

Mark 2:1-12

Get Him To Jesus!

Good morning, Church...

We will be in Mark 2 this morning in your Bibles.

I was reading a story this week about a man named Dick Hoyt who died in 2021.

His name became pretty well-known. I saw him for the first time in one of the Boston Marathons.

It was not his own achievements that made him famous, but what he did for his son.

His son was born with cerebral palsy.

The doctors said that his son would never walk, never speak, and would likely live a very limited life.

This crushed Mr. Hoyt and his wife, but you fathers know that we would do almost anything for our kids.

Mr. Hoyt refused to accept this as the final word.

One day, his son, Rick, was able to communicate to his father that he wanted to participate in a race.

So, his dad pushed him in a wheelchair, and that was only the beginning for the two.

Over the years, father and son would run marathons, with Mr. Hoyt pushing his son in a special wheelchair.

Picture #1

Now the remarkable thing is they completed triathlons, swimming while pulling Rick in a boat, biking with him in a special seat, and running with him across the finish line.¹

Race after race, mile after mile, father carried son to places he could never go on his own.

When asked why he did it, Mr. Hoyt said that when they were racing, it felt like Rick wasn't disabled at all – he was free.

¹https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Team_Hoyt

His son, Rick, told his father, “Dad, when I’m running, it feels like I’m not handicapped.”²

Now, as we come into Chapter Two of Mark’s Gospel, we will meet a man who also could not get to where he needed to go on his own.

He was paralyzed – completely dependent on others.

But he had something powerful: friends who refused to let obstacles stand in their way.

A crowded house... with no way in... all the doors impassable...

But they refused to go home, they would not turn around, or hope for another opportunity.

They went up, tore open the roof, and lowered their friend to Jesus.

Because real faith does not just believe, it carries, it climbs, and it refuses to quit until it gets people to Jesus.

² <https://teamhoyt.com/>

Let's Pray... and we will get into the teaching.

It is good for us to remember a few things as we come into chapter 2.

Mark does not write his Gospel with as much detail as Matthew or Luke.

He is an action man, maybe a little ADHD, not so much focused on Jesus's homilies, but on the reactions and responses to Jesus's ministry and teaching.

In Chapter 1, Jesus was baptized by John in the Jordan and immediately after that went into a spiritual battle with Satan, right before His ministry began.

Then Jesus began in Capernaum by preaching repentance, and then moved into the regions of Galilee, healing and demonstrating power over the demons and spiritual strongholds.

Galilee was privileged to see many exciting and powerful events...

So Jesus is on His circuit through the region, and we read now in verse 1 of Mark Chapter 2...

Jesus Forgives and Heals a Paralytic

(Matt 9:2-8; Luke 5:17-26)

2:1 And again He entered Capernaum after *some* days, and it was heard that He was in the house. **2** Immediately many gathered together, so that there was no longer room to receive *them*, not even near the door. And He preached the word to them.

There in Capernaum, Jesus established His headquarters for ministry.

And He has now done His circuit of ministry and is here back at base, and we read here that they, the people of Capernaum, heard Jesus was in the house.

As we talked about last time, this was most likely Peter's house, which is not far from the local synagogue.

Jesus has gained immense notoriety for what He is saying and doing.

People were crowding into this very small fishing village from the other cities where Jesus ministered.

The houses were not that big, and this one is bulging at the seams.

They were squeezing in like sardines.

Luke tells us... **Luke 5:17** Now it happened on a certain day, as He was teaching, that there were Pharisees and teachers of the law sitting by, who had come out of every town of Galilee, Judea, and Jerusalem. And the power of the Lord was present to heal them.

Luke gives details about who was gathered in the home that day, as Mark mentions here, “many gathered.”

The word was spreading far and wide of this new Rabbi, bringing Pharisees and Teachers of the Law from all over the place.

In this setting are believers and unbelievers, who wanted to hear Jesus and engage in His teaching and healing ministry.

Last week, in verse 28, after all that Jesus did in the synagogue and at Peter's home, Mark noted that Jesus's fame spread throughout the region.

And now, wherever Jesus went, the crowds followed.

This tight space, crammed with those wanting to hear Him, and we can only imagine the discomfort of 40 people smashed into a home the size of our living rooms.

Hundreds more people are outside.

There was no air-conditioning, and the discomfort of strangers, seekers, and skeptics would be immense.

Everyone was there wanting something different from Jesus...

Maybe you are wondering what Jesus was preaching to garner such a crowd.

Maybe He was looking at the current geopolitical developments and beating the end-times drum.

Or giving a speech on how to find your best life now.

Maybe an exciting topic: how capitalism and Christianity pave the way for a more profitable lifestyle.

It could also be a culturally relevant message.

Well, actually, none of these. He preached the Word to them.

The word “preach” here is not among the two most common Greek words, meaning "to proclaim" or "to bring good tidings."

Here, it means to speak, to have a conversation, or a conversational tone in His teaching.

I used to love this about teaching the youth, taking this approach of keeping a dialogue going with the kids, not so much a lecture, but a conversation.

Jesus here in this home is giving a simple, down-to-earth, easy-to-understand, conversational teaching.

These types of teachings are wonderful for a small group setting or home fellowship.

So, as Jesus is teaching here, we now read in verses 3 and 4...

3 Then they came to Him, bringing a paralytic who was carried by four *men*. **4** And when they could not come near Him because of the crowd, they uncovered the roof where He was. So when they had broken through, they let down the bed on which the paralytic was lying.

There is so much potential when we open our homes up to Jesus to be used for ministry.

Tonight, we do have home fellowships, and I really want to encourage you all to attend.

Especially if you are new to the fellowship and want to connect with others.

But Jesus really does amazing work in the home fellowship setting.

Here, people are packed into Peter's living room, the Pharisees are present, and I imagine they are there with ulterior motives, to find fault with Jesus and His ministry, so that they can bring word back to the leaders.

“Who is this new Rabbi, speaking and teaching with such authority?”

Crowds just gathering to hear Him, pushing in to get closer, peaking in the windows...

Jesus taught in a way that engaged their imaginations and connected their hearts.

He is speaking like no one else in His day, revealing truths from God's Word about the Kingdom of God in ways the other teachers of His time could not.

Others spoke from speculation, whereas Jesus spoke from certainty.

Now, as this is all taking place inside the home, Mark turns our attention to the drama outside.

On the outskirts of the crowd, another story is developing.

We are told four men were carrying a friend who was paralyzed for unknown reasons.

Some think syphilis, which at that time, with no penicillin, the infection would spread into the brain, causing this terrible condition of helplessness.

And these friends are remarkable in my estimation.

They have this urgency to get their suffering friend to Jesus.

They knew if they could get him before Jesus, that Jesus would heal him... they have no doubt, but full belief in who is in that house.

There is no hint of frustration or a sense that they saw the task as too great, that they wanted to give up, or not see it through.

So, these industrious men make a plan as they see the crowd, and they move to put this plan in motion, to get their friend before Jesus.

They would have been pushing through the crowd to reach the roof, where they decided to make their way to Jesus.

It would be a fight to get through the selfish crowd. When human beings are drawn to something like this, they don't think much of others; they care only about what they might see and hear, and maybe even touch or get.

Remember those old videos of the Black Friday frenzies when they opened the doors in the wee hours, to let people in for the sales...

That is humanity putting on display what is in all of us, this raging desire to get what is ours in life, at all costs, even if people are trampled, I will get that 55-inch TV!

So, these men, carrying a cot through a crowd of selfish onlookers, would be a great task...

But their urgency to see their friend touched by Jesus kept them working through it... I love the tenacity... this is a rare thing in Christian ministry anymore...

This ability to push through hard things, and not give up when obstacles are in our way...

I believe these four men have really inspiring characteristics worth mentioning.

Think about the love and concern that is driving them here to get their friend to the help he needed.

In Israel, the roofs are still flat; in the first century, they were formed by heavy support beams running across and rafters in between.

They would have a matting made of branches and twigs, all of which was covered by hardened clay or mud.

Their love and concern moved them to work through something hard, to get him before Jesus.

So, their love is commendable, but so is their faith...

They believed Jesus could meet their friend's needs.

Their faith led them to the conviction that knowing Jesus was the answer to this man's problem.

So often, when we pray for people, we want to address the symptoms of sin only...

We pray for deliverance from an addiction, and we pray that people would stop making the same mistakes over and over again in their lives.

We pray for God to do all kinds of things to help with the symptoms, when we should really be praying for them to encounter Jesus.

These men had faith that Jesus was enough, and when Jesus touched this paralytic's life, everything else would come together.

So, we see their Love, Faith, Resolve...

They did not let natural or even satanic barriers prevent them from bringing him to Jesus...

They tore through that mud roof, worked through the discouragement of the selfish crowd, and they would not stop.

Maybe you are discouraged this morning.

This serving others is taking a toll on your mental health, and discouragement has gotten to you, and you are believing the lie that you need to slow down, to do some self-care for a time.

The example in God's Word this morning is to press on, keep going, for the sake of the souls that need Jesus.

My wife is interesting; she will go through these bouts with discouragement...

She has five of our six kids in soccer, doctor appointments down the hill, volunteering at school, and then meetings with people for ministry throughout the week.

And last Saturday night, she kind of breaks down, "I can't do it, I need to step back, turn off my phone

(which has 20-30 messages at any given time), and I need to focus on that pile of laundry, the house... I am not doing it anymore. The church is your thing, the house and the kids will be mine.”

I encourage her, “No problem, babe, you can take some time, you need it... deserve it...”

Well, that Saturday morning, the Lord had already been speaking to me about my wife.

I got in my truck to head to the office here Saturday morning, and there is dog hair all over my truck. I am allergic and mad.

She already makes my truck smell like a woman when she drives it, and now there's dog hair everywhere.

I called her, really upset, and let her know the boundaries of a man's truck that a woman just can't go passed!

She told me, “There was this dog in the middle of the road, and everyone was just driving past it, and I knew it was going to get hit, nobody else was trying

to get it, so Sofia and Ella rescued the dog, and spent some time looking for the owner's home, which was across town... I am sorry.”

I said, “My truck... no dogs!”

And I am at Mister Carwash vacuuming my truck out, something she should have done!

And I am grumbling and complaining in my spirit, “This woman you gave me, Lord!”

Goodness, the Lord chapped me, and the way into the Church, He began to speak to me, “That is the woman I gave you, I made her that way, she will never be able to see a need around her, without having a passion to help...”

And I got about 20 years' worth of pictures reminding me of all the times that woman was running toward the problem to help, instead of looking the other way... She can't look the other way; she can't be stopped.

So, I was super humbled by the Lord in my complaining...

On Sunday morning, right after the night of tears, when she was about to give up, I was praying with John Toomey in my office, and she was blowing up my phone...

I am making plans with so-and-so; we really need to visit with them. Also, this person wants to meet, so I am scheduling them for Monday night...

I just laughed with John, because she literally told me, "I am done just the night before..."

She won't ever be done... It is the way God made her...

I wish they would leave my truck out of it all...

So, these men, Love, Faith, Resolve... nothing was going to stop them...

The fourth thing I see in these guys is their creativity in their approach to ministry.

They were those who thought outside the box, looking for ways to connect their friend with Jesus.

The usual way was not possible, so they looked for a more creative way to do it.

I thank God for the creative people in this ministry... because I do not have an ounce of creativity...

I see everything in black and white, in simplicity... but I know we need you creative types... You are very important to the work.

Love, Faith, Resolve, Creativity, and lastly, they were Active... They put feet to their faith.

They put their faith to work...

Some might really like to bloviate and pontificate about spiritual things... and they talk, talk, and talk, but faith is lived out...

They got busy getting this man to Jesus.

No doubt there were those mocking them, condemning them, looking down upon them for their zeal.

They looked at all this with annoyance: “These men were a little pushy; it is just too much!”

They were willing to lose any reputation they might have, to be ridiculed even, and ultimately judged by others just so their friend could come to the Lord.

We are living in a day where many are desensitized to the great need and suffering all around us...

They would close up their eyes, thinking others would handle it... Others will do it...

There should be an urgency to get people to Jesus today...

Listen to me very carefully: you have to get this into your mindset; there is no one else...

You are the one... others will not step into the need God presents before you... Others are not called to give their time and resources to the work...

You, Christian, are called to serve, and to give...

Just think about this: if everyone gave and served as much as you do, could the Church stay open? Could we stay active in our mission of sharing the Gospel with this community and with the world?

Think about how much you have put into the Kingdom Work... or is your mindset that others are here to pay into it all with sweat and resources?

When you see a light bulb burnt out in your church, is the first thing that comes to your mind, "They need to fix that?" Or "How can we fix this in our Church?"

When you see a need in the ministry, is your first thought, "Man, they really need to do something about that?" Or "I wonder how we can get that done."

Church, you are the "they"-if you don't serve or give, no one else will.

What we see in these four men is a wonderful template, their Love, their Faith, their Resolve,

Creativity, and their Activity, all showed their desire to get him to Jesus...

When you see the lost, is this your desire?

There is a cost to our faith, but the sacrifice is worth it...

Consider this paralyzed man... His condition left him in a place where he could do nothing for himself...

He was living, but he had no life...

He is a picture of a person in their sin... And many believe it was his sin that put him in this condition, paralyzed from bad choices... Sin destroys our lives...

We just had a friend die of sclerosis of the liver, knowing there on his own deathbed that it was his alcoholism that killed him...

Sin will have devastating effects... We will be physically alive, breathing, but spiritually dead...

No matter how hard a person tries to make themselves look spiritual, they cannot do it on their own.

Sin is the paralyzing force in their life, part of the nature we were born with.

And if a person chooses to continue in their sin... the results are clear, it will keep you from true life.

When a person chooses to pursue someone outside of their marriage, or to compromise their relationship before marriage, sin will affect their lives...

When a person chooses to remain in addiction, in the party life, looking to fulfill the lust of the flesh...

There will be huge consequences...

Any sin is paralyzing to our lives. Don't believe the lie that it is not impacting your life...

Recognize that it is sin, and destroying you.

Sin brings death... it paralyzes a person's life....

And on the other hand, if you have a loved one trapped in sin, co-workers who will die in their sin, friends and family... We should be willing to be ridiculed and to work through hard things to reach them for Christ.

These men model this commitment and love, with the best interest at heart... nothing else in this world could help, no therapy, no antidote given by men, only Jesus will do...

And when you believe this, you will be moved past just words, and you will continue to work through the obstacles before you to get them into the presence of Jesus.

Do what it takes to get the lost around you to Jesus...

All the other cars are driving by, you're the one to open your door, and get that dog hair all over the truck.

Reach them, and bring them to Christ...

They are the outcasts, and no one else has a heart to reach them...

You are the “They” called to reach “them” and bring “them” to Jesus...

We are the ones here on earth now to make contact with people bound in their sins... we are the ones to make a way to Jesus...

May God stir us up with the same Love, Faith, Resolve, Creativity, and Action that these four men exemplify here in the text.

Now, Jesus' response is interesting, as they lowered this man down through the roof... probably not what they expected...

Look at verse 5...

5 When Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytic, "Son, your sins are forgiven you."

Jesus recognized their faith... we see this throughout Jesus's ministry, as He responds to great faith.

Not only was there faith in the four men, but it also seems like there was in the paralyzed man as well.

Jesus looks at him and declares this man's sin to be forgiven.

Of course, this was his greatest need... sure, being able to walk would greatly enhance his life, but what good is it to walk and lose your soul for eternity?

Jesus speaks those Words, the most healing words a person can hear in this life...

Your sins are forgiven you!

A Holy God, speaking to a filthy fallen man, says your sin is forgiven...

Cleansed from all unrighteousness.

Psalm 103:12 As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions.

Jesus alone has the power to speak the Word, and sin is cleansed, and the heart renewed.

This is the greatest gift God can give humanity... oh, the weight of sin brings us down... destroys everything... hurts those we love the most...

Ephesians 2:8-9 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works lest anyone should boast.

Jesus saw past this man's physical need, knowing salvation was his greatest need.

You know, for those we are trying to reach for Jesus, hearing about this Grace and Forgiveness might be the message they need...

And maybe it is not a message they need to be told about, but shown...

It could be their sin has impacted your life somehow, and you are harboring unforgiveness...

You have a bitterness, maybe even a hatred for them...

I am not sure if you realize this... Jesus spoke about the forgiveness we all seek... and He said this...

Matt 6:14-15 "For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. **15** But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

Maybe that person needs to be shown Grace to understand it...

Early on in our marriage, Jess had already found the Lord, and I was still outside the faith...

I was lying to her about many things, my addictions, the people I was hanging around... and I had this darkness... two lives being lived...

Now, I don't know why... But the Lord must have been after me... because ultimately, this was the start of my road to Jesus...

I came home from work, and out of nowhere, a heaviness came over me, conviction, guilt. I had a good woman in that apartment...

And as I was walking toward the door, I was talking to my best friend on my Nextel phone, and that would actually be the last time we talked in years...

I said, "I don't know why, but I have to confess everything to her, I can't get away from this feeling, I owe it to her..." He said, "Well, good luck with that..." He knew what a dirtbag I was. We had been friends since first grade...

I came into the apartment, she had dinner ready, and a smile on her face...

I sat her down, and began to tell her of the man I really was, that I had been lying to her since we got married only a few months before this...

Her smile went away, and that outlaw I knew before Jesus came out, she picked up a wooden napkin holder, and through it, it went through the wall, and not my head...

She said, "You are the only person I have ever trusted, and you broke my heart."

I sat down, thinking I destroyed my second marriage, and I was only 24... man, I really was a loser...

And she ended up getting into her car, and I got in with her, and we drove in silence for a good while...

And eventually she parked in front of the Blockbuster video there in Havasu...

She looked at me, and I was sure she was going to tell me she was moving back home, that our marriage was over...

But she looked at me and said these words that changed my life forever, "Jesus has forgiven me so much, I forgive you, and I know that you will never do it again."

The words were so sincere, I believed her... I was used to a relationship where every wrong I ever did was thrown back at me, reminding me of the terrible person I was.... I was told it so much that I just believed it...

But when she said it... It was at the bottom of the ocean, and not once in our relationship has Jess ever dug up those terrible things and reminded me... she forgave, and it was done... in the manner she was forgiven, she forgave...

Anyway, that was the day I understood God's Grace... It clicked for me what God's Forgiveness was like... not through a Bible study or lecture... but through her example...

It was only a little while after that that I surrendered my life to Jesus on the sidewalk...

You see, maybe that person you cannot forgive will forever be changed by your forgiveness...

This is more than a message we preach, it is a lifestyle we live...

Well, let's look at the reaction of the room now.

6 And some of the scribes were sitting there and reasoning in their hearts, **7** "Why does this *Man*

“speak blasphemies like this? Who can forgive sins but God alone?”

Those religious people, they are in every generation...

Oh, how they hate the simplicity of the Gospel...

“Forgiveness for nothing... after all the good things we do for God... how could this lowlife outcast receive the same thing we get for all our hard religion performed?”

These self-righteous men, who were supposed to be leading people to God, instead kept people away from Him.

They should have been the ones out in the crowd directing people to God in the Flesh... they should have known the hour of their visitation.

But their self-righteousness blinded them... and they call the Messiah a blasphemer.

These men did not have faith; they believed only in what they could do for God.

Who could forgive sins but God? Exactly, that is who you have working right in front of you.

Jesus was proving this right here...

Look at the response of Jesus now, starting in verse 8...

8 But immediately, when Jesus perceived in His spirit that they reasoned thus within themselves, He said to them, "Why do you reason about these things in your hearts? **9** Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, '*Your* sins are forgiven you,' or to say, 'Arise, take up your bed and walk'? **10** But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins" — He said to the paralytic, **11** "I say to you, arise, take up your bed, and go to your house."

Once again, Jesus is shooting for the heart here...

He knew these men were critical and jealous, and knowing this, He asks, "Which is easier to say, your sin is forgiven or to say, ' Arise and walk?'"

Then He demonstrates to them His authority to forgive sin, by doing the impossible...

Just by Jesus's declaration of a pardon, no one could really know if the man was forgiven, but God.

William Barclay writes, "Jesus also met the scribes on their own scholarly ground. 'The rabbis had a saying, 'There is no sick man healed of his sickness until all his sins have been forgiven.' To the Jews, a sick man was a person whom God was angry with."

To demonstrate His authority here, to forgive sins, He heals His physical body.

He is healed inside and out, demonstrating incredible power and authority, proving Jesus to be God.

Look at verse 12, as we come to a close...

12 Immediately he arose, took up the bed, and went out in the presence of them all, so that all were amazed and glorified God, saying, "We never saw *anything* like this!"

The crowd is literally left in awe one more time...

They have a reverential fear of what they had seen.

Jesus has power over sin... this is what this world needs the most, salvation... healing from sin...

This morning, we consider here three different interactions with Jesus...

The group of faith-filled friends had an urgency to get the paralyzed man to Jesus.

They knew that his life would be forever changed.

They spared no effort, had no excuses, and went all in on this commitment to see their friend changed by Jesus.

We also saw the Pharisees; they are still in this world today...

They are coldhearted to the needs around them... smug toward their fellow humans' suffering, and are self-centered...

They even tend to look to their own good religion as the basis of their smugness...

They are outside a relationship with Jesus, they don't need Him... and the reality is, even with their magnificent religion, they are still lost in their sins... bound for hell.

We can be one of two groups... the group that sees them, those with the great needs in this world, and put in the effort, time, and money to reach them...

Or we can put all effort, time, and money toward our own lives...

There are a great many paralyzed souls around us that need to be awakened by Jesus...

May Jesus's compassion and passion be our own for them.

Let your faith be led by love, resolve, and action, being a doer of the Word.

The world needs you to bring them to the Only One who can forgive sins... There is no one else to do it...

Don't close your eyes to the need around you...

Your church here is a ministry for the Least of These...

Jesus really drilled this into my heart... as I am always asking Him to speak to the ministry's vision here...

And in the Daily Manna reading a few weeks ago... I was in prayer about this very thing... and we read...

Luke 14:12-14 Then He also said to him who invited Him, "When you give a dinner or a supper, do not ask your friends, your brothers, your relatives, nor rich neighbors, lest they also invite you back, and you be repaid. **13** But when you give a feast, invite *the* poor, *the* maimed, *the* lame, *the* blind. **14** And you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you; for you shall be repaid at the resurrection of the just."

I actually argued with the Lord... if this is our focus as a ministry, how can we pay the bills and fund the mission if we are serving those who cannot repay?

I concluded with, He is God, and who am I to argue...

This is what Jesus taught... to go after the hurting in this world with a message of Hope...

God is for this model, and we are looking ahead to a future reward...

This is who we are zeroed in on Church... our focus will be on "Them," those who cannot repay...

It is a worthy cause, because it is Jesus's cause...

Be all in for what Jesus is about, live to serve Him, be used by Him, to get others to Him.

Don't just watch...

This week, live with the heart to get them to Jesus...

And if you are not a Christian this morning, maybe you are spiritual paralysis today, needing to be healed,

forgiven, please don't leave here the same way you came in...

Jesus can forgive you... And your life can be changed forever by that Amazing Grace...

Come to the feet of Jesus, and be healed...

Let's pray...