

*Introduction:* Thank you for bringing items for the Hope Chest here at MHS on this Super Sunday...

In case you haven't heard, the great Tom Brady, is going for his 7<sup>th</sup> Super Bowl tonight. The GOAT vs. the baby GOAT, Patrick Mahomes. Bucs vs. Chiefs.

For football players, getting to and winning the Super Bowl is the pinnacle of their careers. Every player plays to get to the Super Bowl. All the work, all the sacrifice. Did someone say "Avacado Ice Cream"?

We all spend so much of our lives trying to get places. Degrees. Dream jobs. Wedding Dates. Financial Freedom. Retirement.

Where are you trying to get? Some you will reach; some may remain out of reach. Ambition can be a great thing. All the hard work and sacrifice and prayer, can be a great thing. God shapes us through it all, but listen to me this morning:

Wherever you are trying to get... the greatest advice, the greatest appeal I could ever give you is this: GET TO JESUS

**"Get to Jesus..."**

**Mark 2:1-12**

Mark 2 tells us about 4 friends determined to get their 1 friend to Jesus.

**Mark 2:1-12 (text displayed)**

### Story

Mark 2:1-3:6 is a single section made up five controversies between Jesus and the Jewish religious in Galilee. (Akin)

- Verse 1 reminds us Jesus had been out on a preaching tour throughout the villages of Galilee. As Pastor Jon taught us last week, this is why he came: to announce the astonishingly GOOD NEWS of THE KINGDOM OF GOD.
- When he got back home, word spread rapidly throughout Capernaum. People flocked to Jesus and verse two tells us he continued "preaching the word to them."
  - I love this. Where is Jesus? At home. What is Jesus doing? Preaching.
  - We often falsely assume preaching only happens on Sundays, but Jesus shows us right here, it doesn't matter if he's in the synagogue, traveling itinerantly, or at home, people's need for God's truth never changes, and *God's word is always open for business!*
  - The ministry of the Word happens over lunch and text messages, beside the water cooler and the bedside of children. Why? Because God's Word is ALWAYS - say it with me - OPEN FOR BUSINESS!
- And what was he preaching? The word (the logos, the message): the Scriptures of the OT, and the call to repent and believe in the good news that the kingdom was arriving with his arrival.

T: As he's doing his thing, handling his business... the crowds pressed into hear him. And while that was going on, verses 3-4 tell us four friends show up with their paralyzed friend but can't get in!

Picture this scene!

- The house is so packed, people are overflowing out the front door. Meanwhile, another group of people arrive saying: "Let us in! We need to see Jesus! We've heard about his POWER and AUTHORITY to heal!"

- But the people don't let them through. Did you know people are sometimes the greatest barrier to other people getting to Jesus? (Don't those people! Be mat carriers, door blockers!).
- What are they going to do?
  - Go home?
  - Hope for a smaller crowd tomorrow?
  - Scream for Jesus to come out and meet them?
  - What would you do?
- Verse 4 tells us of their amazing resolve. They took advantage of 1<sup>st</sup> century architecture.
  - Galilean homes were small, one-room structures with flat roofs made out of tree limbs for a base, then packed with mud and clay and grass. The roof would have been easily accessed either by a ladder or stairs that led to the top where people often entertained friends and shared meals. They were not difficult to dig through, and that is exactly what they did.
  - If you don't open the door, we're coming through the roof!
- Can you imagine right now, as you're listening to this sermon, you started to feel debris hit the top of your head? What is that? Did someone throw something at me? MHS so packed... that people had to get a key to the lighting booth to lower someone down. How epic?!

After they opened a large enough hole, they lowered the paralyzed man down on his bed.

- Now, some of us, wouldn't be too happy about people destroying our property. Some of us would have caught them sneaking up the roof with your Ring camera, called the MPD, and charged them with vandalism, but not Jesus.
- Something tells me his heart lit up!! I can see him smiling from ear to ear.
- I can see him now!! FULL OF JOY!! Laughing... "I'm soooo glad you've come... through the roof!"

The selflessness and compassion of Christ is on full display. Rather than chastising them for their impatience... he honors them with one simple statement. Look at verse 5.

*5 And when Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, "Son, your sins are forgiven."*

- Jesus honors their faith, probably referring to all five men, but at the very least the four who brought their paralyzed friend to Jesus. Frequently, throughout the gospels, Jesus responds to the faith of people on behalf of someone else (Mk 5:21-43, 7:24-30; Luke 7:1-10).
- We don't know if the man was born a paralytic, contracted a disease, or had an accident that disabled him, but what we do know is that these friends believed Jesus had the power to heal him!

And Jesus, against all expectation, says to him, "Son, your sins are forgiven."

- Think about it! EVERYONE is assuming... you're assuming, I'm assuming, the people in the house are assuming, the people on top of the house are assuming, and certainly the man on the bed is HOPING, Jesus will say, what? "You are HEALED of your paralysis. Let's dance!"
- After all, the man wants to walk again!!
- But Jesus addresses him as "son" (Gk *teknon*, "child"), revealing His tenderness and compassion toward the young man. (Akin) And out of his affectionate care, he doesn't meet his apparent need, he meets his greatest need!
- God knows our deepest need. No doubt, Jesus cares about our physical health, but he knows our greatest need is a restored relationship with God. "Son, your sins are forgiven."

And with these words, Jesus set off a bomb in the room, especially for the theologians in attendance.

*Verses 6-7 – 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?"*

- This marks Jesus' first direct confrontation with the scribes. They knew the law inside and out. They knew ONLY GOD can forgive sin, so they think to themselves: "Who is this guy spewing blasphemous claims!"
- Blasphemy involves profaning the honor of God through speech or action, an offense so great it could lead to death by stoning.
- Jesus was certainly claiming an ability for himself that only belonged to God.
- Twelve chapters later, we'll see the religious leaders using the charge of blasphemy to nail Jesus to a Roman cross. (cf. Mark 14:63-64)

T: It is amazing how Jesus responds.

Perhaps through a Spirit-empowered word of knowledge or simply leaning on his divine nature, Jesus knew their thoughts and put a question to their questioning hearts (I love this!) Verse 8...

- Why do you question these things in your hearts? Which is easier: to say "you're forgiven." or "Rise, take your bed and walk."
  - This is so smooth... Jesus puts it like this. I can do both, but I'll start with what seems easier to you.
  - Why is it easier to say: "Your sins are forgiven." Because anyone can say that and it can't be proven. But if I tell you to get up and you stay down, I'll look like an impotent fool.
- And then he says, "but that you may know [don't miss it... he wants them to know too!!] that the Son of Man has authority to forgive sins..." And he looks at the paralyzed man and says: "Rise, pick up your bed and go home."

Danny Akin summarizes it: "As a proof of His power to forgive sins, something we cannot see, Jesus healed the paralytic, something everyone could see." - Akin

And the paralyzed man gets up, packs up his bed, and marches out of the room forever changed! No wonder the place erupted in praise and wonder! "We've never seen anything like this!"

T: What does this story teach us? Get to Jesus! Get to him!! Whatever it takes, whatever it costs, no matter where you are in your spiritual journey: Get to Jesus.

WHY?

**THE POINT: Only Jesus has the authority to heal & help you walk again.**

*Get to Jesus...*

**1. . . . for the forgiveness of your sins (2:1-5).**

If you thought Jesus was flexing divinity in chapter 1 with his authority over spiritual powers of darkness and physical suffering, he goes next level right here.

"I possess God's authority to forgive your sins."

Don't miss the irony of verse 7. The scribes question "Why does this *man* speak like this?" He's more than man. He's the Son of Man..., the Son of God.

This is either blasphemy or a direct assertion of divinity!

- No human being can extend complete forgiveness. Why? Because we are guilty too! We need forgiveness. We've wronged one another and God. But not Jesus.

- Forgiveness of sins is the exclusive right of God. Why? All our sin, even against one another, is ultimately against God!
  - Think about King David. After committing adultery with Bathsheba, then killing her innocent husband Uriah, he says in Psalm 51:4 - "Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight."

You need to be forgiven of your idolatry (putting anything above God), because God made you to worship.  
 You need to be forgiven of your jealousy, because God made you to be content.  
 You need to be forgiven of your lust, because God made us for honor and faithfulness.

We need to be forgiven because *one sin* is an infinite offense against an infinitely HOLY God.

God's standard is holiness. God's standard is purity. The wedding dress has been covered in mud.

But here's the good news of the gospel.

- The new covenant promised in Jeremiah 31:34 arrived in the person of Jesus Christ: "I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sins no more"
- Jesus came to remedy our sin problem! Romans 5:8. John 1:29 - "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world."
- And here's a stunning promise: **"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."** (1 John 1:9)

APP: What about you? Have you confessed your sins before God? Do you have peace with God because you've been forgiven by God?

T: Get to Jesus!... only Jesus can forgive you of your sins! #2

## 2. . . . for a front row seat of his kingdom work (2:6-12)

Remember, everything Jesus says and does provides a preview of God's Kingdom. Jesus not only forgives our sin, he restores our brokenness.

- When sin entered our world, all creation was tainted and broken by that fall from grace.
- Romans 8:22: "the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now."
- Tsunamis, viruses, corrupt governments, war, all that ails our bodies (all sickness, every joint pain) exists because our world is fallen.
- "Creation has been groaning in the pains of childbirth." And let me tell you something, I've had a front row seat for the pains of childbirth and it will bring you to your knees.

But I've also had a front row seat for the work of God's kingdom, bringing both spiritual and physical healing!

- Interestingly, there seems to be connection between this man's sin and his illness. Illness is not always a result of sin (as we see in John 9:2-3 with the man born blind, also (Job 1:8; Luke 13:1-5), but it can be a result of our sin (cf. (Deut 28:27; Ps 107:17-18; John 5:14; Acts 5:1-11; 1 Cor 11:30)
- Jesus reveals God's coming kingdom when he grants forgiveness and causes life to flow into the paralyzed man's limbs!

Isaiah 35:6 is being fulfilled before their eyes: "Then the lame will leap like a deer." (Total & joyful transformation!)

This occurs because Jesus is the "Son of Man." This title, "Son of Man," was Jesus' favorite self-designation, found 81 times in the Gospels (14 in Mark). It reveals his mission as the suffering servant and the one who will reign in global glory.

As Daniel 7 predicted, it refers a divine Messiah who would establish God's kingdom.

**"I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed." (Daniel 7:13-14)**

Jesus says before the small crowd in his Capernaum home: "I am the Son of Man. I am bringing God's kingdom!"

Where do you need God's touch? Mental illness? So many gripped by anxiety and depression. Physical pain? God sees you. He cares. In Christ, your healing is on the way. Now, soon, or one day.

T: Let's live so close to Jesus, that we can't help but have a front row seat to see his greatness! And finally...

### **3. . . . and bring others with you in bold faith. (2:1-12)**

How can we not be inspired by the faith-filled resolve and tenacity of these four friends? If you don't let us in the front door, we are coming through the roof!

Undeterred. Determined! Tenacious. Audacious.

How far will you go to get your friends to Jesus? How bold will you be? Jesus alone heals. Jesus alone gives life!

**"Since we have such a hope, we are very bold." (2 Corinthians 3:12)**

If you really believed Jesus would heal your friends, would you get them to him? I want to call out faith today. Whatever it takes, get them there. That's faith.

- Faith sees the unseen. Hebrews 11:1
- Jesus sees faith, and it lights up his heart! "And without faith it is impossible to please God." (Hebrews 11:6) What's the implication: faith pleases him! It causes his heart to rejoice.

Let's live in the multiplication middle. Let's receive to give. Let's do whatever it takes to get our friends to the Son of Man, the Son of God, Jesus Christ.

And it's even better when you have a few other friends who are staying, "let's go!" Surround yourself with people who believe God still moves mountains, who are saying, "Whatever it takes, whatever the cost, we're getting to Jesus!"

#### Conclusion/Response

Jesus said in Matthew 11:28, "Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest."

Come to him today. Get to Jesus.

Do you need forgiveness of your sins today? Maybe for the first time you would acknowledge and confess, God is too pure to allow me into his presence. I've offended him and I need his forgiveness. Tell him that now. Confess. He is faithful and just to forgive you and cleanse you!

Go to Jesus. Get to Jesus. Do you need God's healing touch? Anxiety? Physical sickness? Pain? I want to pray over you.

Come to Jesus. Get to Jesus. Let's pray.

PRAYER.

LORD'S SUPPER