



## THE GOSPEL OF MARK

Study Guide Full  
Mark 2:1-12  
July 28, 2019

We continue on in our first weeks reading Mark, asking two primary questions: a) Who is Jesus? and b) What does it mean to be his disciple?

Last week we caught a glimpse into the *exousia* of Jesus—his power and authority—to heal those possessed, feverous, and leprous. This week, in the narrative of the paralytic lowered through the roof into the home of Jesus, we continue in the same vein, looking at God’s power and authority, and that not just to heal, but also to forgive sins.

*2 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 paralyzed 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 paralyzed 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 paralyzed 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!"

James Tissot (French)  
*The Paralyzed Man Let Down through the Roof*, 1886-1896.  
Watercolor over graphite.  
Brooklyn Museum.  
([www.brooklynmuseum.org](http://www.brooklynmuseum.org))



## Mark 2:1-12

Notes:

### Commentary Notes:

**vv. 1-2.** Key to correctly imagining the scene is a proper picture of the house. All of the houses of Capernaum in this period were one-story structures in which the roof was comprised of poles covered with twigs, branches, and other plant material, along with a clay overlay. Such basic roofing materials were common in the Middle East at this time and

### Discussion Questions:

*Discuss:* When was the last time that you fought your way through a crowd just to get a sight of something interesting? What did you feel like when you finally caught

can still be observed in use in areas today. It is likely that the home was a square structure with a main door opening onto a courtyard that wrapped around one side of the house. Indeed, archaeologists have discovered houses in Capernaum reflecting this design. (See Voelz's *Mark Concordia Commentary*, 189).

It is at such a house that so many were gathered that there was no longer any room, even at the door, as Jesus was speaking to them the word, most likely of the Good News (of chapter 1).

**vv. 3-4.** In these verses our paralytic is introduced. Note that the English word derives from the Greek παραλυτικός (*paralytikos*), out of the root *luo* meaning to "loose" or "detach." The paralytic is certainly "loosed" of strength and of sensation, and yet one also wonders how he might have been detached from life and relationships. Still, the willingness of his friends to help in this situation is remarkable in their

a glimpse? Was the view worth the hassle? How do you think the crowds are feeling here in Mark, crowding around Jesus' door?

*Discuss:* Last week, as we saw Jesus withdrawing to an isolated place, Anthony spoke about the challenges Jesus faced in terms of popularity, and the temptations that popularity inevitably brings. What do you think Jesus might have been feeling inside his home as the crowds gathered outside?

*Discern:* Reading the Greek for "many gathered together," συνήχθησαν πολλοὶ (*synechthesian polloi*), one immediately notes the relation of this word with its noun form "synagogue". The lexical similarities alert us: what we have here is a synagogue-size gathering of townspeople outside the synagogue. How, then, might this picture encourage us collectively, as a congregation, to extend missionally our church life beyond the walls of our church and onto the street? Ask for the Spirit's missional imagination.

*Discern:* What would it look like this week for you to live out the faith of the four mat-carrying friends within the family of FBC in terms of congregational care? What would it look like for you and your Connection Group to do so beyond the family of FBC in terms of neighbourhood missional presence?

*Discern:* Are there ways that, like the crowd in this passage, we (as individuals, Connection Groups, or the FBC family at large) might be blocking full access to the grace and forgiveness of God in the life of our church family?

imagination and dedication to dig through the house's roof into Jesus' very presence. No more is the barrier between Jesus and this paralytic.

**v. 5.** In the Jewish world, no stronger assertion of Christ's divinity could be made than the authority to forgive sins. And so it is that any and all barriers between the paralytic and Jesus have been truly eliminated.

**vv. 6-12.** As if the declaration of sins forgiven were not sufficient testimony to the power and authority, divinity and glory of Christ, Jesus goes on to confirm precisely who he is, and precisely what this means for those in need of forgiveness and healing: he knows by his Spirit, most likely a referent to the Holy Spirit (of chapter 1), what the scribes are grumbling only "In their own hearts"; he takes on these scribes intentionally, provoking conflict around his authority; and he matches his forgiving of sin with his ability to heal, demonstrating that in Christ restoration is for the whole person—spiritual and physical, mental and emotional.

Once Jesus heals, a grammatical shift in the passage occurs: the paralytic finally becomes—to God's praise—the subject of the action.

*Confess:* Note that paralytic is only the *object* of the verbs here; he is heavily *dependent* on the help of others. Confess: How have you been tempted to the opposite, to dangerous forms of self-sufficiency?

*Praise:* When you first came to faith in Jesus, how did you experience the burden of sin lifted from you?

*Reflect:* What stops us sometimes from surrendering our sins and their weight to Jesus?

*Praise:* How have you experienced God's forgiveness and healing in the past in ways that have revealed the great glory of our God?

*Discuss:* Of these verses Chrysostom writes, in his *Homily 29.1*: "The scribes asserted that God could forgive sins; yet Jesus not only forgave sins, but showed that he had also another power that belongs to God alone—the power to disclose the secrets of the heart." In terms of a revealed heart, how do you think the paralytic man felt after all these things?

*Meditate:* Is your own voice skeptically reasoning, "Why does Jesus speak this way with bold declarations of forgiveness and healing?" Surely we all have challenges in our lives that make it easy to identify with the skeptical scribes in these verses. Search your heart, and ask for the Spirit's revelation. How might you be questioning Christ's words?

*Pray:* Pray and ask that the Spirit would continue to work in our church family with the kind of mighty acts of power, grace, and healing seen in this passage.