Father. Our greatest need is forgiveness. Jesus came to address the eternal. Our author, Mark, interestingly moves on to tell us about a tax collector named Levi (Matthew) who was hated by the Jewish people. He paid tribute to the Romans, but also skimmed money off the top for himself. Yet he was called by Jesus to follow Him and when he did, he became one of the Twelve Apostles.

QUESTION: So often Jesus raised up mighty Christ-loving warriors and teachers and leaders in the Bible who had histories of sinful behavior in their pasts. Name as many as you can.

Recognizing that your Heavenly Father no longer holds our sin against us makes us ask, “Who am I to hold my sin against myself?” Even though our rebellion and sin nailed Jesus to the Cross for us, it is through Him we find healing and are made whole. Just as Jesus stretched out His hands to say to the paralyzed man, “Your sins are forgiven,” they would be stretched out on the Cross and nails would go through them and He would die to earn the authority to say to you and me, “Your sins are forgiven.” The price had been paid.

QUESTION: When have you had trouble forgiving yourself?

QUESTION: What do you need forgiveness for today?

QUESTION: What would wholeness and healing look like for you?

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, forgive us for all of the sins we acknowledge today and those we haven't even realized need it. Help us to forgive others as well even if they don't ask for it. Allow us to forgive ourselves for the pasts that hang around our necks like anchors and inhibit our moving forward in service to you. Draw us ever closer to You and surround us with Your presence and love and wisdom as we continue on this journey to obey and serve You. In Jesus' name. Amen.

QUESTIONS

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