

治标又治本——马可福音 2:1-12

The Healer of Both the Symptom And the Disease – Mark 2:1-12

Introduction, Outline

- Scripture reading: Mark 2:1-12; Psalm 130; 1 John 1:8-2:3.
- Teaching text: Mark 2:1-12 (NASB1995)

1 When He had come back to Capernaum several days afterward, it was heard that He was at home. **2** And many were gathered together, so that there was no longer room, not even near the door; and He was speaking the word to them. **3** And they *came, bringing to Him a paralytic, carried by four men. **4** Being unable to get to Him because of the crowd, they removed the roof above Him; and when they had dug an opening, they let down the pallet on which the paralytic was lying. **5** And Jesus seeing their faith *said to the paralytic, “Son, your sins are forgiven.” **6** But some of the scribes were sitting there and reasoning in their hearts, **7** “Why does this man speak that way? He is blaspheming; who can forgive sins but God alone?” **8** Immediately Jesus, aware in His spirit that they were reasoning that way within themselves, *said to them, “Why are you reasoning about these things in your hearts? **9** Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, ‘Your sins are forgiven’; or to say, ‘Get up, and pick up your pallet and walk’? **10** But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins”—He *said to the paralytic, **11** “I say to you, get up, pick up your pallet and go home.” **12** And he got up and immediately picked up the pallet and went out in the sight of everyone, so that they were all amazed and were glorifying God, saying, “We have never seen anything like this.”

- In the medical field, some medications merely relieve the symptom but do not cure the disease, while others can cure the disease from its root cause, medically speaking. Ultimately, however, all medications are only treating the symptoms, for they cannot cure the root cause of disease and death, namely, sin. Medicine can't, psychology can't, science can't, politics can't, environmental protection can't... All they can do is relieve the symptoms. They cannot treat the root cause. Only Jesus can heal both the symptom and the disease.

Outlines:

Title: The Healer of Both the Symptom And the Disease

1. The Curious Crowd (vv 1-2)
2. The Desperate Sinner (vv 3-4)
3. The Gracious Savior (v5)
4. The Cold-hearted Self-righteous (vv 6-7)
5. The Powerful Savior (vv 8-11)
6. The Obedient Sinner (v12a)
7. The Amazed Crowd (v12b)

The Curious Crowd (vv 1-2)

- “several days afterward”: Because of what happened in 1:45, Jesus could not publicly enter a city until the frenzy of the crowd calmed down a little.
- “When He had come back to Capernaum”: This is the city where Jesus has preached the gospel repeatedly and performed many miracles (1:21-34). All that is still fresh in their mind.
- “He was at home”: Not public preaching, just a home visit. It’s likely Peter’s home, which is the headquarters of Jesus’s ministry in Galilee. Jesus and His disciples often eat and live together, and this is part of His discipleship training.
- “it was heard. . . . And many were gathered together”: The crowd, still having a lot of zeal, went into the house as soon as Jesus entered it, and they soon filled up the house “so that there was no longer room, not even near the door.”

The crowd is motivated by nothing more than curiosity, wanting to see miracles. They just want exciting events. Wherever there’s an event, they’ll gather layer upon layer. Some people go to church just to see events and not to seek Jesus. Do you know someone like that?

- “and He was speaking the word to them”: The verb “speaking” is a most common word, which is different from the kind of proclamation with authority in chapter 1. Perhaps because they’re at home here, not in synagogue, Jesus speaks the Word in a more personable manner.

The Desperate Sinner (vv 3-4)

- “a paralytic”: The disease is the result and sin is the reason; the disease is a symptom and sin is the root cause. Although we shouldn’t connect each disease directly with a specific sin, yet fundamentally, all diseases are the consequences of sin. There would’ve been no disease were there not sin.

Theological background: A deep-rooted Jewish belief is that every disease and disaster is a direct divine punishment of a particular sin. This belief is seen in Job’s friends and in the disciples’ question in John 9:2. Although direct correlation of each disease with a specific sin is a theological error, the Jews are correct in a fundamental way. The Bible often relates forgiveness of sin to healing (Psalm 103:3; 2 Chronicles 7:14). Though the Jewish theology is problematic, it is much better than atheistic theology.

- “removed the roof”: A rare word, not common daily language for obvious reasons. Out of a desperate desire for healing, they came up with an innovative plan. To address this pressing need, they put aside all etiquette of what is proper and polite as a guest to the host. The damaged roof can be fixed later, but nobody can meet the desperate need of this paralytic if they miss this opportunity with Jesus. That is what we call faith!

Light: True faith is always an acting faith. True faith will move people to follow the object of their faith, even when it means to do something like removing the roof.

The Gracious Savior (v5)

- “seeing their faith”: Faith is visible (James 2:18). It must express itself outwardly. It is never a total secret. But the faith of the men carrying the paralytic may not be saving faith. Jesus only pronounced forgiveness to the paralytic. The faith that motivated these other guys may simply be a natural faith (like the faith you exercise when you go to the hospital to get a flu shot), which may not necessarily include confession of sin and repentance.
- “said to the paralytic”: There is no causal relationship with the previous phrase; it’s just a chronological order. The only necessary and sufficient condition for forgiveness of sin is for the sinner himself to confess his own sin and repent and trust in the gospel. This is the clear teaching of the Bible. The paralytic obviously had this kind of faith. Don't make a big deal out of the faith of the men carrying him, as if it were their faith that made the paralytic forgiven.
- “Son, your sins are forgiven”: “Son” is an intimate address, calling him as His own child; “sins” is plural, meaning all sins are forgiven by God completely; “forgiven” literally means to send away, “As far as the east is from the west.....” (Psalm 103:12). Imagine how happy this paralytic is!

Ponder: Have you ever been overwhelmed by God’s grace of forgiveness in some specific moment in your life? Not the forgiveness of sins of others, but your own, which made you suddenly realize the most fundamental problem of your soul has been resolved, and that you, too, have become a child of God! Any moment like that? Remember your joy? Is there any word that can express it?

The Cold-hearted Self-righteous (vv 6-7)

- “some of the scribes”: Self-righteous religious leaders. They can’t share the joy of forgiveness because they are unable to see their own sin and have absolutely no love and compassion for other sinners.
- “He is blaspheming”: The term refers to any speech that dishonors, insults, or belittles God. The worst kind of blasphemy is calling oneself God and claiming to do things in God’s name. Only God can forgive sins. If Jesus were not God, He ought to have been stoned.

The Powerful Savior (vv 8-11)

- “Why are you reasoning about these things in your hearts?”: This is a demonstration of Jesus’ deity. Only God knows what’s in man’s heart. (cf Psalm 139:4; John 2:25) The scribes should’ve said: “How do you know my heart? You must indeed be God! If you are God, then you do have the authority to forgive sins. I misjudged you in my heart, please forgive me.”

- “Which is easier”: Not easier to do, but easier to say. Is it easier to say “Your sins are forgiven” or to say “Get up and walk”? And not just say it, but be believed. Which is easier to say so as to be believed? Forgiveness of sin is an invisible fact, whose full effect can only be seen in heaven or hell; but telling the paralytic to get up and walk will be verified immediately. If Jesus were not God, the latter saying would be more difficult.
- “But so that you may know”: The purpose of healing is to prove that Jesus is God, who has the authority to forgive sins. He is the Saviour who heals both the symptom and the disease.
- “I say to you”: Healing with a word. No physical contact nor any complex process. Just one imperative command.

The Obedient Sinner (v12a)

- “got up.....picked up the pallet.....went out”: The three actions are exactly the same as the three verbs in Jesus’ command.

Light: Understanding the forgiveness of sin is the basic motivation for obedience. You tell me how much you obey Jesus and I’ll tell you how much you understand His forgiving grace. Only a soul that has been forgiven can have the freedom and power to obey the Savior willingly from his heart.

The Amazed Crowd (v12b)

- “they were all amazed and were glorifying God”: The story begins with the curious crowd and ends with the amazed crowd. Glorifying God is right, but they totally missed the point – God is right in front of them! But their amazement is only due to the healing miracle.

The crowd here is Capernaum, who had just seen a night of extensive healings not long ago. They had been amazed already, why are they amazed again? Perhaps all they want is the feeling of amazement, but not truth. The majority of them eventually didn't believe. They have seen so many miracles, heard Jesus Himself preach the truth, but they still wouldn't believe. (Matthew 11:23-24)

Ponder: Are you much better than the crowd in Capernaum? Are you truly much better than them in receiving and obeying all the truths of God?

Summary: Until you realize how horrible your own sins are, you cannot appreciate how precious the grace of forgiveness is, and you cannot obey this glorious Savior with the freedom and power of your soul which can only come from the forgiveness of sin. Jesus is the only Savior who heals both the symptom and the disease. Have you been healed by Him?