

I. Introduction.

II. A needy man is brought to Jesus. v. 17-20

- A. The setting: Jesus is teaching (in Capernaum). v. 17 Mark 2:1 Mt. 9:1**
- 1. Pharisees and teacher of the law (scribes) have come to investigate Jesus. 11:37-55**
 - 2. Jesus heals by the power of the Lord.**
 - 3. The Jewish leaders seem unaffected by the Spirit's work among them. 4:18f**
- B. Four very determined men find a way to get their paralyzed friend into Jesus' presence. v. 18-19 Mark 2:3**
- 1. Friends bring a paralyzed man to Jesus. v. 18 14:13,21 Acts 8:7**
 - 2. The great crowd is a barrier. v. 19a**
 - 3. They determine to go on the roof and lower the paralytic down near Jesus. v. 19b**
- C. Jesus shocks everyone with His response to their faith. v. 20**
- 1. He again does more than would have been expected. 5:13**
 - 2. Why does He declare forgiveness of sins when what they sought was healing?**
 - a. Does this imply that sin is the cause of disease? 13:1-5 John 9:1-3**
 - b. Forgiveness is the man's greatest need.**
 - c. Jesus' primary mission is not to heal physically, but to reconcile us to God. 1:77 2:11 3:3 4:18-19 5:32 7:48-50 24:47 Mt. 1:21 Acts 2:38**
 - d. He is revealing Who He is by showing the extent of His authority.**
 - e. He is setting up a confrontation with the unbelief of the Pharisees and scribes.**
 - 3. How does Jesus know that they have faith? 7:9,50 8:48 17:19 18:42**
 - 4. Real faith is visible – demonstrated by action. Js. 2:11ff**
 - 5. Did the paralytic also have faith? Heb. 11:6 Gen. 15:6**
 - 6. On what basis is the paralytic's sin forgiven? 22:20 Eph. 1:7 1 Jo. 1:7 Mt. 1:21 Col. 1:14 Rom. 3:20-31**

III. Jesus demonstrates His authority. v. 21-26

- A. The scribes and the Pharisees take offense at Jesus. v. 21 11:53-54**
- 1. Their premise is true – Only God can forgive sins – but their conclusion is faulty. Ps. 130:12 Ex. 34:6-7 Isa. 1:18 43:25 44:22 55:6-7 Jer. 31:34 Mic. 7:19**
 - 2. They say Jesus is guilty of blasphemy which makes him worthy of death. Lev. 24:10-23 John 10:31-33 19:7 Mark 14:64 Acts 6:11**
 - 3. They should have known Who Jesus is. 7:22,49 11:20 Isa. 35:5 61:1 Ex. 8:19**
- B. Jesus issues a challenge. v.22-23**
- 1. Jesus knows and exposes their hearts. v. 22 2:34-35 4:23 7:39 Mt. 9:4 Mark 2:8 John 2:25 Heb. 4:13**
 - 2. Jesus impales them on the horns of a dilemma. 6:9 20:3-4,44**
 - a. On the one hand, it is easier to say that sins have been forgiven because the truth of this statement is not immediately verifiable (like healing would be).**
 - b. On the other hand, to actually forgive sins is harder.**
 - c. Only God can do either. Both are humanly impossible.**
 - d. Both signify the presence of God's Kingdom. 7:22 Isa. 35:5-6 Jer. 31:34**

C. Jesus heals the paralytic. v. 24-25a

1. Jesus does something visible that only God can do which proves that He can also do the invisible things that only God can do. v.24a 4:32,36 12:5 Acts 2:22 10:38
2. Therefore, by the Pharisees' reasoning, He is God. John 1:1,14 Col. 2:9
3. Why does Jesus call Himself "the Son of Man"?
 - a. This is His favorite self-designation. 6:5,22 7:34 9:22,26,44,58 11:20 12:8,10,40 17:22,24,26,30 18:8,31,19:10 21:27,36 22:22,48,69 24:7
 - b. This title refers to His true humanity. Ps. 8:4 144:3 80:17 John 1:14 Ro. 8:3-4
 - c. This title has Messianic connotations which point to His deity. Dan. 7:13-14 Luke 21:27,36 22:69 Mt. 24:40 26:64 John 1:51 Ezek. 2:1-4
 - d. The title is cryptic enough to avoid a premature crisis.
4. The healing is instantaneous and complete. v. 25a 5:13 4:39 8:44

D. In the aftermath, God is glorified. v. 25b-26

1. The healed man obeys Jesus – obedience follows the forgiveness of sins. v. 25b 5:14 1 Jo. 2:3 Eph. 2:8-10 John 14:15 Titus 2:14
2. The people are full of astonishment and fear. v. 25c-26 Mark 2:12
3. God is glorified among the people. 2:14,20 7:16 13:13,17 17:15 18:43 Mt. 9:8
4. All should have realized is that the "today" of the Messiah has arrived. 4:18-21
5. What do you supposed the Pharisees and scribes were doing? 6:11 John 11:47ff 12:47 2 Co. 4:3-4 1 Co. 1:22

IV. Concluding applications.

A. The example of the scribes and Pharisees warns us that it is possible to be very religious and very lost. 11:37-54 2 Co. 3:14-16 Isa. 29:13

B. The "good friends" are to be commended and imitated.

1. We should care for those who are disabled or less abled. 14:13,21
2. We should seek to bring those who are spiritually crippled to Jesus. 3:3 24:47
3. We should imitate their creativity and their determination.
4. Can your faith in Jesus benefit others? 1 Co. 7:16 Ezekiel 18:1ff
5. We trust in Jesus' power to work through us. 2 Cor. 4:7

C. The focal point of this story is not the "good friends", but the great Friend of sinners.

1. The love of the good friends is a reflection of God's love for us. Jo. 3:16 Ro. 8:3-4
2. Jesus still has authority to forgive sin. v. 24a 1:77 Ex. 34:6-7 Num. 14:17 Ps. 65:3 86:5 103:12 130:3-4 Jer. 31:34 Mic. 7:18-19 Isa. 1:18 55:6-7 43:25 44:22 Neh. 9:17
3. Faith has always been the means by which we receive forgiveness/justification before God. Gen. 15:6 Rom. 4:1-9 5:1
4. Today His great deeds are still visible among us. v. 26
5. What do you want from Jesus? Don't delay. Let nothing stand in your way.
6. We who have been forgiven through Christ should glorify God with great joy.

Discussion questions

1. Why does Jesus forgive the man who came seeking healing?
2. On what basis is the paralytic's sin forgiven?
3. What is the point of Jesus question about what is easier to say?
4. What barriers keep you from getting closer to Jesus?
5. What can we learn from the good friends?
6. Why does Jesus call Himself the Son of Man?
7. What does this passage teach about the relationship between faith and action/obedience?
8. How would you teach this passage to children?