



MARK: Jesus Unfiltered

Forgiver - Mark 2:1-12

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

*(Leaders, please use these questions **as a guide for discussion**. Please don't feel like you have to go through every one!)*

Connect: How does seeing Jesus as both all-powerful and deeply compassionate shape your trust in him?

Warm-Up

1. Is forgiveness a controversial topic in our culture today? Why or why not?
2. Why do you think some people see forgiveness as a sign of weakness or as incompatible with justice?

Read Mark 2:1-5

3. Why had everyone gathered at the house? What had the paralysed man and friends come to Jesus for? Do you think they would have been bewildered or confronted by what happens?
4. Whilst the man had a need for physical healing, how was forgiveness actually an even deeper need?
5. What's the difference between forgiveness and ignoring sin? Why is this an important distinction?
6. In what ways do people today look for "band-aid fixes" instead of deep heart-level change?
7. Why are we all in need of forgiveness? Do you find this easy or difficult to accept?
8. Why do you think that some people have a great deal of trouble accepting God's forgiveness?

Read Mark 2:6-12

9. Why do the scribes see Jesus' words as blasphemy, and what are they actually getting right?
10. How does the physical healing function as proof of Jesus' authority to forgive sins?
11. What does this passage show us about who Jesus is, not just what he can do?
12. How is it that God can still be just and forgive sin? How can we receive the forgiveness of Jesus?
13. How does Jesus' authority to forgive sins challenge the way we view guilt and shame?
14. What does it look like to truly believe that your sins are forgiven?
15. How might this passage change the way we approach God when we fail or fall back into sin?

Apply: Is there anything for which you need to ask God's forgiveness? How can you demonstrate God's forgiveness this week?

PRAY: *Heavenly Father, we thank you so much that Jesus does indeed have authority to forgive sins. Please help us to see him clearly, confess our sins, and receive the forgiveness that he offers. Please also help us to forgive others as we have been forgiven. In Jesus' name, Amen.*

TITLE: JESUS - Forgiver

PASSAGE: Mark 2:1-12

LOCATION: St John's Wishart 9AM

BI: Jesus comes as the one with authority to forgive sins

STRUCTURE:

- Our Deepest Need - 2:1-5
- Forgiving Lord - 2:5-12

- My mum is a radiographer and loves everything medical.
- When it comes to TV shows - she could easily flick to a medical show. It could have been something about an emergency room or something like 'One born every minute' or some other doco.
- And I considered myself pretty brave and so was fairly fine watching all of this - until they started showing orthopaedic surgery.
- When orthopedic surgery came on the TV, I was out of there!

- Now orthopedic surgeons operate on joints and bones.
- But the tools that they use to do these surgeries are something from a nightmare!!
- They use saws, hammers, chisels, drills, I'm sure there's a nail gun and bandsaw or something in there...
- And the methods that they use when operating look like something from a horror film - hammering this out, drilling into this part of the bone...
- It's not for the faint hearted!! And even describing it makes me feel a bit grossed out.
- BUT it's all for a good reason.
- What they are doing when they are hacking someone up - is actually fixing the root cause. They are fixing the heart of the matter, and fixing up pain and ailment.
- Because when you have a hip with multiple fractures - the last thing that you need is a band-aid!
- If you have a dislocated shoulder - you can't just treat it with panadol or neorophen all your life...you need deep intervention
- You need to go see the orthopedic surgeon.

- And similarly,. We need to have our deep and pressing need met.
- Whether you know it or not, we all have a deep and urgent and pressing need that needs to be fixed.
- And it can't be treated by anything that we can do - we need someone else to do it for us.
- The deep problem that needs treatment, is the problem of our sin.
- Sin is universal and sin is something that we all have done, and will do.
- Last week we defined sin as living life and making decisions with ourselves as king or queen over our lives.
- Sin is disregarding and disobeying the God of the universe who created us and knows us and loves us - and instead going our own way.
 - Not just the biggies like 'murder or theft'
- Sin is any action or lifestyle that's against God's good will for us.
- And sin leads to fractured relationships with each other...it leaves a trail of darkness and pollution..
- But not only that - it actually comes with a consequence, and that is judgement from God. Disregarding God's rightful rule - leads rightly to death and judgment.
- And this is our deep and pressing need that we need taken care of.
- This is the great deep-rooted and universal problem that we have.
- We need someone to get into our hearts and do the orthopaedic surgery - we can't just have a band-aid fix, we need a permanent solution.

- And well today in Mark 2, we do see the solution.
- We'll see that Jesus - who is the saviour, the son of God - has come with authority to forgive sins.
- **Our Deepest Need**
- Let's get into it - look with me at Mark 2:1
- "And when he returned to Capernaum after some days, it was reported that he was at home. 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."
- If you were here last week - you might remember that Jesus was gaining popularity.
- So much so that he went to other towns in order to be able to preach!
- But he's come back home...
- And so here he is in this house - but it was jam-packed with the crowds.
- So much so that you couldn't get in the door.
 - *You might have experienced being in a super large crowd. Maybe exiting a stadium...you can only really go in the direction of the crowds. It's almost like being caught up in a wave!*
- Well - that's what it was like on this day!
- Cramped. Hot. Lots of bodies.
- But in the midst of this crowd outside the house were 5 men.
- 4 people carrying one man who was paralysed. He couldn't use his legs!
- And so they obviously want Jesus to heal him - but they can't get into the building because of the packed crowds!
- Let's look at what happens:
- V3 "And they came, bringing to him a paralytic carried by four men. 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."
- This is quite the creative solution isn't it!!
- The roofs of the day would have been made with a mixture of straw and clay and dirt.
- And they were so confident in Jesus - that they risked everything to try and get their mate to him.
- So they dug through this roof.
- Just imagine being in the room when this was happening...
- Jesus is in the middle of the room teaching..when all of a sudden a bit of mud and rubble falls from the ceiling.
- Maybe Jesus realises and stops - you're all looking up and rubble is falling everywhere now...in hair, on your faces, in your eyes.
- And then a hole is opened up, sunlight floods the house and you see the four figures making the hole. Quite undignified!
- And this would have taken a while! A hole to lower a man through on a stretcher would have to be at least a meter wide by almost 2m long! 2m squared!
- And then suddenly they begin to shift into the hole - this stretcher with a man on it...and they begin to lower him down.
- You kind of all have to shuffle about to make way for the intruder...and then he's right there in front of Jesus.
- There's an uneasy awkward silence..what's Jesus going to do now!
- V5 "And when Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, "Son, your sins are forgiven.""
- Jesus sees the lengths that the friends go to as a display of their trust in him. It's enormous! They risked all dignity getting this man to him...
- But he doesn't heal him but instead says that his sins are forgiven? What?

- You could imagine one of the friends shouting down to Jesus - *“Ahhh...Jesus - it’s his legs! He can’t walk!”*
- But Jesus wasn’t mistaken...he knew exactly what he was doing.
- Jesus was addressing the greatest need of the man.
- The greatest need for this bloke wasn’t his legs - it was his heart...his soul - he needed forgiveness first and foremost! Forgiveness is the priority!
- All that rebellion against God, all the hardness of heart and sinfulness - Jesus forgives.
- This word forgiveness is often thrown around a bit - but it’s an amazing reality.
 - Jesus pardons this man - he releases this man, cancels the consequences of the sins of this man, leaves behind all that separates them from a perfect relationship.
- This is the man’s deepest and most pressing need.
- This is **our** deepest and most pressing need.
- We need forgiveness. We need our sins and our rebellion against God dealt with - otherwise, we are destined for death! Destined for judgement!
- If we rock up to eternity at the pearly gates with a healed body, 6-pack of abs, great bone density, and long lush hair but with unforgiven sin - guess what - we’re still destined for death!
- And so we need this forgiveness as much as the paralysed man needed it.
- And the source of his forgiveness and our forgiveness is the same - Jesus.
- He alone has the authority to forgive sins.
- **Forgiving Lord**
- The reaction of the room is fascinating.
- Let’s read on:
- V6 “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?”
- Jesus declaring this man’s sin forgiven is actually quite an audacious claim.
- And the scribes (who were the gurus of the Old Testament and gurus of the Law) were grumbling about this.
- And it’s fair enough!
- *Let’s say that on the drive in today, I hit someone’s car on purpose - let’s say Tommy’s car...sorry about that Tommy.*
- *If then Jason comes up to me and says “Michael, your sins are forgiven..” you’d be a bit confused!*
- *What right does Jason have to declare me forgiven? By what authority could he do such a thing? Who is he to declare me right with God?*
- A Similar thing is happening here.
- Only God has the authority to forgive sins - because it’s him that we ultimately sin against!
- So that’s why the religious gurus are confused and grumbling - because by Jesus declaring this man’s sin forgiven, he is claiming to be God.
- And this was regarded as blasphemy - a lie - false teaching, heresy! Punishable!
- But Jesus knew what they were thinking - because he is the son of God! And so confronts them:
- V8 “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? Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Rise, take up your bed and walk’?”
- Which do you think is easier?
- It’s actually saying ‘your sins are forgiven’

- When Jesus said 'your sins are forgiven' - it's not like there was any physical proof. The man didn't glow white, there was no heavenly chime or dong, he didn't grow a halo around his head - there was no way to confirm it!
- But the harder thing for Jesus to say would be 'Rise, and walk and go home' because there would be physical proof!
- It wouldn't be a great look for Jesus if he didn't do that!
- It would be like me saying to the sky with full conviction - "make it snow!" - if it did, gosh you'd be impressed! If it didn't (which it won't) you'd think I was just crazy.
- But what does Jesus do? Let's continue to follow his argument:
- V10 " But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins" —he said to the paralytic— "I say to you, rise, pick up your bed, and go home." 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!"
- The paralytic man is fully healed. Completely - again no physio, no OT, no respite care - fully healed.
- But the healing isn't the main point here - the healing is the proof of Jesus' authority to forgive sins!
- If Jesus can do the harder thing - of making the man walk in front of everyone - then surely he has the authority to do the easier thing - declaring the man forgiven.
- And he does.
- Jesus can forgive sins because he himself is God!
- He alone can address our deepest and most pressing need of our forgiveness of sin!
- He alone can make us right with God for eternity
- He alone can cleanse us from a guilty conscience, can remove the weight of shame - and instead give us freedom and release.
- When he says "Your sins are forgiven" it really means that your sins are forgiven!
- And this is what he came to do.
- Sometimes it can be all too easy to fall into thinking that God doesn't want us.
- That we aren't good enough.
- That we don't pray enough, we don't pray boldly enough, we don't read our bibles daily, we go back to sin all too often...
- We can fall in comparing ourselves to other Christians and think that we aren't nearly as good as them so maybe God is more keen on them than us
- Perhaps guilt and shame have been weighing you down because of a persistent sin..
- Maybe you're here and this is all new to you and you've been living a life without reference to God and you don't think that God would want you..
- Well - Jesus has come to do that orthopaedic surgery. He has come to take away that sin and forgive it...no matter who we are, no matter what we've done...
- Just a few verses later, Jesus says this: V17 "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners."
- Jesus didn't come for the good people...but for sinners like you and me.
- And he came to serve us by laying down his life for us - and taking that sin and punishment that we deserve! He gives his life as a ransom, as the payment for our release and forgiveness.
 - "The one true sacrifice for the forgiveness of sins"
- He came to secure our eternal life!
- All we have to do is turn back to him - confess that we have done wrong and repent and believe in him and all of this will be freely given. Freely. Completely. Eternally.
- And let me tell you - this makes all the difference in the world.
- In Toowoomba Rach and I had good friends called Graham and Jen.

- A number of years ago Graham was diagnosed with a really aggressive and rare cancer.
- Initially - they were reeling from the news. The uncertainty of what was ahead, what life is going to look like, how long Graham had...
- But they didn't despair...because they knew Jesus. They knew that Graham had his deepest and most pressing need met - not healing, but forgiveness. Which meant that even if Graham did die - it would be excruciatingly hard for the family, but it would mean eternal life and ultimate healing for Graham!
- They knew Jesus and they knew his authority to forgive sins...

- And I want to ask you - do you know him today? Do you really know and have experienced his free total forgiveness?
- Is Jesus your Lord?
- If not - don't sit on the fence - but turn to him TODAY, confess your rebellion and sins, and this forgiveness and love will be yours today.
- Don't miss out on having your most pressing need met...
- Don't turn up to heaven healthy and wealthy and happy but unforgiven.
- Don't face God unsaved - He has done everything needed for our salvation. He has made forgiveness available. All that's required is our response. Turn to God today.