

Message #7

“Pleasing God Through The Roof”

Mark 2:1-12

Introduction

It was Corrie Ten Boom who said that faith is like radar that sees through the fog. Have you ever just had a strong faith in a core belief about something you knew you had to do but had no idea on how to get there. Getting there you were absolutely clueless but you knew it could be done.

I remember when I was sixteen years old on a very foggy morning out in the country and I was going to drive myself to school. My parents did not think this was a great idea. You could not see ten feet in front of you. My mother was a high school teacher. We were both going to the same place. But the idea of a 16 year old riding with his mother to school was out of the question even on this very dangerous driving day. I forget how I did it but I finally convinced my parents to let me drive to school but the exception was I had to follow right behind my mother in this dense fog all the way into school from the country.

I need to confess that I drove a boat for a car. It was a big old Buick. I also confess I seriously underestimated how dense this fog was this early morning as I was on my way to school. My mom pulls out of the long country driveway and I follow behind her. I could not believe how foggy it was outside. It did not help that I was following a female

driver, even if it was my own mother. It is true, I could not see more than 5 feet in front of my car. It actually was intense. Pulling out of the driveway I could barely see my mother's lights on the back of the car. I was afraid to get too close and yet afraid to lose her. We make it about a mile away from the house and still another seven miles to school. My eyes were glued to the road. For just a moment I lost sight of the light's from my mother's car. In the next moment I no longer could see the sides of the road and I heard a few thumps and the car bouncing up and down. It was not until after school when I drove back home that I had seen what I had done. I had completely driven off the side of the road, went through the country ditch and into the nearby cornfield. I was in the cornfield for about twenty feet and went back through the ditch and back onto the country road. The good news was no damage to that 20 foot land yacht that I drove and because it was so foggy my mother did not witness the event at all. It was a story with a happy ending despite the fact that I had no idea where I was going and I probably should not of been driving that day as a 16 year old boy.

Losing sight of my mother's vehicle for just one second caused me to completely lose my sense of direction and go off the road of where I was. Because I failed to follow things could have became a lot worse. A lot of time we go through life as though we live in a dense fog. We walk around trying to do our best but never really seem to get anywhere. We deal with the fog, put up with the fog, and just assume that is all there is to life.

The truth is we do live in a fog. All of us walk around knowing in our hearts this is not the way it was meant to be. You see around seven thousand years ago God created the

heavens and the Earth and God called everything He created “good”. But one warm day in the Garden, the tempter asked Eve, “Did God really say....?” She took a bite of the fruit and all of the sudden everything changed. A fog came over the earth that had never been before. The fog is sin. Suddenly we were afraid of shadows. Fear was involved in everything. Sweat and hard work just to try to grow the necessary food. Near-death experiences for women in just trying to have a child. The heartache of betrayal, deceit, even murder. Being lied to, rejected, feeling alone. There is a fog. All of us walk around knowing it was not suppose to be this way.

Actually it is more than a thick fog, the Bible flat out calls it darkness. And around 2,000 years ago God did something to help those who would believe to live a new life in this ever present darkness.

John 1 teaches this: In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it.

So as a Christian, a follower of Jesus Christ, how do I follow the light with so much darkness around me. How do I receive that light, receive that new life? How do I follow so closely behind the light of life, Jesus Christ in such a way to never get off track in this dark world? Today, we are going to be talking about where it begins, let's discuss today a basic understanding of what it means to have 'faith in Jesus Christ'.

Let's read our text for today:

Mark 2:1-12

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

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

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? Which is easier: to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up, take your mat and walk'? But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins" He said to the paralytic, "I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home." 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!"

We follow Christ out of a deep sense of faith. The author of Hebrews reminds us that without faith it is impossible to please God. Pleasing God is all about total and complete surrender to Jesus Christ.

In our text this morning we are given a clear picture of what it means to want to be close to Jesus. I confess this is one busy scene. In Mark 2 is the very first time we see official opposition to Jesus. Jesus has been hanging out in Galilee for awhile now traveling around preaching and the teachers of the law are catching up to him. In fact, Jesus tries to lay low for a few days and stays with Peter at his house. Inside Peter's house is where Jesus is teaching and sharing the good news with people. Mark let's us know that Peter's house is packed. This paralytic and his four friends demonstrate incredible faith. In fact it is unprecedented. Make no mistake this huge act of faith pleases God greatly. Let's look at three things that happen as a result of this huge step of faith.

For this paralytic, we learn that

Pleasing God Brings Restoration

The truth is we do not know much about this paralytic. Really the only thing we know is that somehow this paralytic has four friends who carry him around to various places probably at various spots to beg for alms. But this day they take him to the house of Peter. We do not know much else. Was he paralyzed from birth? Was it a neck injury?

Is he married and have kids to support?

Carrying a paralytic around would consist of two beams and probably he sat on an animal skin. The truth is Peter's house is packed with people listening to Jesus. These guys are not going to get very close. They had to think of something clever. So they ask one of Peter's neighbors if they could get on the roof of their home. The houses were close enough that you could jump from roof to roof. Their goal seems to go from one roof to another hoping to catch Jesus.

Why were they going to all this trouble to see Jesus? Jesus is very unpredictable. He might be here another day or he might sneak out at night to be someplace else. Jesus was hard to keep track of because he traveled around so much. This could be their only chance and they act on it.

These four men make it to Peter's roof and start to dig. Early Jewish homes would have roofs made of mud and straw. They had to literally dig. At the bottom of the excavation would be tiles that served as the ceiling inside the house. Just imagine Jesus preaching and mud, pieces of straw, and branches start to fall all around him. Jesus keeps right on preaching. Eventually the roof starts falling from the sky in pieces and sunlight now shines through. Jesus perhaps with a grin on his face just keeps on preaching.

This paralyzed man has only one 'to do item' on his bucket list. To see Jesus. Well now is his chance because his four friends are lowering him in the middle of the roof right in front of Jesus.

The text says very plainly that Jesus saw their faith. Not just the faith of the paralytic but all of these men, that is interesting in itself.

Jesus decides to have a little fun at the same time do something very profound. He knows the Pharisees are in the room so he takes this moment for a powerful learning session.

This man is lowered right in front of Jesus and they five men are hoping for a healing and instead Jesus says this mans sins are forgiven. Jesus gives them absolution. The text does not say the men were a bit disappointed but at the same time you have to assume they might be just a little. The truth is Jesus' focus is not solely on these five men but also the Pharisees in the room. Jesus said this to absolutely anger the teachers of the law. The Pharisees claimed that Jesus had just blasphemed God. Who can forgive sins but God alone?

Well the logic is correct: Only God has the moral authority to forgive sins but they are badly mistaken for who Jesus truly is.

When we walk in faith

Pleasing God Reveals Truth

The Pharisees are sitting quietly listening to Jesus teach and are probably already

bothered by this unclean paralytic interrupting the message. They were already upset that Jesus said nothing while all this went on. But now their fight is with Jesus and very personal. They become unglued. Very quickly and with one voice they shout that Jesus has just blasphemed God.

Let's define blasphemy. This is essentially reviling or insulting God. A person can blaspheme God by insulting him, by refusing to give him due praise, or by raising yourself to the level of God and thus the result is lowering God down to your level. It was this type of blasphemy that the Pharisees are shouting at Jesus about and this was also punishable by death in Jewish law. This is a serious offense.

Jesus though knows the heart. Jesus asks them “Why are you thinking these evil things?” Jesus did not come to argue but to verify with amazing evidence who He really is. Jesus gives them a simple question: Which is easier to say, “Your sins are forgiven, or to take up your mat and walk”. The fact is they are both easy to say but both are impossible to do. Also, anyone can say your sins are forgiven but it is impossible as mere humans to prove that they are forgiven. But if someone said, take up your mat and walk, you can quickly verify that as true.

Now we are at the center of this entire passage. “But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins...” Jesus in one breathe turns from talking to the Pharisees who call him out to a humble man with incredible faith and says, Pick up your mat and go home'. Jesus' point is clear. By healing the paralytic Jesus proves He

has authority to forgive sins. Remember the Jews at this time associated physical problems with spiritual problems. They quickly made the connection the authority and power that Jesus has. So Jesus not only heals the man from paralysis but also the social stigma of being a sinner.

When we walk in faith,

Pleasing God Sends Praise

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!"

The man gets up and walks out. The man is doing cartwheels out the door praising God, the crowd's jaw has hit the floor, they are moved to tears and yelling with joy, the men on the roof are giving each other high five's, and the Pharisees stand before them all silent and humiliated. Jesus stands in the middle marked with the power of God and everyone knows it. All the praise goes to God.

The truth is Jesus performed three miracles: Jesus forgave sins, Jesus read the Pharisees minds, and of course the powerful healing. All are stunning and all are delivering praise to God in Heaven.

Conclusion

In this midst of this powerful healing with incredible faith of five men, four of them wanting to help their paralyzed friend we learn a powerful truth of this God-Man Jesus Christ, we learn that only God has the authority to forgive sins and that Jesus knows full well that He is God and no other conclusion can be reached. The men on the roof knew it, the once paralyzed man knew it as he walked out of Peter's house carrying his mat, the entire crowd knew it, and the Pharisees knew it but their hearts instead of melting to repentance became harder towards the one true and living God.

It will not be long now when the Pharisees will accuse Jesus of blasphemy one final time. The very one who teaches right here in our text that He has the authority to forgive sins will in fact become the very sacrifice by which sins are forgiven. While the paralytic walks away healed and forgiven, Jesus one day will be walking with a cross on His back all the way to Calvary. Christ will become sin even though He knew no sin so that we (those who have Jesus as Lord and Savior) so that we might become the righteousness of God.

Ephesians 4

All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath. But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. And God raised us up

with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

Living a life of faith that pleases God has powerful affects because of the nature of God. Walking in faith brings restoration, it reveals truth about Jesus Christ, and it will in time bring glory and praises to Christ.

What is faith? How exactly do we please God?

One night a house caught fire and a young boy was forced to flee to the roof. The father stood on the ground below with outstretched arms, calling to his son, “Jump! I’ll catch you.” He knew the boy had to jump to save his life. All the boy could see, however, was flame, smoke, and blackness. As can be imagined, he was afraid to leave the roof. His father kept yelling: “Jump! I will catch you.” But the boy protested, “Daddy, I can’t see you.” The father replied, “But I can see you and that’s all that matters.”

What is faith? How exactly do we please God? Whether we walk in faith, jump, or are

lowered from a ceiling...it all involves moving closer towards Jesus Christ.

Hebrews 11:6

And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.