

The book of Mark was written just as the apostles were dying off and the first generation of eye-witnesses to Jesus' ministry were dying off. The book was written in order to make sure we always had access to what the real Jesus really said, really did.

When the popularity of Jesus grew - he prayed and went to the unwalled cities - Jesus is more concerned about the quality of response than the quantity of response to the Gospel (ministry of the word of God) - Heart response to preaching is more desirous than the popular response to his healing miracles

40 Now a leper came to Him, imploring Him, kneeling down to Him and saying to Him, "If You are willing, You can make me clean."

Leprosy - a disease where you body wastes away literally - and the observable disintegration of the body tells the story of the social, familial, economic, and spiritual disintegration they experience as well. Back then, they thought two things about a leper: you are the walking dead and you deserve this because this is the punishment of God against you. The emotional and spiritual isolation was devastating.

The leper didn't asked to be healed, he asked to be cleansed - That meant clean before God, clean before his community, clean physically. He knew he needed it all, and Jesus gives it to him. - not just restored physically - but restored socially - restored to his family - restored to worship - restored to God -

Whatever you think you need from God, what you most need from Jesus is cleansing – to be cleansed from sin and a life lived for self.

The leper breaks all the social codes, he risks his life to get close to Jesus - and then he doesn't demand cleansing - if you will - if you see fit. He lays his life down and thrown himself at the mercy of Jesus, and doesn't tell Jesus what to do. He comes saying not my will, but they will be done Lord.

41 Then Jesus, moved with compassion, stretched out *His* hand and touched him, and said to him, "I am willing; be cleansed." 42 As soon as He had spoken, immediately the leprosy left him, and he was cleansed.

He chose to heal this man with a touch. He could have spoken a word or even just thought a thought and the man would have been healed, but Jesus used a touch. Jesus is touching a man who is starved for love - Jesus gives the leper a multi-dimensional healing.

Moved with compassion - Jesus Christ was literally *moved* from the depths of his being by love. This was important because people were forbidden to touch this man on account of his leprosy. Since his disease was in the advanced stages, he was a leper a long time. It was a long time since he had felt a loving touch.

Healing authority - power - in the presence of God - Jesus is the cleaning healing power of God - first time ever in human history the clean thing didn't become unclean - the unclean thing became by the clean.

Word and deed - conversion and healing - love in word and deed - both and -

Unknown Quote - "In Jesus Christ we see virtues combined that never anywhere else are combined. We see tenderness without weakness, strength without a milligram of harshness, humility without one ounce of uncertainty. You see unbending convictions and yet complete and utter approachability. You see power without

the slightest insensitivity. You see passion without the slightest prejudice. You see total integrity without any rigidity. Never unthinking. Never a false word. Never a misstep.”

43 And He strictly warned him and sent him away at once, 44 and said to him, “See that you say nothing to anyone; but go your way, show yourself to the priest, and offer for your cleansing those things which Moses commanded, as a testimony to them.”

Jesus doesn't need praise or people, doesn't need recognition for healing, healing others blesses Him, but it doesn't make Him somebody - He already is God - He's not working out who He is - this is an outworking of who He is. Jesus is not defined by His achievements - His achievements are due to who He already is.

Show yourself to the priest: Jesus told the former leper to go to the priests to carry out the ceremony the law required when a leper was cleansed. Jesus did this first to honor the law of God, but also as a testimony to the priests that an incurable disease had been cured.

Imagine what it was like for the priest when he came to be checked out by the priest - never been done before - Who did this? The power and authority to cleanse was among them - all other humans defiled. Jesus didn't have to go see the priest, he was still clean after touching the leper.

45 However, he went out and began to proclaim *it* freely, and to spread the matter, so that Jesus could no longer openly enter the city, but was outside in deserted places; and they came to Him from every direction.

The man may have meant well and might have thought he was helping Jesus, but his disobedience hindered the preaching ministry of Jesus. Jesus could no longer openly enter the city. It's best to always obey Jesus, and we should never think that we have a better plan than He does.

1 And again He entered Capernaum after some days, and it was heard that He was in the house. 2 Immediately many gathered together, so that there was no longer room to receive them, not even near the door. And He preached the word to them.

At this point in His ministry, Jesus attracted crowds wherever He went.

“It is clear that he was avoiding the streets because they had been turned into a healing campaign. Everywhere he went people besieged him with requests for healing and the casting out of demons, so that he was unable to do what he had come to do primarily, which was to preach the Word.” (Steadman)

3 Then they came to Him, bringing a paralytic who was carried by four men. 4 And when they could not come near Him because of the crowd, they uncovered the roof where He was. So when they had broken through, they let down the bed on which the paralytic was lying.

The roof was usually accessible by means of an outside stairway and was made of thatch, dirt or tile laid over beams.

Think about how dramatic the scene is as the distraction - the noise - the mess - I think possibly the wonder of how Jesus is handling the situation.

5 When Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytic, “Son, your sins are forgiven you.”

They make no reference to guilt, shame, sin, or forgiveness and yet Jesus does. Instead of saying rise up and walk - Jesus says your sins are forgiven.

Not what the paralytic or friends were expecting - they were expecting five of them to walk out of that place.

We think we know our biggest problem, but really Jesus knows better than us. We often think our physical problem is the worse thing in our live, Jesus says we have a much bigger problem.

Jesus doesn't address the obvious problem of suffering but does address the problem sin.

the main problem in a person's life is never their suffering; it's their sin.

When the Bible talks about sin it is not just referring to the bad things we do. It's not just lying or lust or whatever the case may be—it is ignoring God in the world he has made; it's rebelling against him by living without reference to him. It's saying, "I will decide exactly how I live my life." And Jesus says that is our main problem.

When you come to Jesus just looking for a physical healing, or help getting through a hard time, Jesus is saying you are falling short at asking for what you need most.

Redeeming self has been hindered by being paralyzed - if only I could walk again, then I could redeem myself.

What happens if the deeper issue isn't addressed - he gets what he thinks he needs, and finds out later it wasn't enough because the heart issue was never dealt with - redeeming self instead of being redeemed/saved by Jesus

"I think when God wants to play a really rotten practical joke on you, he grants your deepest wish." Cynthia Heimel

Jesus is saying - I'm not going to play that rotten joke on you. I'm not going to just heal your body and let you think you've gotten your deepest wish.

Jesus is the only savior that if you will fulfill you, and if you fail will forgive you.

Eustace in the voyage of the Dawn Treader - In the enda Aslan says, you are going to have to let me go deeper. "I was afraid of his claws, I can tell you, but I was pretty nearly desperate now. So the very first tear he made went so deep that I thought it had gone right into my heart. And when he began pulling the skin off, it hurt worse than anything I've ever felt. Well, he peeled the beastly stuff right off, just as I thought I'd done it myself before the other three times, only they hadn't hurt. And there it was, lying in the grass, only ever so much thicker and darker and more knobbly-looking than the others had been. And then he threw me in the pool. It smarted like anything, but only for a moment. Then I saw I had become a boy again."

Do you realize your deepest wish won't give you the ability to redeem yourself to save yourself. Your deepest wish may be a good thing, but it won't be a saving thing.

"Forgiveness is the greatest miracle that Jesus ever performs. It meets the greatest need; it costs the greatest price; and it brings the greatest blessing and the most lasting results." (Wiersbe)

Another point of confusion - is this forgiveness of sins without repentance or forgiveness of sins on borrowed faith. The bible is pretty clear and consistent that there is no forgiveness of sins without repentance. But Jesus can see faith, can see the motivation of their hearts - The paralytic must have had some inarticulate desire for mercy and grace. Jesus is aggressive with grace. Creates openings - faith is a gift. People who believe more must never be hard on those who believe less. Faith is a gift, not an ability. Ask for more faith.

6 And some of the scribes were sitting there and reasoning in their hearts, 7 "Why does this Man speak blasphemies like this? Who can forgive sins but God alone?" 8 But immediately, when Jesus perceived in His spirit that they reasoned thus within themselves, He said to them, "Why do you reason about these things in your hearts?"

The religious leaders are shocked and angry because they know that only God can forgive sins.

Psalm 51:1 Have mercy on me, O God, because of your unfailing love. Because of your great compassion, blot out the stain of my sins. 4 Against you, and you alone, have I sinned; I have done what is evil in your sight. You will be proved right in what you say, and your judgment against me is just.

Three friends once punches the other and the other forgives - You can only forgive a sin if it's against you! - Common sense.

The religious leaders said it was blasphemy, because Jesus claimed to forgive all his sins, and only God the creator could do that - Jesus is saying He has the same authority as God - in other word - I can forgive all sins because I am God. Jesus is claiming to be God Almighty, and they know it.

9 Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven you,' or to say, 'Arise, take up your bed and walk'? 10 But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins"—He said to the paralytic, 11 "I say to you, arise, take up your bed, and go to your house." 12 Immediately he arose, took up the bed, and went out in the presence of them all, so that all were amazed and glorified God, saying, "We never saw anything like this!"

Which is easier to do? Forgive sins or fix a broken body. I think Jesus is pointing us to the cross and saying it will be infinitely harder to forgive sins than fix a body. Fixing the body is just chemistry. Forgiving sins requires Jesus taking on eternal suffering in ur place for our sin and shame.

Jesus uses the miracle to testify to them that he is more than a miracle worker, but that He is God the savior, redeemer.

As Jesus makes His way toward the cross, this is where the tip of the shadow falls in the Gospels. From here on out they will be after Jesus to kill him.

Ultimately Jesus is going to have his legs nailed to a cross, immobilized so this man can walk again. Jesus is going to be treated as a blasphemer, not because of His own sin, but for the real blasphemers, the religious leaders in the room.

Jesus in the presence of people that want to kill him, and use him, He forgives them. Jesus knows us to our core, down to our deepest darkest thoughts, secrets and sins. He still is aggressive with His grace, mercy, love and kindness to us.

The claws Jesus uses to go deep into your heart and to change what your heart really wants. The thing that really convicts you, really shows you you've been wrong, really makes you weep over how you've been living your life wrong. It's his love. It's his kindness.