



**Growth Group Questions**  
**March 17, 2024**  
**“The One Who Forgives”**

**Context:**

Mark 2 begins a series of five narratives that give insight into the authority of Jesus. As we pick up the story in chapter 2 Jesus has concluded his preaching tour and has returned home. Many think that the home he is in is the home of Simon Peter and Andrew. The crowd is keeping this man’s friends from getting him to Jesus. Mark uses the word for crowd some 40 times in the first nine chapters and they often obstruct access to Jesus.

When the paralytic’s friends realize they cannot carry their friend into the house, they climb the outdoor staircase which would have led them to a flat roof. From there they proceeded to dig a hole, in order to lower their friend into the presence of Jesus. They have faith that Jesus can heal their friend.

Instead of healing the man physically, Jesus tells him that his sins are forgiven. This enrages the teachers of the law who say that Jesus is blaspheming because only God can forgive sins. Priests could pronounce a word of forgiveness, but they could not save people from their sins. Only God could do that. The charge of blasphemy - whose penalty was death - prepares the reader for what Jesus will be accused of in Mark 14:60-64.

However, since Jesus is God, he can forgive sins. He refers to himself as the “Son of Man”, picking up an image from Daniel 7:13-14. Throughout the gospels Jesus referred to himself as the Son of Man as a way of reminding people that he was both fully God and fully human. Son of Man passages in Mark can be divided into those that speak of Jesus authority during his earthly ministry, his suffering, death, and resurrection, and his glorious return.

Jesus eventually heals the man, but what is significant is the forgiveness of sins. The man does not ask for forgiveness, yet Jesus grants it to him. He restores the man’s soul and offers him the peace that surpasses all understanding and can only come from God. In the end, man picks up his mat and walks away, healed both physically and spiritually.



## **Scripture:**

### **Mark 2:1-12**

<sup>2</sup> A few days later, when Jesus again entered Capernaum, the people heard that he had come home. <sup>2</sup> They gathered in such large numbers that there was no room left, not even outside the door, and he preached the word to them. <sup>3</sup> Some men came, bringing to him a paralyzed man, carried by four of them. <sup>4</sup> 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. <sup>5</sup> When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralyzed man, "Son, your sins are forgiven." <sup>6</sup> Now some teachers of the law were sitting there, thinking to themselves, <sup>7</sup> "Why does this fellow talk like that? He's blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone?" <sup>8</sup> 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? <sup>9</sup> Which is easier: to say to this paralyzed man, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up, take your mat and walk'? <sup>10</sup> But I want you to know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins." So he said to the man, <sup>11</sup> "I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home." <sup>12</sup> 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!"

### **Galatians 6:2**

<sup>2</sup> Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.

### **Romans 3:22-24**

<sup>22</sup> This righteousness is given through faith in<sup>[a]</sup> Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference between Jew and Gentile, <sup>23</sup> for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, <sup>24</sup> and all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.

### **Daniel 7:13-14**

<sup>13</sup> "In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man,<sup>[a]</sup> coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. <sup>14</sup> He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all nations and peoples of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed.

### **Hebrews 9:11-14**

<sup>11</sup> But when Christ came as high priest of the good things that are now already here,<sup>[a]</sup> he went through the greater and more perfect tabernacle that is not made with human hands, that is to say, is not a part of this creation. <sup>12</sup> He did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves; but he entered the Most Holy Place once for all by his own blood, thus obtaining<sup>[b]</sup> eternal redemption. <sup>13</sup> The blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkled on those who are ceremonially unclean sanctify them so that they are outwardly clean. <sup>14</sup> How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death,<sup>[c]</sup> so that we may serve the living God!

### **1 John 2:2**

<sup>2</sup> He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.



**Questions:**

1. In Mark 2:1-12, we read the story of four individuals who went above and beyond to help a friend. Can you recall a time when a friend or friends went out of their way to help you?
2. A huge crowd of people got in the way of the four friends who were bringing the paralytic to see Jesus. How might we, today, be getting in the way of people coming to Jesus?
3. Pastor Paul told us that in Mark 2:1-12, we see that Jesus was more concerned about the paralytic's heart than about his suffering. What lesson(s) can we learn from this?
4. Jesus forgave the paralytic's sins and healed his body so that he could walk. Which of these do you think was the greater miracle? Why?
5. How does Mark 2:1-12 demonstrate both the compassion and the authority of Christ?
6. What does it mean that Jesus is "the Son of Man"? Why is this title so significant?
7. How do you define sin?
8. Pastor Paul quoted Cornelius Plantinga's definition of sin as the consistent breaking of God's shalom or peace. How do you think our sin breaks God's shalom?
9. What Bible verse or verses speak to you most clearly about God's forgiveness of our sin?

**Extra Credit:**

In the March 13<sup>th</sup> entry in Pastor Chad's Lenten Devotional, we are told that if we really have faith in God, we have to have faith "all the way until the end." What does it mean to have faith in God all the way to the end?

