

Sermon Text from 6/13/2010

Faith Beyond Religion - Mark 2:1 When Jesus returned to Capernaum several days later, the news spread quickly that he was back home. 2 Soon the house where he was staying was so packed with visitors that there was no more room, even outside the door. While he was preaching God's word to them, 3 four men arrived carrying a paralyzed man on a mat. 4 They couldn't bring him to Jesus because of the crowd, so they dug a hole through the roof above his head. Then they lowered the man on his mat, right down in front of Jesus. 5 Seeing their faith, Jesus said to the paralyzed man, "My child, your sins are forgiven."

6 But some of the teachers of religious law who were sitting there thought to themselves, 7 "What is he saying? This is blasphemy! Only God can forgive sins!" 8 Jesus knew immediately what they were thinking, so he asked them, "Why do you question this in your hearts? 9 Is it easier to say to the paralyzed man 'Your sins are forgiven,' or 'Stand up, pick up your mat, and walk'? 10 So I will prove to you that the Son of Man has the authority on earth to forgive sins." Then Jesus turned to the paralyzed man and said, 11 "Stand up, pick up your mat, and go home!" 12 And the man jumped up, grabbed his mat, and walked out through the stunned onlookers. They were all amazed and praised God, exclaiming, "We've never seen anything like this before!"

13 Then Jesus went out to the lakeshore again and taught the crowds that were coming to him. 14 As he walked along, he saw Levi son of Alphaeus sitting at his tax collector's booth. "Follow me and be my disciple," Jesus said to him. So Levi got up and followed him. 15 Later, Levi invited Jesus and his disciples to his home as dinner guests, along with many tax collectors and other disreputable sinners. (There were many people of this kind among Jesus' followers.) 16 But when the teachers of religious law who were Pharisees saw him eating with tax collectors and other sinners, they asked his disciples, "Why does he eat with such scum?"

17 When Jesus heard this, he told them, "Healthy people don't need a doctor—sick people do. I have come to call not those who think they are righteous, but those who know they are sinners."
Mark 2:1-17 (NLT)

Observation (what does the text say?) **Interpretation** (what does it mean?) **Application** (what does it mean to me/us?)

Discussion/Topic Starters (Ice Breakers)

- If you were in trouble in the middle of the night and needed to call on some friends, who would you call?
 - If you knew someone could help a hurting friend, how far would you go to get your friend to this person?
 - How has forgiving someone or being forgiven changed you?
 - What was the best party you went to this past year? (if focus is v.13-17)
- O: What things in the text strike you or jump out at you? Why?

VI-5 (Jesus heals a paralytic man)

- O: How does Jesus respond to the four people "interrupting His preaching" and "vandalizing" this home?
- I: What do you think was going on in the minds of the characters in the story (house owner, crowd, man on stretcher, friends of man on stretcher, teachers of the law, Jesus' disciples who chose to follow Jesus earlier in Mark ch 1, Jesus)?
- I: Why do you think the faith of the paralytic and his friends made such a difference to Jesus?

V6-12

- O: How did each of these people play a part in healing: The friends, the paralytic, & Jesus?
- I: Why are the teachers of the law so upset? In the Jewish mind, how are sin and the authority of God linked (see John 9:1-3)?
- I: In what way does physically healing the man answer the questions in the minds of the teachers of the law?
- A: In your spiritual journey, who cared enough to get you to Jesus? Who/How do you care about in the same way today?
- A: The paralytic's friends provide a model of caring. What are some practical ways we can follow their example?

VI3-17 (The calling of Levi)

- O: Contrast the Pharisees' attitude toward tax collectors and "sinners" with Jesus' attitude.
- O: What did Levi stand to lose by leaving his work and following Jesus (v.14)?
- O: Jesus compares himself to a doctor (v.17), How has he acted as a doctor through out these passages?
- I: Why do you think Jesus selected the "cheat" (tax collector) as one of His disciples? Why do you think Levi threw a party for his old friends? Do you think Jesus should have gone to that party? Do you think Jesus enjoyed Himself or simply made a token appearance?
- I: Why do you think people of "ill" reputation were so attracted to Jesus (v.15)?
- I: How is sin like illness, especially leprosy (Mark 1:40-45) and paralysis (2:1-12)?
- A: In what ways is this story relevant to you, the group, and our church; how can we model/follow Jesus via this scripture in today's culture?

Recommended Follow-up:

- **Pray:** Pray that God would give you and our church the eyes to see others as He does, and to act towards them as He does.
- **Respond:** Pray and process this week what steps you can take to reach out to today's "unlovely" or "unreachable" for the sake of the kingdom of God.
- **Read:** Next week's sermon (6/20/2010) will focus on Mark 2:23-28. Take time prior to next Sunday to read & study the passage, pray through the passage, meditate on the passage, etc.

* As discussed in Riverside's HGLT (Home Group Leader Training), these guides are to be starting points for home group leaders to develop their own guides and approaches to leading group discussions. This is a resource tool, not a rigid "go through this guide word-for-word." There are intentionally too many questions for a single home group time. These guides rely heavily on a few different study guides; including "LifeChange Series" (ISBN 0891099107), N.T. Wright's guide (ISBN 9780830821822), James Hoover's guide (ISBN 9780830830046), and the Serendipity NT for Groups by the Young Life ministry (ISBN is N/A).