

#1817  
Cf. #1081 #1437

Mark 2:1-12<sup>1</sup>  
Jesus forgives and heals a paralytic  
whose friends lower him  
through the roof.  
7<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Epiphany  
Supplementary Lectionary  
Series "B," Gospels

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Elected men, \$L

<sup>2:1</sup> A few days later, after Jesus had toured the towns of Galilee, Jesus again entered Capernaum. The people heard that he had come home. <sup>2</sup> So many gathered at the house that there was no room left, not even outside the door, and Jesus was speaking to them the Word. <sup>3</sup> Some men came, bringing to Jesus a paralytic, carried by four of them. <sup>4</sup> Since they could not get him to Jesus because of the crowd, they made an opening in the roof of the house above Jesus and, after digging through it, lowered the mat the paralyzed man was lying on. <sup>5</sup> When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, "Son, your sins are forgiven."

<sup>6</sup> Now some Teachers of the Law (Scribes) were sitting there, thinking in their hearts, <sup>7</sup> "Why does this fellow talk like that? He's blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone?"

<sup>8</sup> Immediately, Jesus knew in his spirit that this was what they were thinking, and he said to them, "Why are you thinking these things in your hearts? <sup>9</sup> Which is easier: to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up, take your mat and walk'? <sup>10</sup> But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins..." Jesus said to the paralytic, <sup>11</sup> "I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home." <sup>12</sup> 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!"

JESUS CURES A PARALYTIC  
I. OF HIS PARALYSIS  
II. OF HIS SIN

In the Name of Jesus, who forgives all our sins and heals all our diseases (cf. Psalm 103:3),  
Dear Fellow-Redeemed,

Once again, we see that Jesus' miracles verify that his Teaching, his Message, his Gospel, is true. Jesus' Message, his Gospel – Good News – can be trusted. Jesus' Message focuses especially on his Gospel of the forgiveness of sins. We see and hear this Gospel in our text this morning as ... JESUS CURES A PARALYTIC. JESUS CURES A PARALYTIC ... I. OF HIS PARALYSIS; and, II. OF HIS SIN.

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<sup>1</sup> *The New International Version*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House) 1984. All Scripture references are taken from this translation unless noted otherwise.

## JESUS CURES A PARALYTIC I. OF HIS PARALYSIS

Jesus, with his disciples, returned to Capernaum from his preaching tour in Galilee. Early in Mark's Gospel, we are given the summary of Jesus' Message: "The time has come," [Jesus said]. 'The Kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the Good News (the Gospel)!" (1:15). Along with this Good News, Jesus had been healing the sick and driving out demons. Jesus' miracles verified that his Message was true, authentic and trustworthy. Now Jesus returned to Capernaum of Galilee, where he had set up his headquarters for his Galilean ministry.

As you heard from the reading of this text previously, when the people in and around Capernaum, heard that Jesus had come home, they flocked to the house where he was staying. There were so many people there, that they even crowded around the outside of the house, blocking the entrance into the house. It was to this situation that four men came bearing a paralytic – a man who was paralyzed.

These four men soon ascertained that they were not going to be able to get their paralyzed friend in to see Jesus by the entrance to the house. So they climbed up on the roof – the houses had flat roofs made out of a combination of timbers, clay and other materials. They dug through the roofing materials and then lowered their paralyzed friend into the room right down in front of where Jesus was.

Our text tells us that Jesus saw their faith, and Jesus healed the paralyzed man. Jesus said to him,

***11 "I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home." 12 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!" (2:11&12).***

### APPLICATION

Look at the tenacity of these four men who were carrying their paralyzed friend to Jesus. There was no way that they could get their paralyzed friend to see Jesus in through the door of the house. The door was blocked. There were so many people in the house itself and around the entrance and around the entire house. That did not stop them. They found a way to get their friend to Jesus.

You and I also have Friends, Relatives, Acquaintances and Neighbors – our FRANs network. You and I know that some of these Friends, Relatives, Acquaintances and Neighbors, do not know about Jesus. They have not heard Jesus say, "I AM the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" (John 14:6). They have not heard the Scriptures proclaim that Salvation and eternal life is found in no one else, for "there is no other Name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved" (Acts

4:12). The only saving Name in the entire world is the Name of Jesus. Moreover, the Bible also gives us this encouragement and warning, that ...

**<sup>9</sup> ... God exalted [Jesus Christ] to the highest place  
and gave him the Name that is above every name,  
<sup>10</sup> that at the Name of Jesus every knee should bow,  
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,  
<sup>11</sup> and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is LORD,  
to the glory of God the Father** (Philippians 2:9-11).

Similarly, the Bible tells us in the Book of Revelation that “[Jesus] is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him; and all the peoples of the earth will mourn because of him. So shall it be! Amen!” (Revelation 1:7).

You and I know this Second Coming of Jesus is going to take place. You and I know that only those who call on the Name of the LORD Jesus in faith will be saved (cf. Romans 10:13; Joel 2:32). How imperative it is then for us to bring the Message of Jesus to our Friends, Relatives, Acquaintances and Neighbors!

It is imperative that we proclaim the Name of Jesus to others. You and I need the tenacity and determination of these four men who carried their paralytic friend to Jesus and would not be deterred by a crowd around the door or around the house where Jesus was. You and I, strengthened by the Holy Spirit, are to warn others about Jesus’ Second Coming in Judgment, and we are to proclaim the same Message that Jesus proclaimed: “Repent and believe the Good News” (1:15b).

As we commit ourselves to this Gospel and to the bringing of this Good News to others, the Bible also guides us as to what the focus of our Message is to be. Our text tells us ...

## JESUS CURES A PARALYTIC II. OF HIS SIN

Jesus proclaimed the Gospel of the forgiveness of sins. When Jesus saw the faith of the four men and of the paralytic, “he said to the paralytic, ‘Son, your sins are forgiven’” (2:5). Those are some of the most beautiful and precious Words in the Bible. Yet, we see how some reacted to those Words.

“Now some Teachers of the Law (Scribes) were sitting there, thinking in their hearts, ‘Why does this fellow talk like that? He’s blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone?’” (2:6&7). They were right; and, they were wrong.

They were right. Only God can forgive sins. David says in Psalm 103, “Praise the LORD, O my soul ... who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases” (Psalm 103:1a&3). Having declared that the forgiveness of sins, Jesus goes on to say,

**<sup>10</sup> But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth  
to forgive sins...,” Jesus said to the paralytic, <sup>11</sup> “I tell you, get up,**

***take your mat and go home.”<sup>12</sup> 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!”***

Jesus demonstrates the fact that he has authority to forgive sins by the miracle of healing this paralytic – the miracle verifies that Jesus’ Message of forgiveness is true and valid. There is something else involved in this too.

Jesus has said, “that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins” (2:10a). Jesus refers to himself as “the Son of Man.” That is a Messianic title – a title assigned to the Messiah, the Christ, the One whom God Anointed. Daniel spoke of this Son of Man in the Old Testament.

Daniel said,

***<sup>13</sup> “In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man [like the Son of Man], coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence.<sup>14</sup> He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all peoples, nations and men of every language worshiped him. His Dominion is an Everlasting Dominion that will not pass away, and his Kingdom is one that will never be destroyed” (Daniel 7:13&14).***

Such a description fits only one person in all of history: Jesus Christ, the Son of God and the Son of Man. Jesus is true God and true man through whom alone there is forgiveness of sins, eternal life and salvation. Jesus also hints as to how he wins the forgiveness of sins for the paralytic as well as for all.

Jesus confronts the Teachers of the Law. Our text tells us,

***<sup>6</sup> Now some Teachers of the Law (Scribes) were sitting there, thinking in their hearts,<sup>7</sup> “Why does this fellow talk like that? He’s blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone?”<sup>8</sup> Immediately, Jesus knew in his spirit that this was what they were thinking, and he said to them, “Why are you thinking these things in your hearts?<sup>9</sup> Which is easier: to say to the paralytic, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Get up, take your mat and walk?’” (2:6-9).***

For everyone except Jesus, it could be said that the easier thing is to say, “Your sins are forgiven.” Not everyone could say to a paralytic or to any other sick person, “Be healed!” Jesus does that too and thus demonstrates his authority to forgive sins. But the more difficult thing for Jesus is to say, “your sins are forgiven.”

It is more difficult for Jesus to say, “Your sins are forgiven,” because the earning of that forgiveness of sins will take Jesus to the cross. Jesus would earn the forgiveness of sins for the paralytic and for all people by his suffering and death on the cross. The miracle of Jesus’ resurrection from the dead, would demonstrate that Jesus did indeed earn the forgiveness of sins for all. The Apostle John points to this truth when he writes in his First

Epistle, that “Jesus Christ, the Righteous One ... is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world” (1 John 2:1b&2). The forgiveness of sins is earned by Jesus for all. It is thus that Jesus deals with the greatest need of this paralytic and his friends.

Yes, the paralytic needed to be cured of his paralysis. But his greater need was to be cured of his sins – to have his sins forgiven. His paralysis was only for this lifetime. Without the forgiveness of sins, the paralytic would suffer eternally. Our text tells us that when Jesus saw the faith of the paralytic and his four friends, he said, “Son, your sins are forgiven” (2:5). Jesus announced to them the forgiveness of sins. That announcement, that proclamation of the Gospel, created and strengthened faith in their hearts in Jesus as their Savior.

### APPROPRIATION & APPLICATION

Jesus is the Son of Man, our Savior and Redeemer. In his Word, Jesus says to us, “Your sins are forgiven.” That Word of forgiveness – that Gospel – comes to us in the Means of Grace, the Gospel in Word and Sacraments.

In Holy Baptism, our sins are forgiven “through the washing of rebirth and renewal of the Holy Spirit”(cf. Titus 3:5b). In Holy Communion, Jesus gives us his own true body and true blood poured out for us for the forgiveness of sins (cf. Matthew 26:26-28). In God’s Word, the Holy Scriptures, again and again, Jesus tells us that our sins are forgiven. Through that Gospel, the Holy Spirit creates and strengthens in us faith in Jesus. But there is another aspect of our proclamation of this Gospel to others.

Recall that the Teachers of the Law objected in their hearts to Jesus saying, “Son, your sins are forgiven” (cf. 2:5b). They reasoned in their hearts that only God could forgive sins (cf. 2:6&7). That is true. But God, our LORD Jesus, has given to his Church – that is, to all who believe in Jesus as their Savior – God has given to his Church the privilege, right and responsibility to forgive the sins of others.

Jesus gave this right to individual Christians as illustrated when he gave this right to his Apostle Peter. Jesus told Peter, “I will give you the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven; whatever you bind on earth will have been bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will have been loosed in heaven” (Matthew 16:19). To “bind” means not to forgive. To “loose” means to forgive. Through the proclamation of the Law – binding – and the Gospel – loosing – individual Christians exercise their right and responsibility, in accord with God’s Word, to forgive the sins of those who repent and not to forgive the sins of those who do not repent. This power, right, privilege and responsibility, is also given to the Church corporately or as a whole.

Jesus uses the same words that he spoke to Peter when he says to all believers, “I tell you the truth, whatever you bind on earth will have been bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will have been loosed in heaven.... For wherever two or three come together in my Name, there am I with them” (Matthew 18:18&20). The only difference here when compared to what Jesus said to Peter, is that when Jesus spoke to Peter he

used in Greek the singular “you” [soi & dhvsh/" & luvsh/"]; and, when Jesus spoke to all of his disciples, he used in Greek the plural “you” [dhvshte & luvshete]. Again, after his resurrection from the dead, Jesus spoke to all disciples – all believers in him,

After his resurrection, Jesus said to all believers, “If you [plural] forgive [ajfh`te] anyone his sins, they are forgiven; if you [plural] do not forgive [krath`te] them, they are not forgiven” (John 20:23). The Gospel of Jesus of the forgiveness of sins, is given to you; as a believer in Jesus, you are to proclaim that same announcement to others.

Jesus has called you to be his witnesses. How shall you do that? Remember how Jesus’ ministry in Galilee is described in the First Chapter of Mark’s Gospel: “Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the Good News [the Gospel] of God. ‘The time has come,’ he said. ‘The Kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the Good News [the Gospel]!’” (1:14b&15). Jesus made this same proclamation clear to his disciples after his resurrection from the dead. He said, “Repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in [my] Name to all nations .... You are witnesses of these things” (Luke 24:47&48). In other words, as you deal with your Friends, Relatives, Acquaintances and Neighbors – your FRANS network – you too are to speak both Law and Gospel.

Speak the Law to your Friends, Relatives, Acquaintances and Neighbors, that all of us have sinned and deserve only God’s wrath and punishment in hell for our sins. Speak the Gospel, that Jesus has suffered and died for the sins of all people, that he was raised from death on the third day, and that everyone who believes in him alone has forgiveness of sins and eternal life. The proclamation of this Gospel, by the power of the Holy Spirit, works and preserves faith in the heart for everlasting life.

## CONCLUSION

Jesus’ miracles did not stand by themselves. Jesus’ miracles simply said that what he was saying was true. Jesus’ forgiving sins to the paralytic, was verified by his healing of the paralytic. Jesus’ message of forgiveness to us is verified in us by the Holy Spirit, who has worked, through that message, faith in Jesus as our Savior. Hold on to that faith by continuing in Jesus’ Word; and, proclaim that same Word to others, that they also may believe in Jesus their Savior for eternal life in heaven. Amen.