**“Our Greatest Need / God’s Greatest Gift”**

**Mark 2:1-12**

**(Notes based on the sermon by Elder Dave Kolde 10/6/24)**

 What is your greatest need? (Q1) It is the forgiveness of your sin. I know you can recite John 3:16. Have you considered what it means when it says God “gave” His only begotten Son? Are you one of the “whosoever” that believes in Him? Our sins are an offense to a **HOLY** God. We each need a righteousness that can only be received by the merit of Christ.

 In today’s scripture passage we see that Jesus has returned to His home base in Capernaum, most likely at Peter’s house. A massive crowd gathered, even blocking the door. They were looking for a miracle. Even rabbis and pharisees were there. Jesus was preaching the good news of the kingdom (Q2) (Mark 1:14-15; Acts 17:30-31; John 15:14). When He says to repent, it’s a command, not a suggestion! The call of God to humanity was and is to repent of your sins and believe the Gospel.

 Belief in Jesus is the only way (John 14:6). Only in Him can we become the righteousness of God (2 Cor. 5:21). He died for you and now He lives in you. His redemptive work is done; now He is at the Father’s right hand interceding for you. Repent, believe, follow. That is the gospel call. There is no plan B! It is the choice of Heaven or Hell for all of eternity (Matt. 25:46).

 The friends of the paralytic man were desperate. They believed that Jesus could and would heal their friend. Their friend was unable to come to Jesus on his own. That’s just like us! We can’t take one step toward God because we are spiritually dead! Unless you are born again you are unable to come to God (John 3:3). Read Ezek. 36:25-27. Who does the cleansing and saving? GOD! He gets all the glory. We have as much to do with our spiritual birth as we did with our physical birth (John 6:44).

 In today’s scripture Jesus goes straight to the man’s greatest need: his sin. (Q3) (Q4) It is unforgiven sin that sends people to Hell (Rom. 3:23; Rom. 6:23). But in Jesus we have no condemnation (Rom. 8:1). What is necessary for forgiveness? Repentance and faith in Christ alone. Not just faith, but having Christ as the object of our faith. This is God’s greatest gift to us: through saving faith in the person and work of Lord Jesus Christ alone, our sin has been placed on Him and His righteousness has been placed on us. WE HAVE BEEN FORGIVEN! When the pharisees said that only God can forgive sin, THEY WERE RIGHT! But their arrogance kept them from seeing the truth (Ps. 103:12; Is. 43:25). When we sin against an infinitely holy God, our sins take on infinite importance and magnitude, requiring an infinite punishment. Praise God for His amazing grace in giving us His Son!

 This is not a cheap grace. We are asked to repent, believe, **and follow**. Read Matt. 7:21-23, then read this convicting poem by Jeff O’Hara:

**Why do they call Me Lord, Lord, and do not do the things I say?**

You call Me the Way and walk Me not!

You call Me the Life and live Me not!

You call me Master and obey Me not!

**If I condemn you blame Me not.**

You call Me Bread and eat Me not!

You call Me Master and obey Me not!

You call Me Truth and believe Me not!

You call Me Lord and serve Me not!

**If I condemn you blame Me not.**

(See also John 3:18-21 and Matt. 25:31-46)

Matt. 22:14 says that “many are called, but few are chosen.” Be one of the chosen! Surrender EVERYTHING to the Lord Jesus Christ. As Pastor Steve said two weeks ago, “A faith that doesn’t change you is a faith that doesn’t save you.”

 Do you believe in Jesus as your Savior and Lord? Are you fully surrendered to Him? Either Jesus is a blasphemer or He is God (John 10:30; John 14:9-11). The Lord has not lost His authority. He is waiting to tell you, “Your sins are forgiven.” He is waiting to give you His greatest gift: His Son. Repent and believe and accept this wonderful Gift. Repent and believe in the Gospel and the Christ of Scripture. (Q5)

**QUESTIONS**:

1. What is your greatest need?
2. What is the Gospel? How would you explain your salvation in Christ?
3. Why is it easier to say, “Your sins are forgiven,” as opposed to “Arise, take up your pallet and walk”?
4. Think of the desperation of the four men for their paralyzed friend. Now think of one of your unsaved friends and one of your unsaved family members. Do you have the same resolve to share the Gospel with them? To pray for them daily?
5. Read Matt. 28:18-20. Jesus has been given ALL authority. He has authority over your destiny, your future, your finances. What else? How does knowing this affect the way you live?

**“Nothing But the Blood of Jesus” (Lowry)**

 What can wash away my sin?
Nothing but the blood of Jesus;
What can make me whole again?
Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

* **Refrain:
Oh! precious is the flow
That makes me white as snow;
No other fount I know,
Nothing but the blood of Jesus.**

 This is all my hope and peace,
Nothing but the blood of Jesus;
This is all my righteousness,
Nothing but the blood of Jesus.