

uncheckable. But to say, "Get up and walk" was to say something whose effectiveness would either be proved or disproved there and then. So Jesus said in effect: "You say that I have no right to forgive sins? You hold as a matter of belief that if this man is ill he is a sinner and he cannot be cured till he is forgiven? Very well, then, watch this!" So Jesus spoke the word and the man was cured.

- The experts in the law were hoist with their own petard. On their own stated beliefs the man could not be cured, unless he was forgiven. He was cured, therefore he was forgiven. Therefore, Jesus' claim to forgive sin *must* be true.
- Jesus must have left a completely baffled set of legal experts; and, worse, he must have left them in a baffled rage.
- Jesus was someone who they were going to have to deal with; if his teaching continued, their orthodox religion, built on false beliefs and their own man made rules and regulations, would be shattered and destroyed. In this incident Jesus signed his own death warrant-and he knew it.
- What about us and our church based customs and traditions. Can we honestly say that they are all Biblically based?

### 2.6 Paralytic

- The paralytic now faces his own test of faith: "I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home." (Mark 2:11). The paralytic has been spiritually healed, his sins have been forgiven. He has been physically healed as well. He is totally changed but he now needs to stand up and live in this new reality.
- How often do we live spiritually paralysed lives ourselves because we fail to step out in faith and live as sons of daughters of the living God? How often does God need to say to us you have my power why don't you step out in faith and use it?
- The paralytic: 'got up, took his mat and walked out in full view of them all.' (Mark 2:11)

### 2.7 Conclusion

- "This amazed everyone and they praised God, saying, "We have never seen anything like this!" (Mark 2:12).
- This amazing incident is recorded in three Gospels: Matthew, Mark and Luke. People were not going to forget this day in a hurry. All of this came to pass because six people; Jesus, the paralytic and his four friends were prepared in their own way, prompted by God, to step out in faith.
- Will we be encouraged and challenged by them to do likewise? What might happen, if we, like them were equally prepared to step out in faith and trust God to release his supernatural power.

### 3. Questions to consider at home

- 3.1 'When Jesus saw their faith.' (Mark 2:5) Why is Jesus surprised by the faith level of the paralytic's four friends.
- 3.2 Why does Jesus say to the paralytic 'Your sins are forgiven.' (Mark 2:6)?
- 3.3 What were the teachers of the law thinking to themselves? How does Jesus 'hoist them their own petard.'
- 3.4 How do we stop living spiritually paralysed lives ourselves?
- 3.5 What does Jesus want us personally and our churches to learn from this healing?

Matthew Street - 4<sup>th</sup> February 2024



## The St J's Group

### Mark 2:1-12 - Lowered through the roof Passage, Talk Notes and Questions

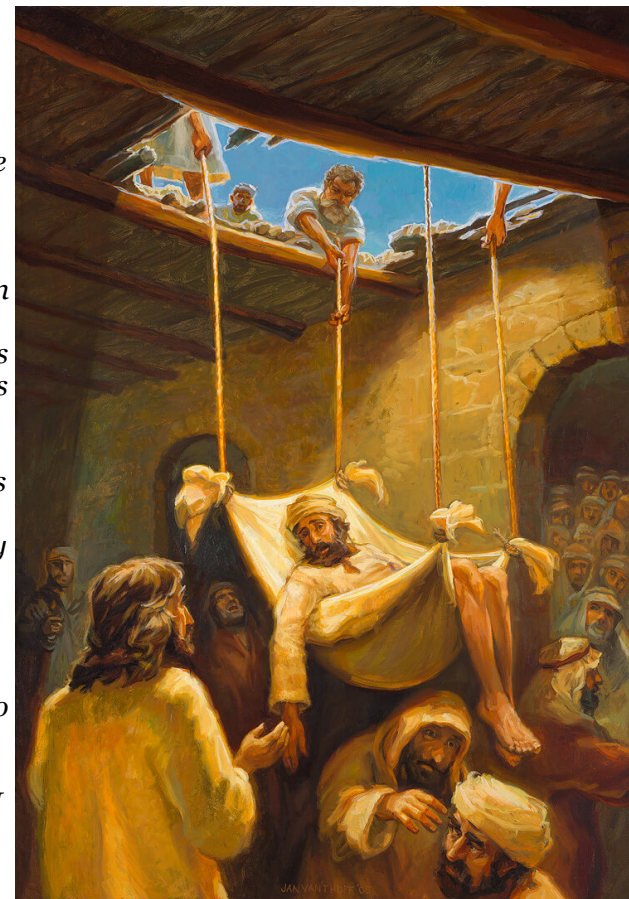
Please feel free to take these talk notes home with you and you may wish to find some time during this week to consider the questions below.

#### 1. Talk Passage – Mark 2:1-12

*1 A few days later, when Jesus again entered Capernaum, the people heard that he had come home. 2 They gathered in such large numbers that there was no room left, not even outside the door, and he preached the word to them.*

*3 Some men came, bringing to him a paralysed man, carried by four of them. 4 Since they could not get him to Jesus because of the crowd, they made an opening in the roof above Jesus by digging through it and then lowered the mat the man was lying on. 5 When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralysed man, 'Son, your sins are forgiven.'*

*6 Now some teachers of the law were sitting there, thinking to themselves, 7 'Why does this fellow talk like that? He's blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone?'* *8 Immediately Jesus knew in his spirit that this was what they were thinking in their hearts, and he said to them, 'Why are you thinking these things? 9 Which is easier: to say to this paralysed man, "Your sins are forgiven," or to say, "Get up, take your mat and walk?" 10 But I want you to know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins.'* *So he said to the man, 11 'I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home.'* *12 He got up, took his mat and walked out in full view of them all. This amazed everyone and they praised God, saying, 'We have never seen anything like this!'"*



#### 2. Talk Notes

##### 2.1 Introduction

- 'When Jesus saw their faith' (Mark 2:5) How would we describe our faith levels at the moment? When was the last time that we stepped out in faith; we heard God calling us to do something and we responded knowing that we were going to have to trust in God's power and not our own? When was the last time that we:

- Spoke to someone about our relationship with God.
- Went somewhere at God's instruction knowing that we were outside of our comfort zone.
- Shared with someone a word or a picture that God gave us for someone else.
- Prayed for someone's health asking God to heal them.
- Six of the people in our passage: Jesus, the paralytic and his four friends all demonstrate high levels of faith in contrast to the low levels of faith demonstrated by the teachers of the law. Each of the six has to step out in faith and in so doing challenges and models to us how we should be living as men and women of faith today.

## 2.2 Context

- Our passage begins: *'A few days later, when Jesus again entered Capernaum, the people heard that he had come home.'* (Mark 2:1) What has Jesus been doing? To answer this we need to look back at Mark chapter 1.
- Jesus has just completed his first ministry trip around the Sea of Galilee: *'So he traveled throughout Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and driving out demons.'* (Mark 1:39)
- He has called four of his Disciples: Simon Peter, Andrew, James and John (Mark 1:16-20)
- He has healed a man of leprosy and then told the leper to tell no one about this which the leper ignores.
- So as we catch up with Jesus coming home into Capernaum we read at the very end of Mark chapter 1: *'Yet the people still came to him from everywhere.'* (Mark 1:45)

## 2.3 Four Friends

- *They gathered in such large numbers that there was no room left, not even outside the door, and he preached the word to them* (Mark 2:2) A crowd has gathered in Jesus' home, in fact there isn't enough room for them in his house they have spilt outside, and he is sharing the word of God with them. No doubt there were local people from Capernaum present but also probably people from further afield and now, no doubt as a result of first his ministry tour, we learn *'some teachers of the law were sitting there'* (Mark 2:6). The guardians of the faith who have come to check out this new teacher.
- Into this scene come four of our six key characters: the paralytic's four friends. *Some men came, bringing to him a paralysed man, carried by four of them.* (Mark 2:3) They look around and see that the place is mobbed and there is no way for them to get their paralytic friend in front of Jesus: *'Since they could not get him to Jesus because of the crowd, they made an opening in the roof above Jesus by digging through it and then lowered the mat the man was lying on.'* (Mark 2:4) and in so doing all four of them step out in faith and put their trust in God's healing power.
- Do you believe in God's healing power? How many of us are prepared in prayer,



to be as insistent or persistent as the paralytics four friends in asking God to release his healing power.

- These four friends also step out in faith against a prevailing cultural belief of that day, which was that people like this paralytic were suffering either because of their personal sin or maybe because of generational sin.
- What about us? What do we believe when it comes to praying for healing for other people? Are we as counter cultural as the paralytic's four friends or do we believe that only medical people can heal and that all those who claim to have been healed by God are delusional.
- Most of us, would have been pretty upset, seeing the roof of our house being torn off in order for this paralytic to be lowered in front of Jesus and yet Jesus does not seem to be concerned with his roof being torn apart. He is more concerned with the levels of faith being demonstrated by the paralytics four friends: *'When Jesus saw their faith'* (Mark 2:5)

## 2.4 Jesus

- Something strange now happens. I suspect the four friends, the paralytic, the people crowding into Jesus' home and us would have thought Jesus would have commanded the paralytic man to pick up his mat and walk. But he doesn't, he says: *"Son, your sins are forgiven."* (Mark 2:6) and in so doing he signs his own death warrant.
- Jesus knows as well as the *'teachers of the law who were sitting there'* (Mark 2:6) that the only person who can forgive sins is God himself: *Who can forgive sins but God alone?*" (Mark 2:7) Claiming to do something only God could do was blasphemous: *"Why does this fellow talk like that? He's blaspheming!"* (Mark 2:7) The punishment for blasphemy was death: *'anyone who blasphemes the name of the LORD must be put to death. The entire assembly must stone him.'* (Leviticus 24:16)
- So why does Jesus take this risk. Why does he step out in faith like this:
  - Firstly he knows who he is. He is the long awaited "anointed one" or "Messiah". The Jews believed that an "anointed one" or "Messiah" would "deliver" or "save" all the Jewish people, bringing them to paradise or heaven. Jesus is this Messiah and here we see him clearly communicating this for the first time in Mark's Gospel. Are we equally prepared to step out in faith and tell others about our true identity in God? Do we readily admit to those around us that we are Christians or do we try to blend in with the world around us?
  - Secondly Jesus can see that this paralytic needs more than just physical healing he needs spiritual healing too. He needs to be healed from his 'slavery to sin' which is why Jesus says *"Son, your sins are forgiven."* (Mark 2:6).
  - Thirdly Jesus wants to demonstrate that the prevailing cultural belief of the day that God was punishing this paralytic for his sins was wrong.

## 2.5 Teachers of the Law

- The Teachers of the Law were adamant that sin and sickness were indissolubly linked together. A sick man was a man who had sinned. So Jesus asks them: *Which is easier: to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up, take your mat and walk?'* (Mark 2:9). Jesus knew that any charlatan could say, *"Your sins are forgiven."* (Mark 2:6) There was no possibility of ever demonstrating whether his words were effective or not; such a statement was completely