

RTS Women's Study: The Gospel of Mark

#4: Mark 2:1-17: The Forgiveness of Sins

Intro: Would you choose walking or would you choose Jesus?

I. The Need for Forgiveness (v.1-5)

A. Our Physical Needs Are Important

- Four men brought their paralytic friend to Jesus
 - Crowds made it impossible to get close to Jesus (v.1-2)
 - Out of desperation, they tore a hole in the roof (v.3-4)
 - Luke tells us the roof was made of “tiles”
 - Can you imagine the noise and disruption to Jesus’ sermon?
- God can use physical problems to drive us to Jesus
 - Could God be using your physical/external issues to draw you closer to Christ?
 - **Better to have illness and Jesus, then no illness and no Jesus

B. But Our Spiritual Needs Are Greater

- Jesus shocks everyone by giving man not what he wants, but what he needs (v.5)
 - Physical problems are temporal, spiritual problems are eternal
 - What good would it be to heal him physically if he remains lost in his sins?
 - Mark 8:36: “What does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul?”
- Why do we not think our sin is our biggest problem?
 - We misunderstand the seriousness of sin—it is not a “mistake,” but cosmic rebellion
 - We underestimate how sinful we really are—we judge ourselves by comparison
 - We don’t recognize God’s holy character—he cares about sin more than we think

Key question: Do you realize your biggest need is spiritual? Will you take desperate measure to come to Jesus to solve it?

II. The Source for Forgiveness (v.6-12)

A. Only God Can Forgive Sins

- The grumbling Pharisees are technically correct: “Who can forgive sins but God alone?”
 - It would be blasphemy for a mere man to forgive another man’s sins
 - “Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins” (v.11)—Son of Man refers to the human/divine figure in Daniel 7 who is judge of the world
 - They do not realize that Jesus is God!
 - Jesus heals the paralytic to prove he is the Son of Man (v.11)

- The human heart looks for other ways to solve our sin problem
 - We think we can do penance to make up for our past mistakes
 - We think we can work extra hard to live a good life going forward
- But Jesus is the only Savior who can take away Sins
 - Jesus is the only one who paid the price for our sins: “Which is easier to say to the paralytic, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or ‘Take up your bed and walk?’”
 - “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me” (John 14:6)
 - What are some reasons that people are offended by the claim that Christ is the only way?

B. Forgiveness Comes through Faith Alone

- Notice the paralytic didn’t spend 10 years doing good works before he was forgiven
- He simply had “faith” (v.5)

Key question: Are you trusting in Jesus alone for forgiveness?

III. The Resistance to Forgiveness (v.13-17)

A. If God Forgives Sins, then he invites the “worst” Sinners

- Tax collectors were the most despised people in Israel, but Jesus invites them (v.13-15)
- Jesus spends time with “sinners” and even eats with them
- “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick” (v. 17)

B. But Sometimes We Are Offended by God’s Grace

- The Pharisees “judged” Jesus for spending time with sinners (v.16)
- But that’s because they believed in their own righteousness and didn’t think these other people “deserved” to be saved; But that’s the point: no one “deserves” to be saved!
- **The Pharisees heard Jesus’s sermons like everyone else, but they hardened their hearts!

Key question: Do you see yourself as the 1st-hour worker or the 11th-hour worker (Matt 20)?

Discussion Groups

1. Share about how you are doing in your life right now balancing your focus on physical needs vs spiritual needs. Yes, both matter, but what steps can be taken to remember what matters most?
2. Do you ever struggle with the idea that Christ is the only way to heaven? How do these passages in Mark help address those struggles?
3. Do you ever find yourself looking down on others in the church as not “worthy” of salvation? How does this passage help you understand that salvation is all of grace?