

# ON THE MOVE WITH JESUS

## IN MARK

### (DAY 9)

*A unique, verse-by-verse,  
life-application commentary*

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#### DAY 9 – JESUS FORGIVES AND HEALS A PARALYSED (2:1-12)

##### COLOUR-CODE SUMMARY (THE FOUR MAIN WAYS GOD SPEAKS TO US THROUGH THE GOSPELS):

- **Blue** - something about Jesus' uniqueness and Lordship that shows he is worthy of our devotion, trust and surrender
- **Green** - something about Jesus' character or ministry that we can imitate
- **Red** - something Jesus taught that we can understand or apply to our lives
- **Orange** - insights we can apply based on the way various people responded to him

##### Jesus forgives and heals a paralyzed man

1 A few days later, when Jesus again entered Capernaum, the people heard that he had come home. 2 They gathered in such large numbers that there was no room left, not even outside the door, and he preached the word to them. 3 Some men came, bringing to him a paralyzed man, carried by four of them. 4 Since they could not get him to Jesus because of the crowd, they made an opening in the roof above Jesus by digging through it and then lowered the mat the man was lying on. 5 When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralyzed man, "Son, your sins are forgiven."

##### Approach Jesus with faith and determination

- Throughout the Gospels the thing that Jesus most positively responds to in those he ministers to is their faith. Similarly, in this story it is the faith of the paralyzed man's friends that Jesus recognizes. Nothing seems to draw the power out of Jesus into our lives and our situations like our readiness to believe that Christ can do something that no one else can.
- But throughout the Gospels faith evidences itself in determination. These four men make a huge effort to get their friend close enough to Christ to be healed. Jesus has the roof of his home (yes it was his home – see verse 1) ripped open. Instead of taking offence, he sees all of their effort

and determination as a sign that they really do trust in him. (As a little aside, perhaps his comment, “Your sins are forgiven” included a playful reference to the fact that this man had just broken Jesus’ roof.)

- We too need to approach Jesus with faith, believing that he is ready to extend grace and miracle-working power toward our lives. We need to learn how to get close enough to Christ in prayer and worship that he is able to minister to the depth of our lives. And we need to be ready to present other people whom we love in prayer to Jesus, asking him to work in their lives too.

### Team together with others in bringing people to Christ

- These verses serve as a metaphor of evangelism. One of the discoveries of so many Christians is that when it comes to helping our friends who don’t yet know Jesus (our friends who are unforgiven and crippled spiritually), it usually takes a team effort and a lot of determination. Here we see four men working together, motivated by their love for their friend, thinking to themselves, “If we can just get this person close enough to Jesus to hear his teaching, or maybe to experience his touch, then we’re sure his life will be spiritually transformed.”
- Don’t give up on trying to bring your unforgiven, spiritually crippled friends to Christ. They may not want to come, or be able to come to him. But God can use you – and your partnership with other Christians – to get them close enough to Christ to find their footing in him.

6 Now some teachers of the law were sitting there, thinking to themselves, 7 “Why does this fellow talk like that? He’s blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone?”

8 Immediately Jesus knew in his spirit that this was what they were thinking in their hearts, and he said to them, “Why are you thinking these things?”

### Repent of a critical spirit

- Our hearts so easily lead us astray. The question Jesus asks in verse 8 can also be translated, ‘Why do your hearts tell you to think like that?’ This describes a critical heart (or spirit): we look for what is wrong in a situation or in a person, and we find the reasons to take offence at them. In our minds it makes perfect sense that we should be concerned or offended by the way another person acts or handles a situation, but what we fail to see is our own sinful instinct in the first place to look for what’s wrong with them. A critical spirit blinds us to what Christ may be doing – and in this situation Christ was moving wonderfully in a person’s life. A common way that critical attitudes undermine what God is doing today is when some people in a church become critical of the leaders, and keep on looking for what’s wrong in the way they do things or handle situations, instead of looking at all the wonderful things God may be doing.

## Be ready to discern (with the help of the Spirit) the heart-attitudes of people.

- Jesus was neither critical nor suspicious of people. However, he was discerning. In verse 5 we're told that he discerned faith in the men. Surprisingly, as he looked at the crippled man, he saw a heart riddled with shame and guilt and knew instinctively (with the help of the Spirit, of course) that this man needed forgiveness before he needed a healed body. In verse 8 we see that "immediately Jesus knew in his spirit" what some people were thinking. This knowledge was instantaneous, supernatural and came from the Holy Spirit. He discerned a critical unbelieving attitude in people.
- We too need to be open to the Spirit giving us discernment of where people are at. We need to be ready to discern levels of faith, feelings of guilt in people, and tendencies to be critical and unbelieving. Until we know where people are at, we won't be able to minister effectively to them.

9 Which is easier: to say to this paralyzed man, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up, take your mat and walk'? 10 But I want you to know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins." So he said to the man, 11 "I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home." 12 He got up, took his mat and walked out in full view of them all. This amazed everyone and they praised God, saying, "We have never seen anything like this!"

## Christ is ready to forgive your sins

- People may think that their greatest need is healing, but by far our greatest need is forgiveness. Yes, we may be sick or broken physically. And we certainly need physical healing. But when we have sinned, and God is counting our sins against us, then by far our greatest need is forgiveness. Everyone would have thought all this paralytic man needed was physical healing. But Jesus knew that even more important than that, the man needed spiritual healing – the healing that comes from having our sins forgiven.
- Everyone who trusts in Christ has their sins forgiven by Jesus. In other words, we can be totally spiritually healed. And sometimes Christ will heal us physically too. But he doesn't always. Encouragingly, if he doesn't grant us physical healing in this life, we are promised resurrection bodies for all eternity.
- It's interesting that Jesus uses crippled-ness as a picture of our sin. Sin really does cripple us. It cripples our hearts. It cripples our relationship with God. It cripples our relationships with others. It undermines the purpose and glory of our human potential.
- But then he uses the miracle as a picture of the forgiveness he gives. His forgiveness is instantaneous, easily received, as a result of the undeserved kindness of Christ. Jesus' forgiveness can get us on our feet spiritually. It can restore us to the life he intends for us.