

The Lord's Message: Faith is the Key to Healing

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Where: Tilghman Methodist Church

Scripture Reference: Mark 2:1-12

Let us just suppose that you have returned home from a trip. What would you do? Maybe sit back and relax for a little while. Unpack your belongings. Feed the cat who is either climbing all over you or having nothing to do with you. This is what I like to do. Kind of slowly getting back into a routine. This is not what happened to Jesus.

Let us pray.

If you would like, open your Pew Bible to page 1553 to Mark 2. Jesus has returned from a trip in which He was baptized in the Jordan River. He spent 40 days and 40 nights being tempted by Satan but did not sin. He called His first disciples who were fishermen from the Sea of Galilee, Peter, Andrew, James, and John. He taught in the synagogue in Capernaum and people were astonished by His teachings. He healed a man at the synagogue with an unclean spirit, Peter's mother-in-law from sickness, and countless others from sickness and demons, including a leper. I would be exhausted by all of this.

Jesus, in His human body, must have been as well. I think Jesus was looking for a few days to kick back and take it easy. Jesus' popularity has spread in this region making His days of rest short. Look at **Mark 2:1**. When people heard that Jesus was home, they gathered at His house. Now, some theologians will say that the home is actually Peter's house. Maybe, maybe not. It does not change the events that take place. The Town of Capernaum does become Jesus' ministry center. More healings and more teachings are held at Capernaum than other places. If you remember in **Luke 4:28-30**, when Jesus went back to Nazareth, the people ended up wanting to kill Him, by throwing Him off a cliff. Jesus passed through the crowd and went on His way.

In **Mark 2:2**, there was such a large crowd that there was not enough room inside or outside of the house. This caused a problem for anyone trying to get to see Jesus. That is what happened to a group of four people bringing a paralytic man on a bed, **Mark 2:3**.

If you cannot go through the crowd, you go over the crowd. In **Mark 2:4**, that is what this group does. They dig through the roof and make an opening to lower the man down to Jesus.

Let us just pause for a second and examine the actions of these friends. The houses at this time were constructed with a flat roof. The timbers went across to the supporting walls. The walls would have continued to go upward encasing the timbers. Then the timbers were covered with plaster or mud. This created an open area. In this area, food would have been drying. There might be an access way in the roof for a winch, allowing the family to pull food items to the roof for drying. The opening would not be large enough to lower a man down. There would have also been outside stairs installed on one side of the house for access to the roof. The accessway would have needed to be enlarged in order to let the man down.

These friends carried their paralyzed friend up those stairs, ripped open the roof with their bare hands, and, using ropes, lowered their friend down to Jesus.

Jesus is amazed by their actions and their faith. Jesus has not done anything yet, but they had faith that Jesus could heal their friend. Faith is defined in **Hebrews 11:1**. Compared their faith to the lack of faith that Jesus finds in His hometown of Nazareth in **Mark 6:5-6**.

Jesus says in **Mark 2:5**. I was wondering why Jesus does not simply say you are healed. If we look at **John 9:1-3**, there was this thinking at this time that disease was caused by a person's sin. God rewarded a person for not sinning by giving them good health and caused disease to inflict a person for sinning. This is what Job's friends kept saying over and over again. That all of this calamity has happened to you because you have committed some sin.

The next verse, **Mark 2:6**, gives us a clue. Jesus wants to show that He is the Son of God. Only God has the power to forgive sin. The teachers of the law know this. These are the words that they are mumbling to themselves in **Mark 2:7**.

So, Jesus confronts them in **Mark 2:8-10a**. To show to everyone that not only does Jesus, as the Son of God, have the power to heal sins, but also to bring about miraculous healing. He signifies this in **Mark 2:10b-11**, by saying to the man "Get up, take up your mat, and go home."

In **Mark 2:12**, to everyone's amazement, the man does just that.

There have been countless studies from prestigious institutions, such as Duke and Johns Hopkins, that faith plays a great part in the amount of time necessary for a person to recover from an illness or medical procedure. I would also say that having faith-filled friends, sisters and brothers in Christ goes a long way for healing as well.

I mentioned last week the importance of prayer. I will again refer to what James, the brother of Jesus says in **James 5:15**.

Now we may not have to tear open a roof for a friend, but we may be asked to drive them to a doctor's appointment or visit them in the hospital or send a card or make a phone call. It may be helping clean up their yard after a storm. It may be doing their shopping or getting their medicine. It may even be throwing them a birthday party.

Tony Campolo wrote about an experience he had while at a convention in Hawaii. Having jet lag, he went for a walk at two in the morning. He stopped at a greasy spoon, where he overheard the conversation of some ladies of the evening (prostitutes). One of them stated that tomorrow would be her birthday. When they left Tony reached an agreement with the owner and cook of the diner to throw a birthday party. It was a very powerful event in the life of this lost woman and everyone was moved by the experience. After the lady of the evening left, Tony suggested that they bow their heads and pray. No one knew that Tony was a minister. When the prayer was over the cook called Tony over and said, "Hey, are you some kind of preacher or something." "Yes, I am," Tony said. Then the cook, with a sneer in his voice, said, "What kind of a church do you belong to?" Tony had one of those moments when the perfect word comes to you. He said, "I belong to a church that throws birthday parties for prostitutes at three in the morning." The cook looked at him and said, "No, you don't. No, you don't. Cause if you did, I would go to that church." Let us remember that Jesus' words to us in **Matthew 25:40**.

Faith is the key to healing. Now, let me just say that healing does not mean restoration of the body. Healing is the restoration of the soul, not the body.

As sisters and brother in Christ, let us use every opportunity to show everyone we meet that God's loves them and wants to heal their soul. Amen.