

Raised to Life
We are Healed
Mark 2:1-12
February 25 2018

Our passage today deals with a central issue and that is: What do you believe Jesus is capable of? There are two sides of the coin. One side believes that Jesus is capable of working miracles and the other that is unsure or at least skeptical.

Read passage

So, take a look with me at what is going on here. We hear that Jesus is back in Capernaum where he is most likely residing at Peter's house. While there, the news spreads about him quickly. They have heard plenty of stories by now about Jesus: that he is capable of healing, that he is preaching the good news of the Kingdom of God. Put yourself in their shoes for a moment. You hear about someone like that and we kind of have two somewhat opposing feelings swirling inside of us. On the one hand we are excited and eager to see and hear this guy who is doing amazing things. On the other hand, there is this skepticism as well that says – if it's to good to be true...then it's not? Can the stories really be true? Are we sure that everything really checks out, did anyone vet this guy? Did he really do and say all those things? Him coming back had to blow up this little town. And the Bible tells us that the house is packed. We know that Jesus is preaching to the people there about God's word to a somewhat diverse crowd. There are these teachers of religious law. They are actually sitting near Jesus, which means that they were among the first to arrive or at least were important enough that people made a way for them. Then there are others like the unexpected visitors who literally just drop in. Ok sorry, I had to make the pun. Only one, I promise. It's a diverse crowd with even more diverse understandings about who Jesus is and what he can do. And Jesus is about to demonstrate the significance of that difference and what it means to us today.

After the opening description we are introduced to four men who are carrying a paralyzed man on a mat. Jesus is in town and they have this faith that Jesus can do something remarkable. They have this friend who is paralyzed. We don't know exactly how this man was paralyzed. Remember for a moment that often things like paralysis or blindness were thought to be linked to sins which meant that for this man to still have friends that cared so deeply for him it was probably an oddity. So, they bring him to the house and they can't even get close to the door. They're disappointed. They are trying to help their friend and they have this one opportunity to bring him to Jesus and they can't even get into the house to see him. We've all been in that place, right. We believe that Jesus is capable and yet there is something blocking us. That's when our faith is tested...do I believe this or not...if we do, then let's go for it. They look at their options and decide that they have to find a way to get to Jesus. Essentially, they have to think about the level of their belief. They have to ask themselves if they believe that this man, Jesus, can really do anything to help their friend.

Let's stop there for a moment. How many of us have been in that kind of situation? Where we were we trusting in God, but then something came up that made us stop and become a bit skeptical? I know I felt that way and I'm thinking you've probably felt that way too. Maybe you made a transition to a new job trusting God that it was where he was calling you only to find that it wasn't what you thought it would be. Maybe you committed to tithing and then gas prices went up or new bills come in that make things tight and tithing seemed like a crazy idea. I think if we're honest, we've all been there and we've all, at some point, backed away.

And then there are those moments where we get the idea that it is beyond God's power or desire to heal or forgive. We sometimes say to ourselves: God doesn't care about this. Or worse we tell ourselves that we're beyond hope. And it's in that moment that we need to push forward and seek out Jesus in any way we can. We need to join these men who do something extraordinary. They climb up on the roof, dig away at the

shingles, and lower their friend through the opening. They push through the difficulty of getting to Jesus and choose to take a chance because they have this firm belief that Jesus is capable of healing.

Jesus is capable of healing.

Now comes the moment of truth. The man has been lowered to Jesus through the opening in the roof. I imagine the four men kind of peaking in from above with this look of anticipation. We aren't told if they said anything or exchanged a quick request of healing this man. I imagine they simply exchanged a look with Jesus who as always seemed to understand immediately. Jesus can see by their actions the faith that they have. He can see by their determination and persistence that they believe he is capable of healing this man. So, Jesus immediately looks at the man and heals him...right, or so we would like to think. But that's not what happens.

Jesus says something that doesn't line up with the views of many in the house especially the teachers of the law. This man wants and needs physical healing and he focuses in on the man's soul and says that the man's sins have been forgiven. Wonder what the men above were thinking. We did all that and he forgives his sins? What about the paralysis Jesus? Did we miscommunicate the message? I'm sure some in here too have felt this way before. If you have ever suffered with an illness or a chronic condition you've wondered why God hasn't healed you. You may be here this morning dealing with that illness and hoping that maybe today will be the day when Jesus decides to heal you. We've heard plenty of sermons that Jesus heals but it is difficult to carry around that truth while going through an illness. And to be quite clear, I don't know why God heals some and doesn't heal others. I do know that we will all receive full healing when we enter eternity. I do know that God offers us new life in eternity that is real and tangible. It isn't just simply something we say, it is an ever-present reality that we can cling to. I also know that the healing God is most concerned with in this life is not our physical bodies. No matter what physical healing we receive now, we will eventually pass away. The healing he is most concerned with is something else entirely.

God wants to heal you spiritually and emotionally.

The people around him are rather upset because Jesus is making a bold statement about himself. He is saying that he has the power to forgive sins. It is clear from scripture that only God has the power to forgive sins. The teachers of the law get a bit upset...look at their response: Verse 6-7. They think this in their head because they are ok with Jesus being a great teacher, but they are not ok with him making this statement. They like their Jesus nice and tame and someone who can teach about the kingdom of God.

But here is the thing, the healing of this man's sins is priority number 1 for Jesus. Why? Because sin is what keeps this man from God. It is what keeps us from God. It is that thing that keeps us chasing after our own kingdom rather than God's kingdom. You see no matter what our physical condition is, we all need healing right? We all hold onto regrets or mistakes from our past and we need healing. I can remember with vivid accuracy when I made a mistake or when I said something in anger or when I lied or when I ... you get the picture. I think many of us have that ability though. The ability to recall our worst mistakes, our biggest regrets. Here is the amazing thing, Jesus wants to offer us healing from those things. He wants to heal our shame and regret and do so in a powerful unalterable way. Do we believe Jesus is capable of that? There is no regret, no sin, no shame that Jesus can't heal.

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The people who are packed in that house are all asking what some of us ask...how are those sins forgiven...where is the evidence? We will not know the fullness of forgiveness offered to us by God in Jesus Christ until we get before the judgement seat of God. There we will see a slate wiped clean of sin and stand before a God who loves us enough to make us right in our souls. But, where his evidence that Jesus can actually forgive sins? So, he does something remarkable and physically heals the man. He even says why he does it. To prove to us that he has the power to forgive sins. He wants us to see just how powerful he is and

what he is capable of. He is basically inviting us to question whether he is capable of healing the entire person and then miraculously does it. Jesus then looks at us and says do you believe I am capable of healing you? Of healing your family? Of healing your community?

Now we want to immediately answer that question with a yes. The fact that we are here in church today we probably relate more to the friends who lowered their friend into the house. We like to believe that this is the level of faith that we have. That we believe that Jesus is capable of healing, right. Yet, I want to push back on that for just a moment. Do we really have that kind of faith? Do we really take Jesus at his word for what he says he is capable of? Jesus demonstrates his power in this spiritual and physical healing, but do we believe that he wants to do the same for us, our friends, our families, our communities, our world?

You see, we say that we have that kind of faith, but our actions often act more like the teachers of the law. We come here on Sunday and hear a message...and we leave feeling good. We try to be good throughout the week and go about our business. And yet... do we believe that Jesus has life changing, healing power today? Do we look at our communities and believe that healing is possible? Do we look at the families around us and believe that God has the power to take a broken family and make it whole? Let me ask you this...have you ever failed to have a conversation that you believe is important because you believe that it won't change anything? Have you ever despaired over the state of the community yet done nothing to get involved? Have you ever been at work and simply put up with a coworker because you don't believe that they could ever change? You see, we've all done that, haven't we? Yet if we truly believe that Jesus has the power to heal, so maybe, just maybe we should be looking at those situations differently.

Our vision here at CrossPoint is Family first, Community Centered, Mission minded. It means that we believe that the family is able to be healed by God. It means that we believe our communities are not beyond healing and that God wants to use us to make it happen. It means that God has healed us so that we can offer healing. He has forgiven us, so we can offer forgiveness. It is not some good teaching that we come and listen to, so we can feel good, but a radical life changing message that calls us to action. It is message that asks us the question: Do you believe that Jesus is capable of healing?

We are healed in order to offer healing.

So, what are we going to do about it? What are you going to do about it?