

I.N.I.

Sixth Sunday after Epiphany
Feb. 3, 2013
Mark 2:1-12

In Christ Jesus, the Great Physician of body and soul, Dear Fellow Redeemed,

We have mentioned this before. The main theme of Epiphany is to manifest, to show forth Jesus as true God. That is Mark's theme also—to display Jesus as the Christ, the Messiah by His words and works. That is why Mark includes this miracle of the healing of the paralyzed man. In this Bible lesson Jesus Himself testifies to His person when He said: **"BUT THAT YOU MAY KNOW THAT THE SON OF MAN HAS POWER ON EARTH TO FORGIVE SINS" –**

Many people followed Jesus and flocked around Him because of their bodily needs. They were sick, diseased, dying. They had heard Jesus could heal them and so they came to Him. But Jesus had come to earth for a far greater purpose than just to heal and to help us with our physical needs. He came to provide healing and health for our souls!

At the end of Mark 1 we read that Jesus couldn't even go into the city where He had cleansed the leper because of the crush of people following after Him. Our text takes place shortly after this event and we see the same thing happening. We are told, **AND AGAIN HE ENTERED CAPERNAUM AFTER SOME DAYS, AND IT WAS HEARD THAT HE WAS IN THE HOUSE. IMMEDIATELY MANY GATHERED TOGETHER, SO THAT THERE WAS NO LONGER ROOM TO RECEIVE THEM, NOT EVEN NEAR THE DOOR. AND HE PREACHED THE WORD TO THEM.** Wouldn't that be great if that was said about our church? We had so many coming to hear the Word of Jesus that we couldn't fit anymore in. Packed to the door.

Unfortunately some who had gathered to see and hear Jesus were not there to be edified, but to criticize, to spy on Him and to try to catch Him in some false teaching or immoral act. Luke tells us that Pharisees and teachers of the law were there. Matthew and Mark tell us that scribes were also there. But five men were not there yet. A paralyzed man and his four friends.

When they heard that Jesus was in the house they came carrying their friend on a cot. When they got to the house they couldn't get in. There was no room. But these men were not deterred. They went up the stairs (no doubt on the outside of the building, as most houses were built that way) and walked on the flat roof.

They began to remove the tiles of the roof. Some wooden or tiled roofs were covered with sod and perhaps this was one of them for our text says **WHEN THEY HAD BROKEN THROUGH, or AFTER DIGGING THROUGH.** This no doubt took some time, removing the sod and dirt, taking up the tiles, possibly even removing some of the boards to make a hole big enough for the man to be lowered parallel to the ground. Imagine the astonishment of the crowd as they saw what was happening. But they hadn't seen nothing yet!

As the man was being lowered down Jesus not only saw him, but He saw into him. He saw into his heart and the hearts of his friends. He saw hearts of repentant faith. Our text says, **WHEN JESUS SAW THEIR FAITH, HE SAID TO THE PARALYTIC, "SON, YOUR SINS ARE FORGIVEN YOU."** Matthew adds the words, **"SON, BE OF GOOD CHEER, YOUR SINS ARE FORGIVEN YOU."**

What amazing words. **SON**=a word of tenderness, like that of a father or mother for their child. By using that word, Jesus assures this man that he is a child of God and that He, Jesus, knows his needs and is now acting out of love for him.

YOUR SINS ARE FORGIVEN YOU=literally they **ARE SENT AWAY**. Scripture says our sins are **CAST INTO THE DEPTHS OF THE SEA,...AS FAR AS THE EAST IS FROM THE WEST, SO FAR HAS HE REMOVED OUR TRANSGRESSION FROM US,...HE BLOTS OUT OUR TRANSGRESSIONS AND WILL NOT REMEMBER OUR SINS.** What more blessed words could this man have heard?

Well how about **BE HEALED!!** That's why this man was there! That is why his friends went to all that work and effort. But Jesus knew this man, and He knows each of us better than we even

know ourselves. And the greatest need we have is not **HEALTH, WEALTH, LONG LIFE, HAPPINESS, RETIREMENT BENEFITS** and so on, our greatest need is **FORGIVENESS OF SINS**. What good would healing do this man if his sins still burdened his soul? What good would it do this man, to be able to walk, run and jump and still go to bed every night with an accusing conscience? What good would physical healing do if he were still spiritually sick?

Others that were there also were surprised by Jesus' words. Surprised because they felt He was taking upon Himself more power and glory than He ought. The scribes, Pharisees and teachers of the law were sitting there thinking to themselves, **WHY DOES THIS MAN SPEAK BLASPHEMIES LIKE THIS? WHO CAN FORGIVE SINS BUT GOD ALONE?**

Part of what they said was true. God alone has power to forgive sins. But because they did not believe Jesus was God, their conclusion was wrong. Jesus did have the authority and power to forgive sins. In fact forgiveness has been earned by Him, by His atoning sacrifice on the cross, by His taking our place and paying for the guilt and punishment of our sins. He has merited forgiveness for us all.

Jesus used His omniscience to know their thoughts and must have shocked them and the whole crowd with these words, **WHY DO YOU REASON ABOUT THESE THINGS IN YOUR HEARTS? WHICH IS EASIER, TO SAY TO THE PARALYTIC, YOUR SINS ARE FORGIVEN YOU, OR TO SAY, ARISE, TAKE UP YOUR BED AND WALK?** In Matthew we read Jesus also saying, **WHY DO YOU THINK EVIL IN YOUR HEARTS?**

In other words Jesus is asking them, "If you do not question My ability to do what seems harder to you, performing miracles (for surely they had seen or heard Him do these things before), then why would you question My authority when I do what seems easier to you, forgiving sins?"

Jesus did not wait for an answer. He turns to the paralyzed man and said, **I SAY TO YOU, ARISE, TAKE UP YOUR BED, AND GO YOUR WAY TO YOUR HOUSE. AND IMMEDIATELY HE AROSE, TOOK UP THE BED, AND WENT OUT IN THE PRESENCE OF THEM ALL...**

The Pharisees and scribes could not see the effect of Jesus' saying: **YOUR SINS ARE FORGIVEN YOU**. But they could clearly see the effect of His second command, **ARISE AND GO TO YOUR HOUSE**. They would have to admit that Jesus not only had the power to heal, but that He also had the authority and power to forgive sins.

Others who were in that crowd **WERE AMAZED AND GLORIFIED GOD, SAYING, WE NEVER SAW ANYTHING LIKE THIS!**

Do we get the point of this Bible lesson?

WE need Jesus! We NEED Jesus! We need JESUS!

FOR TOTAL SOUL & BODY CARE

I: He gets to the Heart of the matter.

II: So that the whole body is Healed.

This morning Jesus has already announced to us after our confession of sins, **YOUR SINS ARE FORGIVEN!** All of our evil, lustful thoughts, all of our sinful, hurtful words, all of our selfish, self-centered actions have been nailed to the cross and removed. They have been cast away, blotted out, covered. We have been given perfect righteousness through Christ, we have been given the assurance of everlasting life, we have peace with God and will enjoy eternal glory with our God in heaven.

To all of you out in the pews who are hurting physically: with arthritis, colds, flu, old age, aches and pains, diabetes, or other ills, **BE OF GOOD CHEER, YOUR SINS ARE FORGIVEN YOU!** Why is that such good news? We have an eternity assured us where there will be none of these ills, and if Jesus can take care of our greatest problem, **SIN**, He surely can take care of, remove and see us through our physical ills.

To all of you out in the pews who are hurting mentally and emotionally from depression, loss of loved ones, problems with raising children, marital strife, job stress and turmoil, aged parents, loneliness, hatred, jealousy, burnout, fear, lack of purpose and a sense of worthlessness, **BE OF GOOD CHEER, YOUR SINS ARE FORGIVEN YOU!** Why is that such good news? We have an eternity assured us where there will be none of these ills, and if Jesus can take care of your greatest problem, **SIN**, He surely can take care of, remove and see us through our emotional and mental ills.

To all of you out in the pews who are tempted-- to worry; to lust; to be lazy; to despise God's Word; to speak profanity or curse and swear; to disobey your parents; to commit adultery; to hate someone; to gossip about others; to lie; to practice hypocrisy; to abuse our spouse or children spiritually, physically and emotionally; to exact vengeance on those who hurt us; to get involved in pornography and sexual immorality; to get drunk and abuse drugs; to covet; to gamble and be filled with greed and deceit? **BE OF GOOD CHEER, YOUR SINS ARE FORGIVEN YOU!** Why is that such good news? We have been redeemed from the punishment of our sins, we have been set free from the power of sin, we have been given power over sin through the Holy Spirit. Jesus has taken care of our greatest problem, **SIN**, and in and through His Word gives us the power to say **NO** to sin and to live for Him.

Jesus wants us to remember everyday that it is He who gets to the heart of the matter and provides for our greatest need, **FORGIVENESS OF SINS** and it is He who then also, according to His will, in His time and in His own way, also provides for all of our needs.

Peter says **CAST ALL YOUR CARE UPON HIM, FOR HE CARES FOR YOU.** The friends of the paralyzed man did not give up when they first couldn't get into the crowded home, they went through the roof. Neither should we give up in seeking Jesus' help, daily turning to His Word for forgiveness, guidance and strength and turning to Him in daily prayer.

Jesus provides **FOR TOTAL SOUL & BODY CARE.** He knows our greatest need. He has satisfied that greatest need with His shed blood and we can be assured that if the Son of Man has the power to be able to do that, He also has the power to help in all of our bodily needs as well.

Forgiveness is ours. May this Good News fill our hearts-**PARDONED OF ALL SINS, CLEANSED OF ALL SPIRITUAL DISEASES, REDEEMED OF ALL UNGODLY DEEDS** by the precious blood of Jesus who loved us and gave Himself for us.

Yes, **JESUS THY BLOOD AND RIGHTEOUSNESS MY BEAUTY ARE, MY GLORIOUS DRESS; MIDST FLAMING WORLDS, IN THESE ARRAYED, WITH JOY SHALL I LIFT UP MY HEAD.**

Let us pray: Lord, may I live every day in the full assurance that You have forgiven all my sins through Jesus Christ, my Savior. May that assurance be mine, not only in life but also in death. Let me always find my highest joy in your unending grace and forgiving love. Amen.