



Sunday School Lesson for June 12, 2005

"Healed to Wholeness"

Printed Text Lesson: **Mark 2:1-12**

Devotional Reading: **Mark 7:31-37**

Background Scripture: **Mark 2:1-12; 3:1-6; 8:1-10**

Time: A.D. 28

Place: Capernaum

### **Mark 2:1-12**

**1 And again he entered into Ca-per'na-um after some days; and it was noised that he was in the house.**

**2 And straightway many were gathered together, insomuch that there was no room to receive *them*, no, not so much as about the door: and he preached the word unto them.**

3 And they come unto him, bringing one sick of the palsy, which was borne of four.

**4 And when they could not come nigh unto him for the press, they uncovered the roof where he was: and when they had broken *it* up, they let down the bed wherein the sick of the palsy lay.**

5 When Je'sus saw their faith, he said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, thy sins be forgiven thee.

**6 But there were certain of the scribes sitting there, and reasoning in their hearts,**

7 Why doth this *man* thus speak blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God only?

**8 And immediately when Jesus perceived in his spirit that they so reasoned within themselves, he said unto them, Why reason ye these things in your hearts?**

9 Whether is it easier to say to the sick of the palsy, *Thy* sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk?

**10 But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (he saith to the sick of the palsy,)**

11 I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy bed, and go thy way into thine house.

**12 And immediately he arose, took up the bed, and went forth before them all; insomuch that they were all amazed, and glorified God, saying, We never saw it on this fashion.**

## **LESSON AIMS**

After participating in this lesson, a student should be able to:

Summarize the story of the paralytic who was made whole in body, and in spirit.  
Explain why Jesus' healing ministry was central to His identity as the Son of God.  
Give praise to God for His power and willingness to make persons whole.

## **Introduction**

### **The Case of Steve**

I once was leading a Wednesday night Bible study group through 1 Thessalonians. One of the participants was a young man, Steve, afflicted with cerebral palsy. This condition left him nearly helpless from a physical standpoint. Steve had to be rolled into the room in his wheelchair by a helper. He tried diligently to follow our study in his own Bible, but his lack of limb control had caused him to rip many pages while trying to turn them, leaving a badly tattered Bible. Steve's participation in discussion was ponderous, even painful. He either spelled out words by pointing to a signing board or tried to verbalize his comments using a voice that was difficult to understand. Sometimes the other adults in this group were impatient as Steve tried to ask a question, for I usually needed him to repeat it many times before I could understand it.

As we got to 1 Thessalonians 4, we began to talk about the nature of Christ's second coming. Suddenly, Steve motioned that he wanted to ask a question. He was very excited, and this caused the question to be even harder to decipher than usual. He enthusiastically repeated it many times until I finally got it. The question was this, "When Jesus comes, will I get a new body?"

I have always had a relatively healthy body, so it took me a second to appreciate the implications of this question. Steve looked forward to the day when his poor, twisted body would be able to walk and talk just like all the "normal" people he observed around him. What a great day that will be! Steve passed away a few years ago without being healed from cerebral palsy, even though I know he prayed for this healing many times. It thrills my heart to know that he is now praising God with no impediment of his defective earthly body.

Today's lesson is about a "Steve" from the ministry of Jesus. He, too, had a nearly helpless physical condition. Surely he also dreamed of being "normal," of walking without help and talking so that he was easily understood. In today's marvelous story, this man received a new body, a miracle of wholeness from Jesus.

## **LESSON BACKGROUND**

When Jesus came to a city, the magistrates and all of the city leaders knew it. He worked in such a way that everybody knew He was there. He changed things. The second and third chapters of Mark's Gospel contain several brief stories, sometimes referred to as "conflict narratives." In these accounts Jesus or His disciples do something that causes people to be upset with them.

In Mark 2:1-12 the healing of the paralytic is accompanied by a pronouncement of forgiveness of sins, causing the Jewish leaders to view Jesus as a blasphemer. In

2:13-17 Jesus attends a celebration at the home of His new disciple, Levi (also known as Matthew). The Jewish religious leaders see this party group as "the wrong crowd," and Jesus is again criticized. As with the paralytic, Jesus draws a connection between physical health and spiritual health, saying, "They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance" (2:17).

This man who was sick of the palsy was in an immobile state. Palsy is a term that was applied to a number of diseases during Jesus' time. It was used to describe the condition of any person who was unable to command movement in an area of his body. This man apparently was incapable of commanding movement that enabled him to walk. In palsy of this type, the muscles, tissues, blood vessels, bones, nerves, and every other physical attribute necessary for movement are present. But for some reason, flesh rebels against command.

This week's lesson shows some of the terrible tensions that Jesus encountered in His ministry. On the one hand, He found people in desperate need of the forgiveness and healing that He freely offered. Their faith, their gratitude, and their blessings inspire and encourage us. On the other hand, Jesus was criticized by critics who hoped for His failure, were constantly offended by His claims, and resented His refusal to submit to their authority.

### **Packed House (Mark 2:1, 2)**

#### **1. At what location was Jesus at the time of this incident?**

At this time Jesus was in Capernaum. He resided there after he was violently rejected by the people in Nazareth (his hometown). They were so angry that they tried to murder him. (Luke 4:16-30) Capernaum was located on a trade route at the North end of the Sea of Galilee, about 3 miles West of the inlet of the Jordan River. This was also thought to be the home of Peter & Andrew (Matt 4:18), James & John (v. 21), and Matthew (Matt. 9:9) whom were Jesus' first disciples. Also, during this time, John the Baptist had been put in prison.

#### **2. Why were there so many people in the house where Jesus was (v. 2)?**

The news of Jesus' ministry traveled fast. After John was put in prison, Jesus began his work preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God (Mark 1:14) telling lost souls "the time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent and believe in the gospel" (the good news). Note: Repentance and faith are man's required response to God's gracious offer of salvation.

The teaching ministry of Jesus astonished many for he taught with authority unlike the scribes. The scribes considered themselves to be experts in the OT scriptures however, their authority was based upon that of other rabbis. Jesus' authoritative teachings, however, was that of the Spoken Word of God. Jesus' teachings were direct, personal, and forceful which is what captivated those who heard him and news had traveled fast around town that Jesus was there. Crowds began to gather immediately; some looking to hear a word, receive a healing or just to see the Master Teacher.

### **3. Who were those people critical of Jesus' ministry that were also present and listening to him?**

The Pharisees and teachers of the law were amongst those in the crowd as Jesus taught. They were self-centered, self-righteous and faithless. They had come from every town in Galilee and Judea and from the capital city of Jerusalem (5:17). Jesus' reputation had spread far and wide, and after hearing so much about Him, the religious leaders felt it was their duty to investigate His teachings for Jesus taught as one with authority.

#### **Dramatic Entrance (Mark 2:3, 4)**

### **4. What happened that interrupted Jesus' teaching?**

During Jesus' teaching/preaching, crowds had gathered and filled the house to capacity in such there was no room to hold them all. We can assume that the rest of the crowd had spilled over into the courtyard.

As Jesus continued preaching to this spiritually thirsty crowd, there were four men who had come carrying a man sick with the palsy (paralyzed). They were trying to make their way to Jesus. We can assume that this man's paralytic condition was very severe since he had to be carried around. When the men saw that they could not get to Jesus due to the crowd, they did not become discouraged, they did not become dismayed, they didn't give up and neither did they turn around and go back from whence they came. They continued in determination and great faith and thought of a way to get in to see Jesus. They carried the palsy man onto the rooftop of the house. So determined to get their friend to Jesus, the men tore the roof off the house. What a dramatic risk they took. Did they consider the homeowner, who may be furious after this stunt? Probably not. These men were on a mission to get their friend to Jesus without allowing anything to hinder them. After they had torn the roof off, they picked up their palsy friend along with his bed and lowered him down into the house to Jesus. As we can see, these men were committed to their task and committed to their faith.

We too must have this same kind of determination and faith when it comes to being followers of Christ. Do not allow any obstacle or circumstance to block your way to Jesus, just come and bring someone with you. We are to be a help to each other as these men were to their friend.

#### **Dramatic Pronouncement (Mark 2:5)**

### **5. What were Jesus' first words to the paralyzed man, and why were they so significant?**

When the four friends lowered the palsy man before Jesus, Jesus said, "Son, your sins are forgiven thee". Jesus no doubt saw the aggressive, persistent effort of the paralytic's friends which was visible evidence of their faith in Christ to heal but before

the physical healing, Jesus saw a much greater need in this man. The palsy man needed to be forgiven of his sins. Many Jews in those days believed that all disease and affliction was a direct result of one's sins. This paralytic may have believed that as well; thus he would have welcomed forgiveness of his sins before healing. Jesus dismissed the man's sin and freed him from the guilt of it. (Matt 9:2). Let us not imply that this man's condition was due to sin, as Jesus did not suggest that this man's situation was caused by sin, but He did recognize the man's need for forgiveness. Jesus also recognized the man's faith. Jesus knew he had a repentant heart and wanted to be right with God as well as be healed of his disease. Jesus' words were a response to the man's trusting heart, and he became a forgiven man. In this text, Jesus demonstrated He has the power to forgive sin which shows forth his deity.

We must realize that Jesus' mission was to restore the gap between God and man that had been destroyed by sin. So fitting, that Jesus would provide this man a "spiritual" healing, which was his purpose for dying on the cross. It was to save a wretch like you and me that we might have a right to the tree of life. For we are all sinners saved by grace.

### **Responses (Mark 2:6-10)**

#### **6. What was the reaction of the religious leaders, and how did Jesus know about it? (v. 6)**

**When the religious leaders heard Jesus' words to the paralytic man, they all said within themselves "Why doth this man speak blasphemies?" and, "who can forgive sins but God only?" First let us be mindful that no one (religious leaders) spoke out loud. Now, if we look closely at vs. 6, it says "certain of the scribes"... meaning a particular group pondered the same thoughts within their heart. They were all of the same mind (birds of a feather will flock together).**

Jesus, being one with God, is omniscience (all knowing). He knows all and he sees all. He knew their thoughts even though they did not verbalize them. We must realize that Jesus knows the heart of man. He knows everything there is to know about us for he is the one who made us. For he knows the number of hairs on our head. In verse 8, "perceived in his spirit" can be translated "by His spirit". This is not the Holy Spirit, but the **omniscient** mind of the Savior (which is confirmation to those who believe that Jesus is God manifested in the flesh).

#### **7. What was it about Jesus' statement that upset the leaders? (v. 7)**

Jesus said, "Son, thy sins be forgiven thee". The religious leaders knew that only God could forgive sins; and they felt that Jesus had blasphemed. They also felt he was claiming to be of equal status with God. The scribes were correct in saying that only God can forgive sins (cf. Is. 43:25), but incorrect in saying Jesus blasphemed. They refused to recognize Jesus' power as coming from God, much less that He was God. Little did they know that once you've seen the Son you have seen the Father.

## **8. How did Jesus set up a situation that could put them to shame? (vs. 8-9)**

Jesus being all knowing realizing the motives of the religious leaders and after revealing to all what was in their hearts, he went a step further to put them at a loss for words-by posing the question to them of whether it was much easier to say, "your sins are forgiven you" -since no human can prove that such a thing actually occurred since it is invisible; or is it easier to say, "Arise and take up they bed and walk?" Commanding a paralytic to walk would be more difficult to say convincingly, however, because the actions of the paralytic would immediately verify the effect of the command. Jesus left no room for them to answer but immediately focused on the paralytic man. In verse 10, Jesus assures the paralytic that He (The Son of Man) has the power on earth to forgive sins; and He then tells the man to take up his bed and go to his own house, to prove to the religious leaders that His power to heal the paralytic's physical infirmities proved the truth of His claim and power to forgive sins. The paralytic man never said a word (just like the religious leaders) but Jesus knew his heart. He knew the man wanted a healing a physical healing as well. And when Jesus commanded that the man take up his bed and go his way, the palsy did just as Jesus said. Jesus' deity is very clear; in that He is the Son of God, as he speaks things into action just as the Father spoke this world into existence. Let us not be like the religious leaders who had become so consumed with their own self-righteousness and jealousy that they refused to recognize the deity of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

## **9. What did Jesus call Himself, and what did this title convey? (v. 10)**

In verse 10, Jesus referred to Himself as the Son of Man. He used this title for Himself to emphasize His humility (those themes associated with his crucifixion and suffering for mankind, and His reign which would convey His authority as well as having all power in Heaven and on earth).

### **Praise God (Mark 2:11-12)**

## **10. How did the people respond to the miracle?**

After Jesus commanded the paralytic man to take up his bed and walk; the man did just that and the crowd was amazed. This man did not hesitate, stumble, nor fall but he immediately stood straight up and carried the bed that once carried him and walked out of the house. The crowd was ecstatic for they knew a miracle had taken place right before their eyes and they also knew where the source of the miracle had come from. It had come from God, and they began to Glorify God. Let us remember that God inhabits the praises of his people. In a house where there was once noise because of the presence of Jesus, there was a new noise because of the Power of Jesus.

It is time for us, the body of Christ, to make some noise about the Power of Christ just as this crowd did. We ought to make some noise about his Saving power. For we are they way people see Christ.

## **Conclusion**

Jesus is healing all the sin sick souls. He is the Master Doctor and he can make you Whole. Although we may have an ache here and a pain there or maybe we are like the paralytic man-we are just simply immobile and don't have the activity of our limbs. Whatever the situation is, we all have one thing in common: a sin sick soul that can only be healed through faith in our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. As we saw in our lesson, the friends of the palsy man had strong faith. They had a faith that was active, alive, and relentless. They believed Jesus had the power to heal their friend and He did-not just physically but spiritually. The palsy man's sins were forgiven him and ours can be forgiven to if we just believe by Faith. By his stripes, we are Healed!

### **Prayer**

Heavenly Father, maker and creator of all, thank you for the many blessings you have bestowed upon us. Thank you for your mercy and your grace. Thank you for looking down upon this sin sick world and sending your beloved son as a cure for our souls. You looked beyond our physical faults, Lord, and saw our need and that need was a saviour. We shall forever praise your name. Thank you for being the God of my salvation. Amen.

### **Thought to Remember**

God's miracles should cause us to give Him glory.

### **Anticipating Next Week's Lesson**

Study Mark 14:53-65; 15:1-3 Trials and Opposition

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