

"YOUR SINS ARE FORGIVEN"

unit 23 | session 1



CHRIST CONNECTION

Jesus's claim to have the authority to forgive sins was supported by His miraculous healings. Jesus would later suffer and die to provide forgiveness of sin and would miraculously be raised from the dead on the third day.

EVIDENCE

This week, we're covering the passages and main points below. But we encourage you to dig in and read all of the content on this timeline.

Mark 2

ONLY JESUS CAN FORGIVE OUR SIN

MARK 2:1-7

1 And when he returned to Capernaum after some days, it was reported that he was at home. 2 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. 3 And they came, bringing to him a paralytic carried by four men. 4 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. 5 And when Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, "Son, your sins are forgiven." 6 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?"

OBEDIENCE IS EVIDENCE OF TRANSFORMATION

MARK 2:8-12

8 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? 9 Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Rise, take up your bed and walk'? 10 But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins"—he said to the paralytic— 11 "I say to you, rise, pick up your bed, and go home." 12 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!"

MAIN POINT.

Our obedience shows Jesus's power to forgive sin and transform hearts.



THEOLOGY CONNECTION

SIN'S EFFECTS IN THE WORLD

Sin does not only impact our relationship with God; it is also the root of our broken relationships with the people around us. Human sinfulness is the reason that creation groans in anticipation for redemption and deliverance from its bondage to evil powers (Rom. 8:20-22). Sin has infected and redirected the social structures of society, leading to injustice and oppression. The distorting effects of sin are visible all around us, but the good news of the gospel is that the battle against these powers will be won through the work of Christ.

DISCUSSION

ONLY JESUS CAN FORGIVE OUR SIN

MARK 2:1-7

- What did the paralytic's friends believe? How did this belief motivate their actions?
- Why did Jesus forgive the paralytic's sin instead of healing his body?
- What did the scribes doubt about Jesus? Who did they believe could forgive sins?

OBEDIENCE IS EVIDENCE OF TRANSFORMATION

MARK 2:8-12

- How easily can you hide what's in your heart? How does knowing God sees your heart impact you?
- Why did Jesus tell the man to rise, pick up his bed, and go home?
- Why was the man's obedience critical in this moment? Why is our obedience important?



HOW DO YOUR CHOICES CONTRADICT JESUS'S POWER TO FORGIVE SIN? WHAT NEEDS TO CHANGE SO THAT OTHERS SEE JESUS'S WORK IN YOU?

CULTURAL CONNECTION

Is it ever okay not to forgive someone? If we're honest, we probably have an invisible line that, once others cross, we determine not to forgive them. Maybe a friend repeats the same offense over and over again, and you don't want to deal with it anymore. Or maybe someone hurts you so deeply that you can't imagine moving past the pain. Forgiveness isn't always easy, but the radical call of the gospel is to forgive others as Jesus forgave us (Eph. 4:32; Col. 3:13). Even Peter asked Jesus how many times he should forgive someone—a question we wrestle with too! Jesus taught that we are to forgive others as He forgives us (Matt. 18:23-35)—endlessly. Now, forgiveness doesn't excuse harmful behavior or mean that we stay in a toxic situation; forgiveness is more about our own heart. Our ability to forgive doesn't come from our maturity or our strength but from experiencing God's grace; we forgive because we are forgiven. We loosen our grip on judgment because we are free from condemnation. If we consider the depth of our own forgiveness, then we'll more willingly forgive others.



DAY ONE

ROMANS 8:31-39

Sometimes, we can feel as if God is far from us. We certainly experience feeling distance between us and other people, often making us feel sad, hopeless, or disappointed. God tells us an amazing truth in the Scripture for today: Nothing can separate Christians from the love of God. How can this be true? Because of what Jesus has done for us. Jesus took the punishment for our sins. Because of Jesus's sacrifice, we enjoy relationship with Him and the Father by the Holy Spirit. Because He saved us, we are now God's children! We are united to Christ! He gives us the strength to face all kinds of pain and difficult seasons. He gives us the strength to face each and every day with courage. Most importantly, because of what Jesus has done, we can be sure that sin doesn't have a hold on us any longer. If you have repented and put your faith in Jesus, then your sins are washed clean. Consider this: Jesus can never be separated from God. He is God! So, if you are in Christ, you cannot be separated from God either. No matter what comes your way, no matter if the whole world seems to be against you, God is for you. You may still experience hard days and very real suffering. You may walk through periods of depression, anxiety, or loneliness. But you are never, ever alone. God is for you! Nothing can separate you from His love because of the wonderful grace you have received in Jesus Christ our Lord.

- **HAVE YOU EVER FELT LIKE GOD WAS FAR FROM YOU? HOW CAN THE TRUTHS IN THIS PASSAGE COMFORT YOU WHEN YOU FEEL THIS WAY?**
- **HOW DOES KNOWING YOUR SINS HAVE BEEN FORGIVEN HELP YOU WHEN YOU STRUGGLE TO FIND JOY?**

PRAY

FATHER, THANK YOU FOR THE WORK OF JESUS. HELP ME BELIEVE YOUR WORD AND LIVE IN THE TRUTH THAT YOU ARE FOR ME. THANK YOU FOR FORGIVING MY SINS AND PROMISING THAT NOTHING CAN SEPARATE ME FROM YOUR LOVE.



DAY TWO

PSALM 34:18

Physical pain has a way of making time feel different. When you're in pain, time seems to pass more slowly. Maybe we feel this way because we just want the suffering to end. The paralytic man in this week's lesson had suffered for a long time. He likely felt like there was no one who could help him. He had at least a couple of good friends but likely felt very sad and lonely in his condition. Thankfully, his friends brought him to Jesus, who healed him both from his disease and, more amazingly, from his sins. The story of the paralytic and our verse today show us the caring heart of our God—the compassion God has for those who are heartbroken. Jesus cares when we are crushed inside. He is not a God who is far away from us but a God who is always near. As Christians, we can be sure that our Lord does not hide from us or our emotions. Jesus became human for us, which means He experienced every emotion we experience. Jesus felt brokenhearted and crushed in spirit. Not only is Jesus near to us during our pain, but He also knows what it's like to *feel* pain. Our Lord loves us so much that He left His throne in heaven to come to earth for our salvation and to carry our sorrow and grief caused by sin (Isa. 53:4).

God is near. God cares. God sees our pain. Though we may not experience physical healing from paralysis, we are healed from within from our sin. If we repent and follow Jesus, He gives us a new heart; we enjoy a relationship with God. This relationship will never be broken and will carry us through times of joy as well as suffering. What a God we serve, who is near to us in our brokenness and pain!

- **WHEN HAVE YOU FELT SAD OR BROKENHEARTED? HOW CAN YOU LEAN ON JESUS IN THOSE MOMENTS?**
- **HOW CAN WE BE SURE THAT OUR GOD CARES FOR US WHEN WE ARE HURTING? HOW DOES THE GOSPEL SPEAK TO OUR SUFFERING?**

PRAY

FATHER, THANK YOU FOR CARING FOR US. THANK YOU FOR LOVING US SO MUCH THAT YOU CARRIED OUR SORROWS TO THE CROSS. HELP US TO RELY ON YOU WHEN WE FEEL CRUSHED INSIDE. STRENGTHEN US AND HELP US TO LEAN ON JESUS.



DAY THREE

EXODUS 2:23-25; 3:7-8

Louis Zamperini was an American soldier in World War II. He survived a plane crash in the Pacific Ocean, where the Japanese rescued him only to beat, starve, and mistreat him in a prisoner of war camp. Louis often wondered if his suffering would ever end. Ultimately, not only did his physical suffering end, but Louis became a Christian and received forgiveness from his sin. The Israelites suffered as slaves in Egypt for much longer than Louis—about 400 years! They cried out to God to save them, but His answer was not immediate. Surely, they wondered if God heard them and cared about them. Surely, God seemed far from them. But God is never far from His people. God heard Israel and sent Moses to bring them out of bondage in Egypt. Moses didn't do this by his own power, but God used him for His purposes. God, through Moses, brought His people out of Egypt and would ultimately lead them into the promised land, which He had promised to Abraham long before.

This story of God leading Israel out of suffering in Egypt shows us that God is near. He cares deeply about the pain of His people. In fact, He cares so much about the pain of His people that He sent His Son, Jesus, into the world. The Son of God became a man—so near to us that He suffered in our place to save us from our sins. And now, His Spirit lives within us, walking with us until we reach our eternal home, which God promised to those who call on Him for salvation. Praise God that He is near and hears the cries of His people! He hears and cares for His people today as much as He cared for those He brought out of Egypt long ago. Even greater than the rescue from Egyptian slavery is our rescue from sin and death. Be encouraged: God is never far from the cries of His people.

- **HOW CAN YOU REMIND YOURSELF THAT GOD CARES DEEPLY FOR YOU WHEN YOU'RE WALKING THROUGH PAIN?**
- **HOW DO YOU HANDLE DIFFICULT SEASONS? DO YOU TURN TO GOD OR AWAY FROM HIM? HOW CAN YOU TURN TO HIM?**

PRAY

FATHER, WE PRAISE YOU AND ARE GRATEFUL THAT YOU ARE A GOD WHO IS NEAR. PLEASE HELP US TO REMEMBER THAT YOU HEAR US WHEN WE CRY OUT TO YOU AND TO ALWAYS TURN TO YOU FIRST WHEN LIFE HURTS.



DAY FOUR

MARK 2:11-12

Have you ever been sick? Maybe you had a cold or the flu and felt like it would never end. The man Jesus healed had been sick for years. His body didn't work how it was supposed to. Jesus healed him of this physical sickness and gave him freedom from his disease. But Jesus didn't stop there because the truth is that Jesus cares more for our spiritual sickness. Even more serious than the man's physical need was his spiritual need. Jesus forgave the man's sin. When He did this, the man then used his new ability to walk to glorify God and to tell everyone about what Jesus had done for him. This man's entire purpose in life changed the moment Jesus healed him. He saw nothing better or more fitting to do with his new ability to walk than to give glory to God!

We may not be paralyzed, but we share a common sickness with the paralytic and with each other: We are all sinners. Jesus offers us forgiveness of our sins and renewed relationship with God through Himself. And when He forgives us, we gain new purpose! Our lives change in that moment. We are free to live as we were meant to before sin messed everything up. We can live to glorify God in all that we do and tell others about the hope we have in Jesus. The paralyzed man was not only free to walk but to walk in a way that glorified God. When Jesus saves us, we are freed from sin, but we are also empowered to glorify God and tell others about our Lord. May we do this always.

- **WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO GIVE GLORY TO GOD? HOW CAN WE DO THIS WELL?**
- **HOW HAVE YOU SEEN GOD MEET NEEDS IN YOUR LIFE?**

PRAY

FATHER, WE THANK YOU THAT YOU ARE A GOD WHO HEALS. WE KNOW THAT WE CAN TRUST YOU WITH OUR PHYSICAL NEEDS BECAUSE YOU HAVE ALREADY MET OUR GREATEST NEED—HEALING US FROM OUR SIN.





DAY FIVE

1 JOHN 1:9

Imagine you have done something against your parents' rules. You apologize, but your actions hurt them, and they're disappointed in your behavior. Although they forgive you, you might struggle at first to feel forgiven.

We can sometimes feel this way in our relationship with God as well. Remember, Jesus did heal the paralyzed man, but more importantly, Jesus forgave his sin. In Christ, we can have our sins completely forgiven. When God tells us that our sins are cast as far as the east is from the west, He means that they are gone forever, never to return (Ps. 103:12). We will still sin and make mistakes, but we can rest assured that because of Jesus's work, we can repent and receive perfect forgiveness. The truth though? We may struggle to *feel* forgiven because we know we don't deserve it. And this is true! We haven't done anything to deserve the forgiveness God offers us. Be encouraged! Jesus lived a perfect life (because we couldn't) and died the death we deserved; He bought our forgiveness with His blood. We get grace, a free gift from God—a gift we didn't earn. We can never mess up so much or too badly that we can't come to Jesus. Instead of running in shame when we sin, we can run to God. He is ready, willing, and able to forgive all who come to Him. So, when you struggle to believe that God can forgive you, remember that forgiveness is rooted in what Jesus did for you. Your sins are removed and washed away by the blood, and God's love for you is faithful and great. Praise God for these wonderful truths!

- **WHEN HAVE YOU STRUGGLED TO FEEL FORGIVEN? HOW CAN YOU REMIND YOURSELF THAT IN CHRIST, YOUR SINS ARE TRULY AND COMPLETELY FORGIVEN?**
- **HOW CAN YOU BALANCE ASKING GOD TO HELP YOU WITH PHYSICAL NEEDS WHILE ALSO REALIZING YOUR GREATER NEED IS HELP WITH TURNING FROM SIN?**

PRAY

**FATHER, THANK YOU FOR JESUS. THANK YOU FOR
SENDING HIM TO CARRY OUR SINS AND PROVIDE
FORGIVENESS FOR US. HELP US TO LIVE IN THE
FREEDOM CHRIST HAS GIVEN US.**