

The Gospel of Mark

Jesus Overpowers Sin: Lesson 4

1. Jesus returns to Capernaum
 - a. Jesus' Starting Point (Again) Is His Preaching and Teaching
 - i. The Word has magnetic, attractive
 - b. In Capernaum once again
 - i. Jesus faces sin, another tentacle belonging to the Monster of Death
2. The Crowd
 - a. Discrete entrance into town to avoid attention
 - b. Crowd gathers as they learn Jesus is present
 - c. Crowds are mentioned 40 times by Mark
 - d. Crowd is the object of Jesus' compassion
 - e. Crowd never turns to Jesus in repentance or belief
 - f. Crowd obstructs access to Jesus
 - g. Crowd is not a measure of success
 - h. Crowd is passive and fickle
3. The Remarkable "Breakthrough" of the Four
 - a. House construction in the region in Jesus' day
 - i. Flat roofs
 - ii. Exterior stairways
 - iii. Roofs used as additional living space
 - b. Four men to assist shows the total helplessness of the paralyzed man
 - c. Digging aimed to lower the sufferer right over Jesus
 - d. It took time to dig through the roof
 - e. A substantial hole was needed to lower a stretcher in a level way
 - f. Dust and dirt fell on Jesus and the crowd
 - g. What were the emotions at work?
 - i. Anger at damage to someone's property
 - ii. Laughter and amazement at their boldness
 - iii. Admiration at their commitment and hope
4. Jesus Saw Their Faith
 - a. First mention of faith in Mark
 - i. Connected to an action
 - ii. Active trust that Jesus is sufficient
 - b. There is power in collective faith
 - i. It made an impression on Jesus
 - c. The faith of the four took the form of hard physical work
 - d. Did the sufferer have faith?
 - i. Unclear from the Gospel
 - ii. He allowed his friends to carry out this unusual project

- e. Actions of the four
 - i. Persistent
 - ii. Creative
 - iii. Contrary to normal standards of behavior
 - iv. Willing to create an interruption, an inconvenience
5. Jesus' Shocking Response
- a. Calling the sufferer "son" establishes intimacy and care.
 - b. A supreme gift: "Your sins are forgiven!"
 - c. The man had wanted healing
 - i. Jesus makes a deeper diagnosis of need
 - ii. Jesus answers prayers that may not be prayed
 - d. Only God can forgive sins!
 - e. No one imagined a priest, a prophet, or the Messiah had authority to forgive sins
 - f. Jesus takes a prerogative open only to God
 - g. Intercessory healing showed Jesus power
 - i. Cure could not be due to the sufferer's preparedness or to auto-suggestion
 - h. Only time Jesus equates sin and illness
 - i. "Your sins" speaks to specific sins
 - i. Jesus personally addresses sinners at deepest level
 - ii. Lets sufferer know friends' faith is not a replacement for his own faith
6. Who Are the Scribes?
- a. Educated, literate men
 - b. Served in a dual role
 - i. In civil and secular roles requiring legal services
 - ii. In religious matters regarding the reading and interpretation of Scripture
 - iii. No prophets to deliver God's word
 - c. Evaluated Jesus' words and actions
 - i. Limited by their understanding.
 - ii. Came to a reasonable conclusion
 - 1. Jesus is "out of line."
 - 2. His speech and behavior is a high offense against God
 - 3. He is usurping God's own unique authority
 - d. This was a perilous confrontation over religious authority
 - e. Only the chief priest could absolve sins
 - f. Not even the Messiah could forgive sins
 - g. Jesus knows the heart of the Pharisees
 - h. They accuse Him of blasphemy

7. Jesus' Forgiveness of Sins
 - a. Jesus can heal the man of his physical paralysis
 - b. Jesus cannot heal the scribes of their spiritual paralysis
 - c. The man is aware of his need, the scribes are less aware of their need
 - d. "Safe" to proclaim the forgiveness of sins
 - e. "Dangerous" to claim healing of illness, injury
 - f. Authority to spiritually forgive sins proven by healing the physical infirmity
 - i. Same authority for each
 - ii. Proven by Jesus' last statement
 - g. (Short) No one but God can forgive sins
 - i. Jesus forgave sins
 - ii. Jesus is God
 - h. (Long) No one but God can forgive sins
 - i. Jesus forgave sins
 - ii. Jesus must have been granted unparalleled authority by his Father for acting this way
 - iii. He is demonstrating an astounding intimacy with God his Father.
 - i. Second (long) explanation
 - i. Does not deny the divinity of Jesus
 - ii. Points emphatically to the unique relationship between Jesus and the Father.
 - iii. Closeness taught in John 1:18
 1. 'The eternal Son has been abiding in the bosom of the Father'
 - iv. Miracles of Jesus are actions of the Father, acting in his Son, through the Spirit
8. Jesus' displays his deity
 - a. Reads the hearts of the Pharisees
 - b. Does NOT dispute their premise that only God can forgive sins
 - c. Demonstrates divine power by healing
9. Does Sin Cause Sickness?
 - a. Yes
 - i. Miriam's sin brings leprosy upon her (Numbers 12:9-16)
 - ii. Disregard for the needs of others at the Lord's Supper causes many Corinthians to suffer (1 Corinthians 11:27)
 - iii. Sinful attitudes (anger, revenge, dishonoring our bodies) often bring about physical and emotional illnesses

- b. No
 - i. Jesus denies that the sin of the victim or of his parents brought about the blindness (John 9)
 - ii. Prayer should be offered for the sick, IF they have committed sins, they will be forgiven (James 5: 13-18)
 - c. Discernment is needed! Both possibilities must be kept in mind by the sufferer and by those praying
10. Who is "the Son of Man"?
- a. First mention in Mark (v10)
 - b. Free of the political, military connotations of Messiah
 - c. Use had little impact on the crowd or scribes
 - d. Allows Jesus to speak of himself in public
 - e. Use fourteen times in Mark
 - i. Apocalyptic
 - ii. Authority
 - iii. Suffering
 - f. The traditional view
 - i. To say Jesus is the Son of Man is to say "Jesus is fully human"
 - ii. To say Jesus is the Son of God is to say "Jesus is divine"
 - iii. These confessions together express the orthodox Christology of Jesus being fully God and fully man
 - g. View based on biblical-historical
 - i. "Son of God" speaks more to one's role as (human) king of Israel (2 Samuel 7:14)
 - ii. "Son of Man" may have a different origin
 - 1. Only Jesus refers to himself this way
 - 2. The expression is often combined with the mention of power, glory, clouds, angels
 - 3. The background is likely Daniel 7:13-14
 - 4. Heavenly figure having human appearance, but being granted universal power and authority
 - h. One might almost say that
 - i. "Son of God" was originally anchored as "human king"
 - ii. "Son of Man" was originally anchored as "otherworldly universal ruler"
 - iii. Jesus may have referred to himself as "Son of Man"
 - 1. To give the hint toward his otherworldly origin and universal authority
 - 2. But without fully revealing his status
 - i. Jesus as this "Son of Man", though having heavenly origin, has authority "on earth" to forgive sins