

Free From Sickness

Mark 2:1-12

Central Idea: God's power is clearly seen in His ability to heal every sickness when we have faith!

Introduction

We have been talking about miracles. I have categorized miracles into three general types: natural, healing and spiritual miracles. As we consider healing miracles, I'd like to point out that this type of miracle is profuse in the Gospels. Everywhere Jesus goes, healing is part of His regular ministry. It is part of the ordinary acts of God.

The account we speak of today embodies the very nature of divine healing through a miracle. When we reach the very end of our medical sciences, there are still times when a doctor sits with a terminal patient, hangs their head, and whispers, "I'm sorry. I can do no more." For many, this death sentence is the end of a long battle, and considered a loss. Others take it in stride and live out their days with dignity. But there is another possibility if only we would trust in the word the Lord has for us!

Text – Mark 2:1-12

¹ And when he returned to Capernaum after some days, it was reported that he was at home. ² And many were gathered together, so that there was no more room, not even at the door. And he was preaching the word to them. ³ And they came, bringing to him a paralytic carried by four men. ⁴ And when they could not get near him because of the crowd, they removed the roof above him, and when they had made an opening, they let down the bed on which the paralytic lay. ⁵ And when Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, "Son, your sins are forgiven." ⁶ Now some of the scribes were sitting there, questioning in their hearts, ⁷ "Why does this man speak like that? He is blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone?" ⁸ And immediately Jesus, perceiving in his spirit that they thus questioned within themselves, said to them, "Why do you question these things in your hearts? ⁹ Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Rise, take up your bed and walk'? ¹⁰ But 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, rise, pick up your bed, and go home." ¹² And he rose and immediately picked up his bed and went out before them all, so that they were all amazed and glorified God, saying, "We never saw anything like this!"

- I. Healing miracles require our faith (vv. 1-5).
 - A. Faith is an active ingredient in healing.

- i. No matter what healing miracle you turn to in the Gospels, you will find that faith is involved. Sometimes Jesus asks those with the illness if they have faith in Him to heal or if they want healing.
- ii. Other times it is the faith of others that brings the healing. Today's account is one of those. We are introduced to a paralytic man, one who has some type of paralysis in his body.
- iii. Because the man is laying on his bed or cot, we are probably to assume that he has no ability in his legs at the very least. This man cannot work or do any of the things you and I consider normal activity.
- iv. So this man is left to the resources and kindness of others. Enter the four friends. These guys bring him to Jesus so that Jesus can heal him. They are the ones who demonstrate faith in this account.
- v. Faith is one of the regular ingredients we see in the Scriptures for healing. Faith is an active participation in what God is doing. It is accepting with our minds the possibilities and abilities of God and acting on that knowledge.
- vi. The only way for this man to act on faith is to ask his friends to help him get to Jesus. We have no record of that, but it's possible that he expressed a desire to be healed by Jesus.
- vii. What we do know from the text is that his friends are determined to get him to Jesus. They are so determined that they actually remove part of the roof of the house Jesus is teaching in to get him there.
- viii. Faith can move mountains, and it can move roof tiles. It may that the roof tiles might have been removable, or that it cost the owner of the house something to repair them.
- ix. But the roof was the least of the problems for the friends. They so trusted in Jesus and were desperate for His healing touch that they broke this home owner's roof to get their friend there.
- x. **Application:** Faith requires an action. It must be done, not just agreed to in the mind. Faith is based off of what we give ascent to in our minds. If we believe that God can heal, then we will ask Him to heal and wait on Him to heal. The measure of your desperation and trust in God will result in how far your faith is willing to take you into the insane and impossible. How "silly" will you get when your faith is strong?

B. Faith puts our hope to work.

- i. To better explain the relationship between hope and faith, let me put it like this. Hope is the desire for God to do something despite the fact that it has not happened yet, and faith is the action we do that agrees with the possibility of what is not yet occurring.

- ii. **Illustration:** Hope is the driver behind the car pushing the gas while faith is the engine revving in response and moving the car. Hope is the plan to build the house, while faith is the hammer and nails, the wood and the fleshing out of those plans. Hope sees with a future vision; faith builds according to the plan.
- iii. These four friends have a hope that Jesus can heal this man. Jesus has not yet healed him, but they believe through hope that if they could just get Jesus' attention or get their friend to Him, that Jesus will heal the man.
- iv. Their hope creates an environment in which the possibility of the man's healing becomes probable. Their hope in Jesus being the way to heal their friend drives them to action. They pick him up and take him to the Jesus meeting. They try to get him through the crowds but that doesn't work. The sea of people is too thick.
- v. Without faith, they would have given up, said, "Oh well, it must not be God's will today. Best get back home and try the next time Jesus is in town. Or maybe someone else can heal him..."
- vi. That's not faith. Faith said, "Can't get through the crowd, but can get on the roof." Faith seeks the possibilities, seeks the fulfillment of hope at all costs. It calls us to be desperate for God, to do anything to reach Him.
- vii. Whether or not this paralytic had faith, his four friends demonstrate an uncanny faith, willing to even break a roof to get him to Jesus. They are so desperate and determined to meet Jesus that they will do anything. Their faith has taken over!
- viii. Are we willing to do the impossible, to look like fools for the sake of our faith? These friends must have gotten some stares from the crowd inside the house. I'm sure the owner of the house was none too happy about the matter. Anyone who is a home owner would be a bit perturbed if someone broke their roof.
- ix. We need a generation like the four friends. We need people who are so desperate and determined for God to heal and save and deliver that they are willing to go to great lengths, to any measure, to see God move now, not later.
- x. The Bible depicts faith as a commodity. Sometimes there is no hope, and faith is more than dead on arrival.
- xi. **Illustration:** I see faith in healing miracles as a necessary ingredient. You know, when you make a meal, if you leave something important out, it's not the thing you're trying to make. There are essential ingredients that make a thing what it is. You can't make spaghetti without noodles! You can't make a burger without the meat patty. You can't make a meal without the base ingredients that make that meal what it is.

- xii. In the same way, the way I understand these miracles I see in the Gospels and the Bible, faith is a required ingredient. Without faith, the miracles don't happen. There's actually a town that Jesus comes to where he cannot do miracles because there is no faith.
- xiii. Think about that for a second, Jesus, the Son of God, who existed before the creation of the world and was an active agent in creation itself, CANNOT heal in that town without faith. God is tied in His healing ability by the lack of faith!
- xiv. God can do anything, but He couldn't work in that town because of no faith. The Bible doesn't tell us we need a lot of faith either! Jesus talked about the faith of a mustard seed. Mustard seeds are very, very small!
- xv. The disciples are always asking Jesus to increase their faith, and that is a lofty goal, but you have to have faith first. I can't say, I want more uranium if I have none to begin with!
- xvi. These friends have faith in spades, no matter what the paralytic has as far as faith. And faith is the only thing Jesus needs. It's most likely He can do more with more faith, but He needs at least a tiny bit to do anything, according to my study of the Scriptures.
- xvii. And this is the rub of the matter isn't it, for we live in a day and age, in a church in America, that has turned to science and neglected faith itself. We have put it in other things. We come to the altar with nothing because we have over-thought healing, not seen it so we don't believe it's possible anymore, or whatever our excuse for not having faith is.
- xviii. I'm not saying that no one has faith, but that we need it to see God do miracles. Now are there times when God does not do a miracle even when there is faith? Perhaps. Just because I have the ingredients for pizza does not mean that I have to make pizza.
- xix. There might also be other factors, as we'll see in just a moment, that keep the healing from becoming a reality. In our study of healing miracles this week, we will see these times as well.
- xx. **Application:** But when I look at the majority of healing miracles, faith is a required ingredient, an environment of trust and action based on that hope, that fuels God's healing power! Do you have a faith that pushes past the unseen and gives legs to your hope in God's ability? We can say we believe in things with our minds, but until we act on those beliefs, they are just some internal preferences. Let faith put flesh and bones on your hope today!

II. Healing miracles require God's power (vv. 6-12).

A. God can heal and save!

- i. Imagine if you are those four friends, doing everything possible to get your friend to Jesus, and when you lower him through the ceiling, Jesus takes one look at a guy who is paralyzed and says, “Your sins are forgiven.”
- ii. Hold on a minute! Sins are forgiven? Dude can’t walk! Dude’s paralyzed. Needs healing, not forgiveness, right? Why would Jesus forgive his sins instead of healing him?
- iii. But the four friends aren’t the only ones who are wondering about this. So are the Pharisees and teachers of the law. This leads into quite an interesting discussion that I think is important for us to work through this morning.
- iv. Jesus in this account talks about sin and sickness in the same breath. That is not always the case, but the reason that He does it is because you can see it throughout the Bible.
- v. It all stems from two issues. First, the Fall of humanity in Genesis 3 introduces death officially to the human race. In certain instances, death is found through suffering and sickness.
- vi. The second reason is that there are certain words that capture a holistic approach to life. For instance, the word in Hebrew for peace, shalom, is much better understood as being whole and well, physically, spiritually, mentally. You name the category of health, and this word covers it.
- vii. That holistic approach is seen both in the Old and New Testaments. In the Old, sometimes sickness and sin are linked together and sometimes they are separate issues. It is the same in the New Testament.
- viii. For instance, the word for save, sodzo, is a word that has a range of meaning from salvation of a person’s life to healing to deliverance from demons.
- ix. In today’s text, Jesus links sickness and sin together. In John 9, He refuses to accept that they are linked. It’s a case by case, but they are often put together. Sometimes the reason we are sick is because sin causes death, and sickness if not treated or healed, will bring death.
- x. But it must be stressed that there is not a necessary connection between sickness and death. So if you see someone who is sick, don’t do as the disciples in John 9 and immediately think, “Oh, they’ve sinned against God and this is what happens.”
- xi. Jesus came to save and heal and deliver. His ministry on the cross and in our lives is not just a cure for one part of our life. He doesn’t save our souls and leave our bodies to rot in diseases. He came to do it all!
- xii. **Application:** We need to be constantly relying on the ministry of Jesus in our lives as believers. He wants us to be whole, not parts of saved and

parts of healed. We are not a mess! We are a piece of art that God is molding. At times, we'll be sick or in sin, but Jesus keeps working on us, and He leaves no stone unturned!

B. God will get glory for healing!

- i. The argument that Jesus starts with his approach is concerned with this idea of holistic ministry. Because God can both forgive sins and heal diseases, which one is easier for Jesus to proclaim to this man?
- ii. We are to understand that in both phrases, the man receives both healing and forgiveness. If Jesus said, "You are healed" the man would be forgiven and healed. If Jesus said, "You are forgiven," the man would be healed and forgiven.
- iii. God doesn't do just one at a time, but both are integral to His ministry in our lives and bodies. So Jesus makes the case that He could use the two phrases interchangeably.
- iv. There's just one problem for these scribes and Pharisees. They also would agree that God can both save and forgive sins. But can Jesus do that? Let us not misunderstand that this is a key passage to show Christ's divinity.
- v. He makes the bold claim, and they don't misunderstand Him, that He can save and heal like God can save and heal. This is why the matter is brought up when this man comes to Him.
- vi. I want to put it this way. **Illustration:** As a kid, I was always worried when an evangelist, especially one with the gift of a word of knowledge, would come to our church. I always feared that God would somehow tell that guy my deepest, darkest sins, and he'd mention them at the altar in front of everyone or something! Let's not forget that being legally blind with coke-bottle-thick glasses did not help my case. I will give other ministers the benefit of the doubt, but I've had my share of "There's sin in your life or you'd be healed when I prayed for you."
- vii. I want to issue a pastoral caution about the way we intercede for others. When you meet someone who has some kind of illness, please do not pray that their sins are forgiven. And also don't treat sins like a sickness.
- viii. The connection made in the Bible is a case-by-case connection tied with theological strings, and that person is not coming to you to see that you realize this connection. They are coming to you for prayer.
- ix. We have a disease in our day and age of modernity where we think we need as many details as possible when we pray, but the fact is that God knows the situation better than any information we have.
- x. When we pray for others, let us pray for what they have asked and what the Spirit tells us to pray. Let us leave the rest of it up to God. While we can discuss exactly how God does His saving and healing, that is a

discussion to increase our understanding and faith, not to use in our prayer time to show how smart or insightful we think we are.

- xi. Finally, I say this about verse 12. God gets the glory from all healing and saving and delivering. He deserves all the praise, and He gets it from this ex-paralytic!
- xii. The people are amazed and glorify God. We should never cease to be amazed at God's ability! It is not a surprised look that we bring to the answer of prayer. If we doubted when we prayed, what would be the point, and the faith component would be missing.
- xiii. We celebrate, not act surprised. We expect God to do that miracle or forgive that person, and when He does, we rejoice in His power. Idols can't heal like that. We can't heal like that.
- xiv. **Application:** Divine healing is a reason for a party of praise to be offered to God, for us to be awestruck at His power and amazed at His grace. God doesn't have to save or heal anyone, but He does it on a regular basis for you and for me! Let us seek the Lord for our healing! Every good gift comes from His hand! And when He heals you and me, may we not be silent, but full of gratitude and awe at His wondrous might!

Conclusion

God wants to free us from sickness. It is part of the old guard of this fallen world. Sickness is only still around because we still live in this fallen world. The power of Christ demolished sin and sickness and death for us when we came to Him. We don't have to be sick. Sometimes we are for one reason or another, but we don't have to be. Jesus provided for our sickness and sins in His sacrifice, and He can heal and forgive. We must bring our faith and watch the Lord do His incredible work in us!

Action Points

- Faith is required for healing and forgiveness and any work that God does in us. But it doesn't absolutely have to come from us. Sometimes it comes from others who intercede for us.
- How much faith does God need to do His miraculous work? Well, Jesus talked about the faith of a mustard seed. Those are really, really tiny! It's not about the amount of faith as much as it is about the presence of faith in us!
- Jesus saves and heals and delivers. He desires that you be whole and complete, lacking nothing. While there's a connection between sin and sickness in the Bible, it is case-by-case, not all the time. Let's not presume that someone is sick because they are in sin.
- When we come to Jesus with our need, He does everything required to bring that healing. If He has to forgive us before He can heal us, the healing confirms our forgiveness. Let us allow God to do His work without thinking we know what is needed. We offer what we do know, and God does the rest!