

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

*February 11, 2018*

Dr. Timothy Wilson authored a book called *Strangers to Ourselves*. After decades of intensive research Wilson says many of our decisions happen below conscious awareness.

Meaning—as one reviewer puts it, “You are (Probably) Wrong About You. She says,

“If you want to be more successful — at anything — than you are right now, you need to know yourself and your skills. And when you fall short of your goals, you need to know why. This should be no problem; after all, who knows you better than you do?”

Right? Obvious. But wrong says Dr. Wilson.

“Who's right? Who knows you best? Well, the research suggests that (others) do — other people's assessment of your personality predicts your behavior, on average, better than your assessment does. The truth is, we don't know ourselves nearly as well as we think we do. When it comes to performance, our surprising self-ignorance makes understanding where we went right and where we went wrong difficult, to say the least.”

What do you think—We don't know ourselves nearly as well as we think we do.

You are probably wrong about you.

Ouch.

That is a bit of a hard pill to swallow, but if I am honest about me—what I want changes. One moment, I'll give anything to get something another day that all changes. My emotions ebb and flow like a barometer.

If we are wrong—who is right?

Who is right about you? What you need, what you are here for etc?

Jesus.

You are probably wrong about you. Jesus is not wrong about you.

Jesus knows what you need better than you do.

The scriptures are in agreement—You are probably wrong about you.

And if we are wrong about ourselves—we aren't going to know what we need most.

Main idea: Jesus knows what we need most and offers it.

We are going to watch Jesus.

We are going to listen to Jesus.

We are going to follow Jesus around and get to know him.

“And when he returned to Capernaum after some days, it was reported that he was at home. <sup>2</sup> 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. <sup>3</sup> And they came, bringing to him a paralytic carried by four men. <sup>4</sup> 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. <sup>5</sup> And when Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, “Son, your sins are forgiven.” <sup>6</sup> Now some of the scribes were sitting there, questioning in their hearts, <sup>7</sup> “Why does this man speak like that? He is blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone?” <sup>8</sup> 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? <sup>9</sup> Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Rise, take up your bed and walk’? <sup>10</sup> But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins”—he said to the paralytic— <sup>11</sup> “I say to you, rise, pick up your bed, and go home.” <sup>12</sup> 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!”

## PRAY

Where are we in Mark as we—

We are going to watch Jesus.

We are going to listen to Jesus.

We are going to follow Jesus around and get to know him.

We've watched Jesus go out on a preaching tour in the state of Galilee. We've listened to the sermon he preached—

“The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.” Mark 1:15

And now as we follow him around we join him back in his ministry base—in the port town of Capernaum. Jesus goes back to the same house that the town surrounded a few weeks prior on that memorable Saturday night.

Jesus is back and so is the crowd.

Just as the last time he was in Capernaum the crowd thronged around him. Unlike last time, this time they came IN his house. The home was bursting beyond capacity and Jesus began to ‘Preach the Word.’

We know what he was preaching because Mark has already told us up in chapter 1,

“The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.” Mark 1:15

The attention of Capernaum was fixed on this man as he taught about NOW being the time to turn and believe in him and his message.

If we were there we would see everyone leaning in straining to hear the voice of Jesus. A quiet gathering spilling out all over the front of the house and into the street. And then in the corner of your eyes, you pick up

movement. At first you are not sure what it is, but then you see them—

Vs. 3,

“And they came, bringing to him a paralytic carried by four men.”

We don't know who these four men were but we know they were not going to be put off by something as trifling as a crowd. I wonder if last time the town of Capernaum came this home, I wonder if this group of 5 found Jesus gone already to the desolate places.

Now that Jesus was back, they were not going to let something as trifling as a crowd push them back. These guys were determined. They were ready to surmount any barrier for their friend.

Do you have four friends like that?

“<sup>4</sup> 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.”

To me that sounds like a plan 5 guys would come up with. Just a little stupid and a bit risky. I know! Let's cut a hole in the roof. Yeah. Yeah.

I would have liked to have heard that conversation.

In ancient Palestine, houses were built with the stairs on the outside of the home. The 4 climbed the stairs and got

to the roof. This roof would have been flat with beams stretching from wall to wall and some combination of mud and thatch.

So, as Jesus is teaching, above him 4 guys dig through the roof. This hole had to be big enough to lower a stretcher down on the floor without dumping the paralytic.

These four friends reach in and lay their friend down at the feet of Jesus. Remember, he had been healing people in the town of Capernaum and the reason this paralytic was brought there would seem obvious.

And yet we read vs. 5,

<sup>5</sup> And when Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, “Son, your sins are forgiven.”

What?

I can imagine the four friends up on the roof—their facial expressions. Going from excitement to confusion. I might be tempted to say,

“Uh, Jesus I think you got Ralph’s paperwork mixed up. We are here because he can’t walk.”

That seems completely random at first blush. Why is Jesus talking about forgiving this paralytic’s sins? It seems out of place, offbeat, strange and downright bizarre.

We aren’t worried about his sins—we are worried about his legs. They don’t work. He can’t walk.

Who cares about sins?

If we are probably going to be wrong about what we need, we ought to expect to be wrong about what this paralytic needs most.

He, his friends and the crowd thinks—healing.

Jesus thinks and says forgiveness.

What does this mean?

They did not know what he needed most.

Let me tell you what this does not mean. This man was not a paralytic because he sinned somehow more grievously. That is not the way it works.

It also does not mean that Jesus doesn't care about this poor man's plight.

What DOES this mean?

It means that the man who was carried on a mat by his friends to be healed by Jesus had a more pressing need than a remedy for his legs.

What was that? A remedy for his sins.

Shocking.

Imagine you take a visit to a country without any public services. And imagine you find someone lying on the side of the road, unable to walk, unable to work, unable to get

food and you have a truck full of food and you say, “Son, your sins are forgiven.”

How would people respond?

They would say—stop talking about sins—this man needs to eat. Feed him.

But we don’t know what we need.

Remember who Jesus is. He is the creator. He is the one who created all things, including men and women in his image. He is creator. He is our designer. He is the one who has formed us each personally.

He knows better than we do what we need.

And so—when Jesus says, “Son, your sins are forgiven.”

He knows best.

Jesus knows what you need more than you do.

This man’s biggest problem is that he had sins that needed to be forgiven, not that he had legs that didn’t work. What is your biggest problem?

This man did not know what he really needed—neither do we. Our problem, like this man, is that we are more aware of other needs than sin.

We don’t feel it. We don’t know it.



There was a group of people that had alarm bells going off in their heads when Jesus says, “Son, your sins are forgiven.”

The scribes.

The scribes were the ones that were hired by the town to be teachers of the town. Jesus taught with an authority that they did not have. And today, they are witnessing it firsthand.

How would they respond?

<sup>6</sup> Now some of the scribes were sitting there, questioning in their hearts, <sup>7</sup> “Why does this man speak like that? He is blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone?”

They were not wrong.

They had chapter and verse saying that only God forgives sin. One such example was one of the most famous sections in the Hebrew Bible. When God appeared to Moses he said about himself,

“The LORD, the LORD, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, [7] keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the

children and the children's children, to the third and the fourth generation.” Exodus 34:6–7

Do you see who is doing the forgiving here? God. No one else. The verse does not say, “The LORD, the LORD, and this dude from Nazareth... a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness keeping steadfast love for thousands—forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin...’

No.

They were not wrong to ask the question, “Who can forgive sins but God alone?” Theologically they were exactly right.

Theirs was not a problem of theology but of logic. Their logic went like this:

- We know only God can forgive sins
- This man says he can forgive sins
- Therefore this man is blaspheming

But there was another alternative. Think through the following logic—

Yes, only God can forgive sins and this man says he can forgive sins, therefore this man must be God.

This is what Jesus is saying. Jesus is God. He can take on the prerogatives of God because he is God.

Jesus knew they had trouble with this—he probably saw it written all over their faces.

<sup>8</sup> 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? <sup>9</sup> Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Rise, take up your bed and walk’?”

Which is easier? To forgive or say rise up and walk?

That is a good question. I’m not sure I have a good answer. They both seem pretty difficult to me. It is one thing to say someone is forgiven, but quite another to grant forgiveness. OR to rise up and walk.

If I’m picking I don’t pick door #1 or door #2.

For Jesus, healing and forgiveness are his to grant. One is simple the other horribly costly.

And Jesus gives them a clue by what he says next,

<sup>10</sup> But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins”—he said to the paralytic— <sup>11</sup> “I say to you, rise, pick up your bed, and go home.”

If they were listening, they would have heard the answer to their question—“Where do you get off forgiving people?”

They think that this Jesus of Nazareth is a pretending trying to have authority that he did not have. Jesus gives the ground or the reason for his authority when in the way he answers them—

“But that you may know that the Son of Man...”

He tells them who he is. And they knew what he was saying. Jesus is saying, “I am the Son of Man from Daniel 7,”

Who was that?

[13] “I saw in the night visions,  
and behold, with the clouds of heaven  
there came one like a son of man,  
and he came to the Ancient of Days  
and was presented before him.  
[14] And to him was given dominion  
and glory and a kingdom,  
that all peoples, nations, and languages  
should serve him;  
his dominion is an everlasting dominion,  
which shall not pass away,  
and his kingdom one  
that shall not be destroyed. Daniel 7:13–14

Who can forgive sins but God alone, indeed?

Jesus is the Son of Man presented to the Ancient of Days—  
with all the prerogative and equality with God. Jesus, the  
one preaching the word to them and sitting in their  
midst—he is the one

Who has been given dominion and glory and a kingdom so  
that every people and nation, language and tribe should  
serve him. By the way, his dominion—his authority is  
everlasting—it is forever.

That is how this man can forgive sins. He is the Son of Man. God the Son.

Back to the question—

<sup>9</sup> Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Rise, take up your bed and walk’?

I don’t know which is easier, both are hard. But Jesus proves who he is by what he does.

Jesus continues,

<sup>10</sup> But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins”—he said to the paralytic— <sup>11</sup> “I say to you, rise, pick up your bed, and go home.” <sup>12</sup> 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!”

We have said that miracles are NOT just raw displays of power BUT they tell us who Jesus is. What does this sign tell us about Jesus?

What does he do?

He meets a man who cannot walk, sees his faith and says, “My son your sins are forgiven.”

He then confronts the men in the room who think he is blaspheming.

He proves that he had the right to forgive sins by healing the paralytic man.

Put this all together.

This man who could not walk needed forgiveness more than he needed healing. I can tell you, his four compatriots did not take him to Jesus to be forgiven—but to be healed.

What does this tell us?

Just as this man and his friends did not know what they needed from Jesus most, we don't either.

Jesus knows what you need better than you know what you need. You are probably wrong about you. Jesus never is.

Jesus knows what you need better than you do.

Maybe you don't buy that. Think with me for a moment or two. Maybe you don't have a problem as obvious as being unable to walk.

Maybe you have a different problem. The kind of problem that bothers you enough that if you could go to Jesus personally, you would ask him to fix this one thing.

What is it for you?

- Estranged from your kids?
- Kids to become Christians?
- You need a job.
- You are in pain.

- MORE

If you went to Jesus with any of these problems, how would you feel if he said to you, “Son (Daughter) Your sins are forgiven.”

What does this mean?

Your biggest problem is that you are a sinner.

This reality is something that has hit home for Christians. We have at some point in the past realized that we don't just fall short but that we are sinners.

We have sin that gushes out of our hearts and lives naturally and no amount of obedience or religion can plug that flow.

If you are a Christian, Jesus is the only one who can forgive you.

You might say, What right does Jesus have to forgive me? I have not sinned against him.

Good question. No. Great question.

You might think it would be a little like if I came over to your house and punched you full in the nose. And you get knocked out because I really know how to punch. And your head rings and you are angry at me.

What if your friend was there and she said, “Don’t worry I forgive you for what you did him.”

Uh. No right.

But that seems what Jesus is doing here. Jesus tells this man whom has presumably never met—Son, your sins are forgiven.

What does that mean?

And understanding what this means helps us understand why we don’t know what we need.

It means that Jesus is always the most offended party when we sin. That is what he is saying. That is what is going on here.

All the sins committed by that paralytic man—I can imagine most of them were verbal and internal—all of those sins were primarily against Jesus.

What about you?

Even better question.

All of your sins—everything you have done wrong has primarily been aimed at Jesus. How is that right?

He created you. He owns you. You are his. Anything you do to violate his purpose you do against him. That is the essence and nature of sin.



“What makes sin *sin*, what makes it so profoundly heinous, what makes it so deeply repugnant and culpable, is that it is offense against God. We dare not forget that the first commandment, according to Jesus, is the commandment to love God with heart and soul and mind and strength.

Thus the first sin— first sequentially, first in fundamental importance— is not to love God with heart and soul and mind and strength. It is the sin we always commit when we commit any other sin. At the most profound level, whenever we sin, God is the most offended party. If, like David, we commit adultery, God is the most offended party. If we cheat on our income taxes, God is the most offended party. If we puff ourselves up in pride, indulge in slander, demean a colleague, or nurture bitterness, God is the most offended party. If we watch porn on the internet, God is the most offended party...Whatever forgiveness we try to secure, we must have God’s forgiveness, or we have nothing.

Yes, you and I need to forgive one another. Yet in the most profound analysis of what sin is, only God can forgive sin.”  
D.A. Carson

And that is what Jesus does here—

Forgiveness is either something you have or something you need.

Which are you?

Christians

You don't know what you need either.

