

Getting You & Your Friends to Jesus

1. People can get in the way of your connection with Jesus. Sometimes people can be your biggest obstacle.
2. God can use your friends to take you closer to Jesus.
3. It can cost you to get your friends to Jesus. Imagine the relief when they got to the house...and then...there was more to do.
4. God will do things for others because of your faith.

Once you get your friends to Jesus—the Jesus of the Bible, here is what they can expect. After giving this some thought, you'll find that we all need to be re-introduced to the Jesus we know from time to time. Here is what we can find:

1. A Jesus more concerned with truth than with comfort (2:1-2).
 - a. The truth of the viciousness of sin (2:3-4).
 - b. The truth about His exclusiveness (2:10).
 - c. The truth of His authority to forgive (2:5-10).

2:1-2

And again He entered¹ Capernaum after some days, and it was heard that He was in the house. The same house he was in chapter 2: Simon's house; the house where Simon's mother in law stayed; the house where the whole town had gathered on the eve of 1:35. **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.** Once again, you will notice that the last time He was in town, they flocked to be healed and delivered. Now they are flocking and what is the Master's preference? **Preaching the Word to them**, rather than miracles. This, by the way, is properly translated as "He was speaking to them."² This implies that what was about to occur interrupted Jesus' preaching.

2. A Jesus Who notices faith at the expense of almost everything else (2:5).

2:3-4

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. This is best understood as occurring on a type of home where the roof is flat and stairs are provided for warm nights to ascend to one's roof.

2:5

When Jesus saw their faith, We know there were at least two among the five who had faith. We aren't sure the man who was being healed "had no faith." Furthermore, verse 12 tells us the man had faith. Otherwise, he would have never "arose" as Jesus commanded and would have, for all intensive purposes, kept his palsy: "I am not getting up. This is dumb. This guy can't forgive my sins or heal my palsy."

¹Matthew is the odd man out here when he puts the healing of the demoniacs (two of them) before this episode. Mark and Luke put the healing of the leper before this which Matthew includes much more previous to this episode. Here again is the Synoptic Problem: 1. The three Gospels are so much alike that you would say there was a source among them (if one of them was not actually the source); 2. The three Gospels contain enough of a difference (in this case, Matthew's preceding story) that one would think there were no blind copying at all. So, which of the two orders (preceding episodes concerned) are correct (Matthew or Mark-Luke) again must be in some way tied to specific geography and time (as Matthew seems to do the most with his statements in 8:1 and 9:1). From the perspective of this author (me), then, Matthew will be treated as the chronological overlord.

²[*New American Standard Bible: 1995 Update*](#) (La Habra, CA: The Lockman Foundation, 1995), Mk 2:2.

He said to the paralytic, “Son, your sins are forgiven you.” Very strange: Why would Jesus connect this man’s paralysis to his sins? I do not want you thinking for a minute that I think that every ache, pain, sickness, disease, or infirmity, is the result of sin. I don’t.³ But, I think we say the opposite so much that we never think there’s a connection.

My grandfather, my mom’s dad, died in a bar. I never met him. He died of a brain aneurism and fell down the back stairs of a bar in Madison, Wisconsin. I don’t know that alcohol killed him, but I know this: it would have been hard to fall down the stairs of a bar if he was not at a bar.

So why is this obvious sick man having his spiritual state addressed? It’s not like he asked for any help with his sickness, much less his sin. Is it because it was a result of sin?

Maybe we should say, “Lord, is there any sin in which I am knowingly ignoring Your Holy Spirit or the clear-cut Word of God?” I cannot guarantee that my sickness is a result of my sin, but if I am sinning I cannot guarantee that it is not a result. I’m not trying to be hard. I’m just trying to be honest and the Scripture clearly says there is a connection between this man’s palsy and his sin. Otherwise, why is Jesus bringing it up?

My grandmother, my mom’s mom—I never met her, died of emphysema, at around 48 years old. She was a smoker. My friends, I think we can say there’s a connection. And we’re so busy trying to convince people, “God’s not mad.” Maybe He’s not mad, but I promise if you jump off a building there is about a 100% chance you’re going to hit the ground. And sometimes there’s a connection between what we do and how we feel. I know this, if I eat how I want I shouldn’t be upset if my immune system is not the way it ought to be. I know that we think that we should be able to do whatever you want, live however you please, but I promise you if Ho-Ho’s and cupcakes and Ding-Dongs are all you eat, don’t expect your system to shut down the infection when it comes. I’m not trying to be a legalist. I haven’t told you what you should eat and shouldn’t eat. I’m just trying to say if all you eat is pizza don’t be surprised if your skin starts feeling greasy after a while. Sometimes there’s a connection between what we do and how we feel. “Why is God so hard on me? My back’s been hurting for 30 years.” Well, I don’t want to be critical folks, but America is not a thin nation.

Let’s not lose the marvel that a man has just been absolved from His sins. This is no small thing. The only reason Christ would say this is given in the text: “He saw their faith.” No prayer; no trip down the aisle; just... **faith.**

3. A Jesus Who care about the internal **and** the external.

2:6-9

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?” Everybody seems to have sound theology here. **8 But immediately,** used the 2nd time in this passage after the nine times in the previous chapter.⁴ **when Jesus perceived in His spirit that they reasoned thus within themselves,** “You’re probably asking why I can do that?” This is, by the way, the credential of one forgiving sins. You must know every work of the person and the motive behind each work. You must know the state of the heart and the state of the head: “intents and thoughts” (Hebrews 4:12-13).⁵

We are not saying Jesus only cares about the heart. He heals the man. We hear folks excuse their conduct by saying “but God knows my heart, and God understands.” In other words, when we want our outward acts excused we say God is basically just interested in the heart, but when we want God’s help, we are almost always interested in the outward at the expense of the inward. “Never mind who I am in the heart, God, heal my sickness. Nevermind that I have hated everything good and lusted after everything evil, please heal my marriage and my finances and my health.” What hypocrites we can be!

³John 9, the disciple said, “Lord why is this man blind? Is it because of his sin or his parent’s sin?” And Jesus said, “In that case, neither, but for the glory of God.” So, it’s not always a connection between what we do and how we feel. On the other hand, the book of John speaks of a man healed at Bethesda (chapter 5) who is told not to sin “unless something worse comes on you.”

⁴Job 14:4; Is. 43:25; Dan. 9:9

⁴ "G2112 - eutheōs - Strong's Greek Lexicon (KJV)." Blue Letter Bible. Web. 28 Mar, 2017.
<<https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongsg=G2112&t=KJV>>.

⁵Romans 2:16 is shocking here, really. It is a reality that Jesus will judge the secrets of men at the judgment.

Consider the fact that these were asking about the credentials of this man: “Is He God that He can forgive sins?” Funny thing, it’s hard to describe God in any way other than “omniscient” (“all-knowing”). Jesus, therefore, shows them that He is this very same God, and is therefore, qualified to forgive this man’s sin. In other words, the omnipotence that is exercised in forgiving sin is hand in hand with knowing their thoughts.

Not only that. Jesus was showing that He not only had the power to forgive the sins of a paralytic; He was at least theoretically able to forgive these same austere men of their own sins. It is alarming, isn’t it, that some who are Christ’s greatest critics are disqualifying themselves from God’s only avenue of forgiveness?

He said to them, “Why do you reason about these things in your hearts? 9 Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, ‘Your sins are forgiven you,’ or to say, ‘Arise, take up your bed and walk’? You and I will answer questions this week about, “Why God this?” and, “Why Jesus that?” and, “Why this?” There’s nothing more important than sins forgiven. Not even being healed of your palsy. Now clearly there’s a connection here between this man’s sins and his healing, but not always. I really wish we could see that our greatest need is not:

1. Scholarships
2. Plans
3. Financial peace
4. Relationship success
5. Athletic prowess
6. Self esteem
7. Lots of free time and vacation

Parents, if we don’t figure out how to lead by example and learn how to cast the family vision on this, we’ll have much for which to answer in the final day. Your children’s greatest need is a right relationship with God through Jesus and that doesn’t end with their cute little profession of faith and subsequent baptism. A right relationship with Jesus continues each day in your insistence that they honor authority and each week in your insistence that they honor the Lord’s house. Not everything gets done and not all commitments can be made if things get out of whack, so be really careful that you don’t over commit yourself. If you do, you will begin to justify why you can’t do this for the Lord and why you can’t do that for your church and why you can’t be counted on for anything...other than to the job, the HOA, the PTA, the children’s ball team, the bank that owns your loan...and then we say “but my sins are forgiven” as we continue to.....sin—knowingly sin.

Friends, you owe it to your loved ones to not promise them:

1. A therapeutic Jesus: pats your hand and provides services to you.
2. A deistic Jesus: does your bidding at your bidding only to disappear in time to hold no accountability.
3. A manipulated Jesus: desperately seeks your approval and acceptance.

And we do this because we are trying so hard to become influential in our workplaces and families that we almost settle for “respected as a Christian” or “acknowledged as different and upstanding”. We love the idea of earning promotions and getting recognized and before you know it, we haven’t said a word about the heart of the matter—the life nobody sees (“the heart”, verse 8) and the need nobody sees (“forgiveness”, verses 5 and 10).

Why don’t we see the need for others?

1. Probably because we don’t see much of a need for us. I mean, when was the last time you had a heartfelt appeal for forgiveness with anybody in this room? Or, God?
2. Or worse, Maybe we don’t see the need to share the need of forgiveness with our loved ones and associates because we ourselves are not sure we have secured that same forgiveness. Many in this room—your own conscience condemns you—because when the topic of forgiveness comes up you make a beeline for what you hope is the truth but in your gut you know it’s not and you say strange things you can’t find in the Bible like “accept Jesus” and “ask Jesus into your hearts” and “ask God to take away your sin.” When Scripture says “He makes us ‘accepted’” (Ephesians 1:6); He “lives in

our hearts by faith” (Ephesians 3:17); God has “raised us out of our deadness in sin by grace through faith” (Ephesians 2:8-9).

2:10-12

10 But that you may know get it. Jesus is about to heal a man and talks about doing so in order to convince him that He is **the Son of Man on earth** and **has the power** this is not that word dealing with “ability” but rather “authority” and is used previously in regards to His “teaching with authority” (1:22) and His casting out demons “with authority” (1:27). This, then, rounds out a pretty sound trinity of comprehensive authority: to teach truth; to exercise position of the spirit world; to absolve sin. **to forgive sin**. That is why Jesus did miracles. That is why the disciples were later told to do miracles.

Mark 16:19 So then, after the Lord had spoken to them, He was received up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God. 20 And they went out and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the word through the accompanying signs. Amen.

Why is Jesus, verse 2, “preaching the word unto them?” That was His mission (1:38). Why did He do miracles? To show that he had authority to preach the Word. Why did the disciples follow His pattern after He ascended to Heaven? To show they had authority to preach what they were preaching in Christ’s wake.

that the Son of Man How does this work with Mark 1:11 where God calls Jesus His Son? Is there a connection? Consider what the reader would have thought when he read this:

Psalms 80:14 Return, we beseech You, O God of hosts; Look down from heaven and see, And visit this vine 15 And the vineyard which Your right hand has planted, And the branch that You made strong for Yourself. 16 It is burned with fire, it is cut down; They perish at the rebuke of Your countenance. 17 Let Your hand be upon the man of Your right hand, Upon the son of man whom You made strong for Yourself. 18 Then we will not turn back from You; Revive us, and we will call upon Your name. 19 Restore us, O LORD God of hosts; Cause Your face to shine, And we shall be saved!

There are a great many things in this passage that speak of God’s rejection of Israel in the time of Jesus and yet, the biggest lesson in this passage is that the **Son of Man** is known as the God’s “Right hand man.” They “share an office.” In other words, when Jesus said He was the **Son of Man**, He was claiming to share the place of prominence with the Almighty.⁶

has ²power 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.” Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house.** This bed was more of a sleeping mat. “I just want to prove to you that I have power on earth to forgive sins.” Why did Jesus tell the man to get up? So that you know that He has the **power to forgive sin**. Why did Jesus do those healings when He was here on earth? One answer, dear friends. So that you would know that He has the authority to forgive sins. We have 2,000 years of history proving that Jesus can forgive sin. Converted hearts. You should not expect regular works of healing in a supernatural, apostolic sense anymore. Why? Because they were for the purpose of proving to His listeners that He had the authority **to forgive sins**. And the apostles are also those ones sent by Jesus and their job was to do great works to validate what they were preaching. How many Testaments were there when Moses came preaching? Zero. And so he had to do miracles to validate what he was preaching. So here comes Jesus and some apostles. How many New Testaments were there when they started preaching? Zero. How many books were available when they started preaching, in the New Testament? Zero. So they had to validate their new message by doing miracles. Friends, we’re not going to get another Testament of Jesus Christ. So there’s no need for this, proving that Jesus has the **power on Earth to forgive sins** any longer.

⁶More is said on this in the author’s commentary on Matthew.

²authority

4. A Jesus Who expects those who “get up” to “take up their bed.” (2:12) We have here a Jesus who expects those whom He has healed to stop laying around at the expense of those around them. This was no easy thing. I saw this in the military all the time: A soldier who was an awful spectacle of fitness and never got to work on time and always tried to get off the mission gets legitimately hurt, and he acts as though it really crimped his style. The truth is, after he gets med-boarded and chaptered, he now gets paid for being hurt (and that is unfortunate), but he got what he always wanted—legitimate excuse to no longer work hard.

Notice here that the crowd that would have kept them out at ground level is now that which could keep him in at ground level.

The crowd that would have kept him from getting close to Jesus is now keeping Him from obeying Jesus. The wife that prayed for her husband to get saved is now upset because he wants to go to prayer meeting. The husband that asked for his wife to get more involved with the ladies at church is now upset because she likes to go to Willing Hands. The kids that were praying for dad to quit being so abusive in his tone are not frustrated because he wants them to dress in a respectable manner and treat God’s house like it’s special more than two or three days a month.

And all I’m trying to say is that there are some who never wish to be healed because they know the implications of not having excuses anymore to serve Jesus. If He takes away their groaning and palsy, what will be the things they talk about anymore? What will be the excuse for why they don’t lay around anymore? They will be expected to be productive parents and children and citizens and church members, but look what happens...

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!”⁷

⁷All three Gospels continue with the account of Matthew’s calling (also named Levi).