

MARK 2:1-17
A MINISTRY OF HOPE TO HOPELESS PEOPLE

1. REVIEW:

A. IN MARK 1:40-45:

1. A MAN WITH **LEPROSY** COMES TO JESUS TO **HEAL HIM**.
2. JESUS HAD A **CHOICE** TO MAKE:
 - a. **HEAL THE LEPER** AT THE **RISK** OF **LIMITING HIS TEACHING MINISTRY AND PREMATURELY PROVOKING THE OPPOSITION** OF THE **RELIGIOUS LEADERS**.
 - b. **BECAUSE OF HIS COMPASSION** (HE CAME TO **SERVE**), JESUS **CHOOSES TO HEAL THE LEPER**.
 - c. **HOWEVER...** HE **STERNLY WARNED THE LEPER TO SAY NOTHING ABOUT IT TO ANYONE... BUT THE LEPER ANNOUNCED HIS GOOD NEWS TO EVERYONE WITH THE EXPECTED RESULT THAT JESUS COULD NO LONGER CONDUCT HIS MINISTRY INSIDE THE CITY OF CAPERNAUM...**

1) Mark 1:45 (NASB) But he went out and began to proclaim it freely and to spread the news around, to such an extent that Jesus could no longer publicly enter a city, but stayed out in unpopulated areas; and they were coming to Him from everywhere.

B. IN MARK 2:3-4 **FOUR FRIENDS BRING A **PARALYTIC** MAN TO JESUS TO BE **HEALED**.**

1. **THEY OPEN THE ROOF OF THE HOUSE WHERE JESUS AND THE **RELIGIOUS LEADERS** WERE SITTING.**
2. **Mark 2:6-9... But** some of the scribes were sitting there and reasoning in their hearts, "Why does this man speak that way? (1) He is blaspheming; (2) who can forgive sins but God alone?" Immediately (11) Jesus, aware in His spirit that they were reasoning that way within themselves, said to them, "Why are you reasoning about these things in your hearts? "Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven'; or to say, 'Get up, and pick up your pallet and walk'?"
 - A. **LUKE WROTE THAT** "there were *some* **Pharisees** and **teachers of the law** sitting *there*, who had come from **every village** of **Galilee** and **Judea** and *from Jerusalem...*"
 - B. **THOSE WHO CAME **JUDEA** AND **JERUSALEM** TO **CAPERNAUM** BY THE MOST POPULAR ROUTE **TRAVELED ABOUT 100 MILES** WHICH WAS A **FOUR TO FIVE DAY WALK**.**
 - C. **THEY WERE NOT THERE TO **WORSHIP GOD'S SON**... THEY WERE THERE AS **CRITICS** AND **SKEPTICS** TO **EXAMINE THIS **ILLNESS-HEALING, **DEMON-EXORCISING, **LEPER-CLEANSING** RABBI FROM **NAZARETH**********
 - D. **AND THEY HAVE A FRONT ROW SEAT!!**

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- E. JESUS HAD A POINT TO MAKE, SO HE SEIZED THE OPPORTUNITY TO REASON WITH THE SCRIBES AND PHARISEES, ISRAEL'S AUTHORITIES ON ALL THINGS RELIGIOUS, BY ASKING A PROFOUND TWO PART QUESTION.
1. Mark 2:8-9 (NASB) Immediately Jesus, aware in His spirit that they were reasoning that way within themselves, said to them, "Why are you reasoning about these things in your hearts? "Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, (1) 'Your sins are forgiven'; or to say, (2) 'Get up, and pick up your pallet and walk'?
 2. THE ANSWER TO JESUS' QUESTION REVEALS WHETHER ONE BELIEVES IN HIS DEITY.
- F. THE SCRIBES/PHARISEES ARE WRONG ON THE FIRST QUESTION ("Why does this man speak that way? He is blaspheming) ... BUT WERE RIGHT IN THEIR SECOND QUESTION (who can forgive sins but God alone?).
1. JESUS ASKS A RHETORICAL QUESTION... IT IS INFINITELY EASIER TO HEAL THE BODY THAN IT IS TO FORGIVE SINS.
- G. THE SCRIBES/PHARISEES ARE CONFOUNDED... AND THEY HAVE NO ANSWER.
- H. BY EXERCISING HIS POWER TO FORGIVE SINS AND THEREFORE DECLARING HIMSELF TO BE THE SON OF MAN (A TITLE MEANING FULLY MAN AND FULLY GOD), JESUS HAS WON A MULTITUDE OF GRATEFUL FRIENDS AND ALIENATED A HANDFUL OF DEADLY ENEMIES.
3. Mark 2:10-12 "But so 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, get up, pick up your pallet and go home." And he got up and immediately (12) picked up the pallet and went out in the sight of everyone, so that they were all amazed and were glorifying God, saying, "We have never seen anything like this."
- A. REMEMBER: MARK IS A GOSPEL OF ACTION... THE FORMER PARALYTIC "IMMEDIATELY" ... GOT UP... PICKED UP THE PALLET... AND WENT HOME.
- B. TRUTH: GENUINE MIRACLES ARE INSTANTANEOUS, UNDENIABLE, AND COMPLETE... THE HEALING OF THE PARALYTIC WAS A GENUINE MIRACLE.
- C. THE RESPONSE OF THE PEOPLE: "... they were all amazed and were glorifying God, saying, "We have never seen anything like this."
1. JESUS FORGAVE SINS, CONFOUNDED SCHOLARS, AND HEALED SICKNESS... AND THE PEOPLE "were glorifying God".
 2. "glorifying God" IS THE FIRST STEP IN REALIZING THAT JESUS IS GOD'S SON... THE MESSIAH.

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4. INSIGHTS GAINED FROM MARK 2:1-2 FOCUSING ON THE PARAPLEGIC, THE SCRIBES, AND JESUS:

A. FIRST: BY FOCUSING ON THE PARAPLEGIC WE LEARN THAT OUR DEEPEST NEEDS ARE NOT PHYSICAL; THEY ARE SPIRITUAL AND INVISIBLE.

1. THAT EXPLAINS WHY JESUS GAVE PRIORITY TO THE PARALYTIC'S HOPELESS SPIRITUAL CONDITION BEFORE HE ADDRESSED HIS HOPELESS PHYSICAL CONDITION.

2. WE TEND TO INVERT THOSE PRIORITIES, PLACING OUR PHYSICAL NEEDS ABOVE OUR SPIRITUAL NEEDS... BUT GOD CALLS US TO REORIENT OUR THINKING TO SEE THINGS AS HE DOES.

B. SECOND: BY FOCUSING ON THE SCRIBES WE LEARN THAT THE EARLIEST SIGNS OF A CRITICAL AND JUDGEMENTAL SPIRIT ARE OFTEN HIDDEN AND UNSPOKEN.

1. UNLESS A CRITICAL AND JUDGEMENTAL SPIRIT IS TAKEN SERIOUSLY... IT BECOMES DEADLY.

2. THEREFORE... EVALUATE YOUR ATTITUDE TO MAINTAIN A POSITIVE AND CONSTRUCTIVE INFLUENCE ON OTHERS.

a. THESE UNSEEN AND HIDDEN PARTS OF OUR BEING HAVE A POWERFUL INFLUENCE ON HOW WE EXPERIENCE LIFE AND HOW WE IMPACT OTHERS.

3. WHEN WE SENSE BEING CRITICAL AND JUDGEMENTAL GROWING IN OUR OWN SPIRIT... DEAL WITH IT!

a. Proverbs 4:23 (NLT) Guard your heart above all else, for it determines the course of your life.

b. Matthew 7:1-2 (NLT) "Do not judge others, and you will not be judged. For you will be treated as you treat others. The standard you use in judging is the standard by which you will be judged.

C. THIRD: BY FOCUSING ON JESUS WE LEARN THAT REAL MIRACLES ARE SELF-EVIDENT.

1. GENUINE MIRACLES ARE INSTANTANEOUS, UNDENIABLE, AND COMPLETE.

2. NO PERSON STATING "YOU HAVE BEEN HEALED" GUARANTEES A HEALING... IF A MIRACULOUS HEALING IS GENUINE, IT WILL SPEAK FOR ITSELF.

5. A MINISTRY OF HOPE: Mark 2:13 (NASB) And He went out again by the seashore; and all the people were coming to Him, and He was teaching them.

A. AS A RESULT OF Mark 1:42-45 (NASB) Immediately the leprosy left him and he was cleansed. And He sternly warned him and immediately sent him away, and He said to

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him, "See that you say nothing to anyone; but go, show yourself to the priest and offer for your cleansing what Moses commanded, as a testimony to them." But he went out and began to proclaim it freely and to spread the news around, to such an extent that Jesus could no longer publicly enter a city, but stayed out in unpopulated areas; and they were coming to Him from everywhere.

6. A **MINISTRY OF HOPE**: Mark 2:14 As He passed by, He saw **Levi** the son of Alphaeus sitting in the **tax booth**, and He said to him, "Follow Me!" And he got up and followed Him.

- A. IF THE GALILEANS HELD A **CONTEST** TO CHOOSE THE **MOST HATED MAN** IN **CAPERNAUM**, **LEVI**, THE **TAX COLLECTOR**, WOULD HAVE **WON HANDS DOWN**.

1. HE SAT AT THE **TOLL GATE** IN **CAPERNAUM**, WHERE HE COULD **TAX** ALL OF THE PEOPLE WHO **PASSED** THROUGH THAT **INTERSECTING CITY** BETWEEN **NORTH** AND **SOUTH, EAST** AND **WEST**.

- a. **LEVI AMASSED A FORTUNE** BY **SELLING HIS SOUL**.

2. **SPIRITUALLY**: **LEVI STANDS CONDEMNED** AS A **SINNER** BECAUSE HE MAKES HIS **PROFIT** BY **CHEATING, INTIMIDATION, AND BRIBERY**.

- a. **POOR** AND **POWERLESS PEOPLE** **SUFFER** AS HIS **PRIME VICTIMS**.

3. **SOCIALLY**: EVEN THOUGH HIS **MONEY** GIVES HIM **LUXURY**, HIS **CIRCLE OF FRIENDS** ONLY INCLUDES HIS **OWN KIND**.

- a. TO **EVERYONE ELSE** IN **GALILEE**, **LEVI** HAS **FALLEN OFF THE BOTTOM** OF THE **SOCIAL SCALE** BECAUSE HE **FUNCTIONS** AS A **HIRELING** OF THE **DESPISED ROMAN GOVERNMENT** FOR WHICH HE **COLLECTS TAXES**.

- b. **NEITHER JEWS NOR ROMANS** WANT **ANYTHING TO DO WITH HIM**.

- B. **QUESTION**: **WHY** WOULD **JESUS** **CALL** **LEVI** TO BE A **DISCIPLE**?

1. **ANSWER**: BECAUSE THE **TRUTH** IS THAT **JESUS SPECIALIZES IN REJECTS**... WHETHER IN **LEVI**, OR **PETER**, OR **MARY MAGDALENE**, OR **JOHN MARK**, OR **PAUL**, OR **US**... **JESUS SEES** THE **POTENTIAL** FOR **SPIRITUAL GROWTH** AND **GREATNESS** IN **REJECTED PEOPLE**.

- C. **SO**... **SEEING** SOMETHING OF **GREAT VALUE** IN **LEVI**, A **REJECTED MAN**, **JESUS** PUTS HIM TO THE **TEST** BY SAYING, "**FOLLOW ME**."

1. **WITHOUT HESITATION**, **LEVI WALKS AWAY** FROM HIS **TAX OFFICE FOREVER**.

2. **SIMON, ANDREW, JAMES, AND JOHN** HAVE THE **FAMILY FISHING BUSINESS** TO WHICH THEY CAN **RETURN**.

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a. **BUT ONCE LEVI BREAKS HIS CONTRACT WITH THE ROMANS... HIS CAREER IS FINISHED!**

b. **OR... IS IT JUST BEGINNING?!**

7. A **MINISTRY OF HOPE: Mark 2:15-17 (NASB)** And it happened that He was reclining *at the table* in his house, and many tax collectors and sinners were dining with Jesus and His disciples; for there were many of them, and they were following Him. When the scribes of the **Pharisees** saw that He was eating with the sinners and tax collectors, they said to His disciples, "Why is He eating and drinking with tax collectors and sinners?" And hearing *this*, Jesus said to them, "*It is not those who are healthy who need a physician, but those who are sick; I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners.*"

A. **AFTER LEVI LEAVES HIS TAX OFFICE TO FOLLOW JESUS, HE INVITES "TAX COLLECTORS AND SINNERS", THE ONLY FRIENDS HE HAS, TO CELEBRATE HIS DECISION AT A DINNER.**

1. **NOTE: NOW JESUS' MINISTRY OF HOPE MOVES FROM A HATED MAN TO A HOPELESS CLASS OF PEOPLE.**

2. **THE DOUBLE DESIGNATION "TAX COLLECTORS AND SINNERS" (V. 16) INDICATES THEIR DOUBLE REJECTION AS SOCIAL AND SPIRITUAL OUTCASTS.**

a. **LIKE LEVI, THEY HAVE:**

1) **SOLD OUT TO THE ROMANS AS TAX COLLECTORS.**

2) **AND HAVE FAILED TO FOLLOW THE EXACTING REQUIREMENTS OF ORTHODOX RELIGION.**

3) **NOTE: NONE OF THE "TAX COLLECTORS AND SINNERS" PROTESTED WHEN JESUS CALLED LEVI TO "FOLLOW HIM" ... THEY CELEBRATED!!**

B. **CONSIDER: THAT WHEN JESUS BROUGHT HIS "MINISTRY OF HOPE" TO A CLASS OF HATED PEOPLE IT PUT A SPOTLIGHT DIRECTLY ON THE FAILURE OF ESTABLISHED RELIGION TO REACH THEM!!!**

1. **NOW, THE CRITICISM FROM THE RELIGIOUS LEADERS (THE PHARISEES) SHIFTED FROM THEORY TO PRACTICE... AND FROM AUTHORITY TO INFLUENCE.**

C. **THE PHARISEES ARE ALWAYS SUBTLE SO THEY DO NOT COME DIRECTLY TO JESUS WITH THEIR CRITICISM.**

1. **THEY TAKE HIS DISCIPLES ASIDE, HOPING TO PLANT A SEED OF DOUBT IN THEIR MINDS, AND ASK, "HOW IS IT THAT HE EATS AND DRINKS WITH TAX COLLECTORS AND SINNERS?" (V. 16).**

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2. SOMEONE ONCE SAID THAT IT TAKES TWO PEOPLE TO DESTROY YOU... AN ENEMY TO SLANDER YOU AND A FRIEND TO TELL YOU (AND OTHERS) ABOUT IT!!!
- D. JESUS QUOTES AN OLD PROVERB THAT IS UNIVERSALLY ACCEPTED AMONG THE JEWS, AND HE SPEAKS ONCE AGAIN OF HIS SERVANT ROLE:
 1. Mark 2:17 (NASB) And hearing *this*, Jesus said to them, "*It is not those who are healthy who need a physician, but those who are sick; I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners.*"
 2. FIRST, JESUS GAVE THE PHARISEES CREDIT FOR THEIR RIGHTEOUSNESS ("THE HEALTHY") AND THEN STATES THAT HE HAS COME TO BRING "HIS MINISTRY OF HOPE" TO A CLASS OF HATED AND HOPELESS PEOPLE.
 3. JESUS HAS COMPLIMENTED THE PHARISEES FOR THEIR RIGHTEOUSNESS SO THEY CANNOT CONTEST HIS WORDS OF HOPE FOR NEEDY PEOPLE ("SICK SINNERS").
 - a. AT BEST, THE PHARISEES WILL HAVE TO LIE BACK LIKE SATAN AFTER THE WILDERNESS TEMPTATION AND "WAIT UNTIL AN OPPORTUNE TIME".
 - b. IN THE MEANTIME, JESUS WILL BE MINISTERING TO TAX COLLECTORS AND SINNERS... WITH A MINISTRY OF HOPE TO THE HOPELESS!
- E. QUESTION: WHO ARE THE HATED AND HOPELESS CLASSES TO WHOM JESUS WANTS TO BRING HIS MINISTRY OF HOPE IN THIS GENERATION?
 1. DISCUSS: WHEN JESUS SHIFTED HIS MINISTRY OF HOPE TO THE POINT OF NEED, THE PHARISEES BRISTLE IN REACTION... DO WE?... ARE ALL CHURCHES TODAY ACCEPTING OF HATED AND HOPELESS PEOPLE?... OR DO THEY HAVE AN "US FOUR AND NO MORE" MENTALITY?
 2. THE "GOOD NEWS" IS THAT ALL PEOPLE AND CLASSES CAN FIND HOPE IN CHRIST.
8. CONCLUSION:
 - A. IN MARK 2:1-17 ANOTHER PRINCIPLE OF THE KINGDOM HAS BEEN ESTABLISHED, NAMELY THAT TRUE RIGHTEOUSNESS IS WILLING TO TAKE A RISK ON HATED AND HOPELESS PEOPLE.
 1. AND THAT SEPARATION FROM SIN DOES NOT MEAN SEPARATION FROM SINNERS.
 2. AND AS PROOF THAT JESUS IS THE CHRIST, THE LONG AWAITED MESSIAH... NOW... ALL PEOPLE HAVE HOPE!
 - a. BUT... IT IS UP TO CHRISTIANS TO SPREAD THAT "GOOD NEWS" BOTH ACROSS THE OCEAN AND ACROSS THE STREET!!!

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