

Sunday, March 23, 2025

More Like Jesus

Week 4- Mark 2:1-12

- If you have your bibles, go ahead and turn with me to the Gospel of Mark chapter 2, as we continue our series that we have entitled More Like Jesus

- And just to recap chapter 1 for us, Mark starts off this Gospel in a hurry, getting straight to the point and beginning with Jesus' Baptism
- Then Jesus goes out to the wilderness to fast and pray for 40 days and there he overcomes temptation from satan himself before he makes his way back to Capernaum and begins teaching and preaching in the synagogue
- Everyone was astonished with the authority that He taught with, but then he really blows people's minds by showing His authority

over demons by silencing them and casting them out

- And then He shows His authority over the physical as well when He heals Peter's mother in law
- And just when the disciples thought that everything was taking off and going the way it was supposed to go, Jesus says, "No let's go visit the other towns so I can preach there, because that is the main reason for which I came"
- So they travel around and Jesus preaches, until one day He is confronted by a leper who He heals, and this leper, contrarily to what Jesus told him to do, went around and told everyone how Jesus healed him so now Jesus can't go anywhere without a mob forming to see Him
- So He spent some time out in the wilderness and everyone was coming from every quarter to see Him out there until He decides to go

back to Capernaum which is where we pick up in the beginning of Chapter 2:

- ***“And when He returned to Capernaum after some days, it was reported that He was at home. And many were gathered together, so that there was no more room, not even at the door. And He was preaching the word to them. And they came, bringing to Him a paralytic carried by four men. And when they could not get near Him because of the crowd, they removed the roof above Him, and when they had made an opening, they let down the bed on which the paralytic lay. And when Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytic, “Son, your sins are forgiven.” Now some of the scribes were sitting there, questioning in their hearts, “Why does this man speak like that? He is blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone?” And immediately Jesus, perceiving in His spirit that they thus questioned within themselves, said to***

them, “Why do you question these things in your hearts? Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Rise, take up your bed and walk’? But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins”—He said to the paralytic— “I say to you, rise, pick up your bed, and go home.” And he rose and immediately picked up his bed and went out before them all, so that they were all amazed and glorified God, saying, “We never saw anything like this!” -Mark 2: 1-12 (ESV)

- PRAY
- My brother Matt is the more sentimental one of the two of us. He is one that likes to hang on to things
 - He has so many of our child hood toys, his kids use the same toy box that we used as kids
 - He has so much stuff from our childhood

- Helping him move is like having one blast from the past after another
- And some of it is really cool, but some of it is kind of strange at the same time
- Some things you'll find in his garage or among his things will leave you scratching your head...like, "Why did you keep that?"
- And there is one that we like to give him a hard time about the most
 - Whenever he, Miriam, and the kids were moving into their new house in Conover a few years back, we were unpacking the boxes and we came across a walking boot.
 - And when I saw it I was so confused, and I was like "Bro, is this the boot you got from breaking your ankle back in like 2011??"
 - He was like "Yeah?"
 - "Why do you still have this??"
- He said, "Bro, I was stationed in Germany at the time, that thing was like a 200 Euro boot."
- And I said, "But did you have to pay for it??"
 - "Well....no."
- SO WHY DO YOU STILL HAVE IT!? THROW IT AWAY!
- He said, "No way, it's valuable...you never know when you'd need it again"
- I said, "There's no way that any doctor is going to let you put on a 10-12 year old german boot if you ever break your ankle again!"
- But that didn't matter to him, whether or not that thing had any value now, it did at one point, and he was keeping it
- And I couldn't help but keep thinking about that whenever studying this passage this week.
 - Because I can't help but think, "What did the paralytic do with his bed?"

- Jesus told him to rise, pick up his bed, and go home.
 - Did he take the bed home with him? Did he keep it?
 - Years later, whenever he was moving or clearing out the house, did anyone press him to throw away that old raggedy bed?
- Now whatever this bed looked like I'm not exactly sure
 - It could have been something like a rug, it could have been a thin mattress, I could have been something like a stretcher or pallet
 - Whatever it was (if he did keep it), I can imagine a wife, a kid, a grandkid, some punk brother giving him a hard time pressing him to throw it away
 - Telling him, *"That doesn't have any value now, no one will ever use it again! Doesn't it just remind you of that time when you were hurt? All of those dark years you spent just*

laying around not being able to really live your life??"

- No, that reminded him of the day that he met Jesus. The day that changed everything.
 - *Because you know, sometimes the very thing that has caused you the most distress in life, is the very thing that leads you to the feet of Jesus.*
 - *Sometimes your darkest hour, is what leads you to His light*
 - *What hurts the most, just might actually lead to your ultimate healing.*
- Now, we don't like the exact nature of this man's paralysis
 - He could have been that way since birth, he could have been in an accident
 - But we do know that he was surrounded by people that cared about him

- We know that he had at least for incredible friends that were willing to do whatever it took to get him to Jesus
- He may not have even asked them to, he may have been embarrassed
- But they had heard about the power of Jesus, and they could have been kicking themselves for missing Him whenever He was in Capernaum the first time and started doing miracles
- They may have been there at Peter's house late into the night trying to get to Jesus to heal their friend but weren't able to get to the front of the line before the night was over
- But now that they heard that Jesus was back in town...they weren't going to miss their shot again
- So they go and scoop up their paralyzed friend, and get back to the house that Jesus was preaching at
 - *This was most likely back at Peter's family home where He had been in chapter 1*
- And of course they can't move as quickly and as freely as everyone else because they're carrying the dead weight of their paralyzed friend
 - And when they finally get to the house, they can't get anywhere close
 - People have filled the house, crowded around the doorway and all of the windows listening to Jesus
 - It feels like the entire town is out there...and now all of the scribes and religious leaders are pushing their way to front in order to vet this New Guy Who's causing all of this ruckus around town.
- But then one of the friends says that he has an idea and they make their way to the back of the house
 - Because around back there would have been a staircase leading to the roof

- The roofs of these houses would have been completely flat: Used for storage, an outdoor dining room at times, sometimes they would sleep up there on hot summer nights
 - But these roofs were easily accessible
- And they would be built with cross beams going horizontally across and filled in with thick mud and thatch, so they were solid... but if someone really wanted to, they could dig their way through the roof
- So they get up top, and they start digging.
 - And this is what makes me think that these guys were teenagers
 - Because who else, other than teenagers would think that it would be ok to break through someone else's roof??
 - They weren't homeowners themselves, I can guarantee you that!
 - Who else wouldn't think about just how much of an interruption this would be, in the middle of Jesus' teaching?!

- But nevertheless, they break through the roof, and they begin to lower their friend down to Jesus
- And verse 5 says, ***“And when Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytic, “Son, your sins are forgiven.” - Mark 2:5 (ESV)***
 - It doesn't say when Jesus saw the paralytic's faith, he may have been included, but it says when Jesus saw their collective faith.
 - Which leads me to our first point for today, and that is:
- **FAITH TAKES A COMMUNITY**
 - Very rarely does anyone ever get to the feet of Jesus on their own
 - All of us can probably think of the various people and influences in our lives that helped lead us to Jesus
 - Only He can save us, but He allows us to be a part of His work by leading people to Him

- *I know for me, I think of my parents who gave me Godly examples growing up and my Father leading me in a prayer to accept Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior*
- *I think of my best friend from college, Alex Culbert, who came along side of me and helped me grow in my faith*
- *I think of Pastor David Hardwick who I served under at Northside Baptist church in Columbus, GA as an intern who disciplined me for years*
- *I think of Jeff Marburger and Skip Allen from Hope Shelby who took me under their wings and helped me grow and mature and develop me into where I am today*
- I can think of countless friends and influences who help me in my own faith journey and I would be willing to bet if you took the time you would be shocked just how many people would be on your list
- This Christian life was never meant to be lived alone...we were created for community

- I don't care how much if an introvert you think that you are...It is not in our design or created nature to be alone
- I'll prove it to you... Genesis 1:26, in the midst of creation we read: ***"Then God said, 'Let Us make man in Our image, after Our likeness.'" -Genesis 1:26***
 - I'll be the one to ask...WHO IS GOD TALKING TO??
 - Yes, God is talking amongst Himself. Because we believe in One God that exists in 3 Persons. God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit all exist together as One with no beginning and no end
 - Explain that further....we could spend years trying to break down the intricacies of the Trinity but we will still not fully wrap our heads around it on this side of eternity
 - This is an aspect of our faith that takes exactly that...faith

- But the point is this....How important is Community to God?
 - God IS a Community, in and of Himself. And we were made in His Image.
 - Therefore: We were created by community, for community, in order to exist in community —with God and with each other
 - So if we are to be made more like Jesus, we must be in community
- There's a reason why the bible spends so much time teaching us who we are supposed to be for each other!
 - ***“Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.” -Ephesians 4:32 (ESV)***
 - ***“Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God.” -Romans 15:7 (NIV)***
- ***“But God has so composed the body... that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another.” -1 Corinthians 12:24-25 (ESV)***
- ***“Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing.” -1 Thessalonians 5:11 (ESV)***
- ***“As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace” -1 Peter 4:10 (ESV)***
- If you need a good way to remember, who we are supposed to be *to* and *for* each other, just remember, this how we are to love all of the **F.A.C.E.S.** among the Family of God
- We are to be a community that constantly and consistently forgives one another, accepts one another, cares for one another, encourages one another and serves one another.
- All to reflect the image of our God whom we were created in.

- Even further, Jesus says, ***“By this all people will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.” -John 13:35 (ESV)***
- Jesus said that He was going to make sure that the gauge in which people would recognize that we are Followers of Jesus, would be how we love, treat, and care for each other.
- So no doubt, the heart of Jesus is warmed by the faith of these friends who broke through this roof in order to be able to get their friend to Jesus...because it reflects how Jesus broke through Heaven in order to be able to get us to the Father
- It is the primary duty and mission of our lives, to break through whatever we need to break through in order to try and get people to Jesus
 - We need to break through fear, we need to break through selfishness, we need to break through awkwardness, we need to break through insecurity, we need to break through

inconvenience, we need to break through doubt, we need to break through hurt, we need to break through spiritual warfare, ect.

- Whatever obstacles may be standing in the way, we need to be the friends that are willing to break through whatever needs to be broken through so that we can help get the people around us to the feet of Jesus.
- You know, this week I called one of my best pastor friends to ask him about this passage, because I knew this was one of the theme passages for his church plant and I wanted to hear what his big take aways from this passage were
 - And one of the things that he talked to me about was the friends, getting the paralytic to Jesus.
 - And he said that they desire to be a church that is willing to break roofs to get people to Jesus
 - But at one point he referenced The Chosen. He said, “I don’t know how you feel about the

chosen, and I don't think that their depiction of this was completely accurate," but he said, "I sometimes go back and watch this scene. Because at one point you see Jesus, after He heals the man, look up at the friends. And you can see so much love and pride in His eyes."

- He said, "Sometimes, I just pause it right there. And pray that when I get to Heaven that Jesus will look at me like that because of all of the people that I have tried to bring to Him."
- I think that was such a beautiful thought. I bet we cannot even fathom the amount of pride He has for us who bring others to His feet. To do whatever it takes to take people to the only One who can really meet their needs.
 - And we need to trust that He is the Only One that really knows what those needs are:
 - Which is our second point:
- **JESUS KNOWS WHAT WE REALLY NEED**

- We may think we know that we need, but Jesus always sees the bigger picture.
- How many times do we come to Jesus with our list of perceived needs that we have, and we get so frustrated because we feel like He's not answering or meeting our needs?
- But really that's because we're not listening for Him to let us know what our needs actually are
 - You might be crying out to Him saying, "God, I need a Job!"
 - And He might say, "No, you need the faith that I can provide"
 - You could say, "God, I need a spouse!"
 - And He might say, "No, you need to know that I am enough."
 - You could say, "God, I need a physical healing!"
 - And He could say, "No, what you really need is a spiritual cleansing"

- Can you imagine the confusion of these friends, and really all of the people standing around, seeing the great lengths that these people went to in order to get this paralytic lowered down to Jesus?
 - And Jesus looks at them and the paralytic with more love than you and I could ever possibly imagine...and Jesus just says, “Son, your sins are forgiven.”
 - *“Uh Jesus, that’s sweet and all, but thats not the need here! This man needs to walk!”*
- But Jesus is once again driving home the point that the spiritual always outweighs the physical...there is a condition that is so much more crippling than paralysis, and its sin
 - The very thing that caused the separation between God and man in the first place and contaminated all of creation to the point that its effects caused a ripple effect of disease, brokenness, and natural disasters in this world
 - And Jesus is on Earth to show that He has power over all of it
 - He is here to reclaim creation as it’s Creator
 - And by Him making this statement, He is declaring that is exactly who He is
- Because on the surface, it seems so odd that Jesus would tell this man that his sins were forgiven, not just because they were expecting a miracle, but because the only person that can offer the forgiveness is the person that has been wronged
 - If I were to get punched in the face by _____, and Jalisa comes up and says “Ohhh don’t worry about it _____, you’re forgiven!”
 - I’d be like “Hold up! I didn’t say he was forgiven! He hit me! Not you! He aint forgiven until I say that he’s forgiven!”
- If they were at Peter’s house, I guarantee you his wife wasn’t offering any forgiveness at this time!

- She'd be thinking, "Uh, uh! They just put a hole in my roof! They better fix that before we start talking this forgiveness nonsense....ooooo they luck Jesus in my house right now!"
- But that is exactly why the scribes were thinking the way that they were thinking
- Verse 6 goes on to say: ***"Now some of the scribes were sitting there, questioning in their hearts, 'Why does this Man speak like that? He is blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone?'" -Mark 2: 6-7 (ESV)***
 - And they were right to think that way. Because every sin, is a sin against God first and foremost, so He is the only One that can truly forgive sins
 - But they were missing the point of who Jesus was saying He actually was
 - He was claiming His deity in the fact that He had the ability to truly offer spiritual forgiveness
- So, Jesus, as another way to prove that He is truly is God in flesh...he reads their minds before they even say anything.
- In verse 8 it says, ***"And immediately Jesus, perceiving in His spirit that they thus questioned within themselves, said to them, 'Why do you question these things in your hearts? Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Rise, take up your bed and walk?'" Mark 2:8-9 (ESV)***
 - Now that is an interesting question
 - Because think about it, which one is easier to say?
 - On the surface, it definitely feels like it would be easier to say that you're forgiven because you can't tangibly see the forgiveness.
 - On the flip side, if you tell someone to get up and walk, and then they still can't get up and walk...it's gonna be pretty awkward...

- However, whenever Jesus says “to say” it actually has the connotation of an action
 - It literally means, “to command to be”
 - It’s active speech, like when the Lord spoke the world into existence
- So Jesus could have said, “Which is easier to do? Forgive the man’s sins, or heal the man’s legs?”
 - Again, Jesus highlighting the magnitude of the spiritual healing that we need
- Because the reality is, the act that it would take to provide the forgiveness of sins, would indeed be way more difficult than the act of healing physical ailments
 - He could heal with a word and with a touch
 - But he would provide forgiveness through the cross
- And that ultimate forgiveness would not be readily available for mankind until he was mocked, slapped, and spit on.
 - Until that crown of thorns was buried into His brow and He was scourged within an inch of His life
 - Until He would carry that cross up to Calvary and had the nails driven through His hands and His feet
 - And He would hang there for 6 hours until He finally suffocated to death and gave up His Spirit
- So let’s ask the question again, which is easier? To heal someone’s legs? Or being the sacrifice that would provide the opportunity for eternal forgiveness for all of mankind?
- Verse 10 goes on to say, ***“But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins”—He said to the paralytic— “I say to you, rise, pick up your bed, and go home.” And he rose and immediately picked up his bed and went out before them all, so that they were all amazed and glorified God, saying, “We***

never saw anything like this!” -Mark 2:10-12 (ESV)

- Here's the final point for today:
- **JESUS DID WHAT THEY COULD SEE, TO PROVE THAT HE COULD DO WHAT THEY COULDN'T SEE**
 - You see Jesus came to deal with the problem, not just the symptoms
 - Jesus could heal this man's paralysis but that was not his greatest need
 - In the grand scheme of the spiritual, the paralysis is just a symptom of the real problem, and healing those legs is really just like taking some Tylenol for a migraine. It might mask the problem a bit, but the problem is still there
- Sin is the issue and the battle He came to fight and to fix.
 - And whenever He get's you right spiritually, He will bring healing to you circumstantially

- Think about the way that these events take place.
 - He offers the man forgiveness, which I believe is safe to assume that he accepts
 - Then He tells the man to get up, pick up his bed, and go home
- Jesus made him right spiritually, and then told him that the way he lived his life was forever going to be changed
 - But the paralytic still had to do his part
 - Imagine, if his response to Jesus was, “Um, Jesus, I can't”
 - What if he refused to even try to get up and walk, because He didn't believe? Because He didn't take Jesus at His Word?
- Now, that might sound ridiculous but I can't help but think, How often is that us?
- Because whenever we are off spiritually, it will always effect us circumstantially

- When you're relationship with the Lord is off, your marriage will be off
 - When you don't prioritize Him, your priorities get confused
 - When He doesn't come first, life gets more difficult. Things at work get harder, things with your kids get messy, your mood and attitude are constantly affected, and life in general just gets harder and harder and harder
 - Why? Because life is hard. Life is messy. Life is confusing. Life is full of problems and so often all we do is try to mask the symptoms rather than going to the One who can fix the problem.
 - And then when we finally do get to His feet, He always offers forgiveness
 - And we fail to realize just how powerful living in the power of His forgiveness really is
 - And when He tells us, "You're forgiven...now go back home....", our response is normally,
- "No Jesus, my marriage is a mess! I need you to fix it before it goes..."
- But He wants you to see just how different a forgiven-you lives!
 - And how you walking in forgiveness can impact your marriage, or your work, or your relationship with your kids
 - We cannot underestimate how much the forgiveness that we have received from Him can change us
 - When we live in the power of His forgiveness, we stop living so fearful and defensive. We become less selfish and self-centered.
 - We care more about the things worth caring about
 - We become so much less concerned with what we can see because we know that He is taking care of everything that we can't see
 - And everything about you changes...to the point that His forgiveness is as evident in your life as a paralytic being able to walk!

- You know, I've been asked before if there was one year of my life that I could relive, which would it be?
 - And for me it would be my sophomore year of high school
 - I look back on that year with so much regret
 - I spent that year back in the Christian school in PA that I had spend so many of my elementary school years at
 - And because I had spent a few years out in a secular environment and learned how to have "fun" and had gotten a lot better at sports...I thought I was so much cooler and better than everyone
 - I was a jerk. After the Lord really got a hold of me after I graduated high school I sent many apology messages for how I was that year
 - But a few years into college and really walking with the Lord, my brother Dewey and I went back up to PA for a friend's wedding
 - And we saw a lot of people from that school year at this wedding
- And we had a good time, and at one point at the reception, I could notice out of the corner of my eye one of the guys from that school keep eye balling me with a look of confusion
 - But i didn't pay him any mind, I just kept catching up with people and enjoying the wedding
 - But at one point he finally spoke up and said, "Ok, what happened to you? You're completely different, what changed??"
- And I couldn't help but smile from ear to ear, and let Him know what the forgiveness of Jesus had done in my life.
- Jesus did something in my life that could be seen, to be a testimony of His power to do what could not be seen
 - His forgiveness did not just save me, it changed me...It healed the way I carried myself and treated other human beings

- Yes, everything about me changed...but the forgiveness came first. And I had to accept it, even before I could see what He would do.
- We cannot wait to see something from Him, before we believe Him...Because that's not faith
- If you remember Jesus' interaction with Thomas after the Resurrection. Jesus tells him, ***"Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."*** -John 20:29 (ESV)
- It is wild to me that Jesus says that there is an even greater blessing reserved for us that did not get to see Jesus physically walk the earth and all of His miracles that He performed, and yet still believe Him and take Him at His word
- And that is the type of faith that changes lives, speaks a testimony, and preaches a message
- Faith is living your life in such a way that you believe God is working, whether you can see it or not.
- And whether or not you see it, if you live with belief...other's will see it in you.