

Mark 2:1-12

The Character of Christ Jesus the Healer

Introduction: If it is your first time joining us - Welcome! We have dedicated this year to Biblical Literacy; meaning we as a church are reading the Bible for ourselves to know first hand what it teaches and in order to be shaped by the story of God. And along with that we are teaching through the Bible on Sunday mornings - the main themes, message and characters. Last week we started a 5 week series on the Character of Christ. So continuing this morning we are going to look at Jesus the Healer; we want to look at Jesus in this light and then understand what that means for us, that Jesus is the healer.

Though we give many titles to Jesus of Nazareth - Son of God, Savior, Redeemer, Messiah, or the Christ. It is a well know fact of history that Jesus was a healer or a miracle worker.

One of my favorite passages about Jesus comes from the lips of Peter in Acts 10 - He says, **“You yourselves know what happened throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee after the baptism that John proclaimed: how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit, and with power. He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil for God was with him.” - Acts 10:37-38**

Leading up to our story that we just read this is exactly what has been happening..

In Chapter 1:14 of Mark we read **“Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.”**

“And immediately he left the synagogue and entered the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John. Now Simon's mother-in-law lay ill with a fever, and immediately they told him about her. And he came and took her by the hand and lifted her up, and the fever left her, and she began to serve them. That evening at sundown they

brought to him all who were sick or oppressed by demons. And the whole city was gathered together at the door. And he healed many who were sick with various diseases, and cast out many demons. And he would not permit the demons to speak, because they knew him.” - Mark 1:29-34

“And a leper came to him, imploring him, and kneeling said to him, “If you will, you can make me clean.” Moved with pity, he stretched out his hand and touched him and said to him, “I will; be clean.” And immediately the leprosy left him, and he was made clean. And Jesus sternly charged him and sent him away at once, and said to him, “See that you say nothing to anyone, but go, show yourself to the priest and offer for your cleansing what Moses commanded, for a proof to them.” But he went out and began to talk freely about it, and to spread the news, so that Jesus could no longer openly enter a town, but was out in desolate places, and people were coming to him from every quarter.” - Mark 1:40-45

Jesus miracles so far in Mark’s Gospel consist of:

The Sick being made well

Those oppressed by demons being set free

Those ceremonially unclean or dirty being made clean

Those who are lame are made whole

We often refer to the healing works of Jesus as miracles, but I love that John’s Gospel calls them “signs” because we often simply focus on the miraculous act rather than seeing it as a sign pointing to something else. Remember - Jesus in Mark 1:14 began his ministry with this proclamation - “The Kingdom of God is at hand,” and then Mark records these “miracles” of healing and restoration directly following his proclamation.

Have you ever noticed how the miracles in the NT are never about power for the sake of power? Jesus and the Apostles aren’t doing tricks; they aren’t showmen attracting a crowd; the miracles always relieve suffering. Why is that? Because they are signs; signs pointing to the kingdom of God and the new creation - to a restored creation, when the curse of sin and all the effects of sin, brokenness, decay, and death in the world will be removed..

Often we talk about miracles as being supernatural but that is because we are living in a world under the curse of sin. Miracles, like sight to the blind, the dead being raised, are, if you think about it, the most natural thing in the world.. they are not the suspension of the natural order but a restoration of the natural order.. Because God did not make a world with sin, cancer, blindness, lameness, suffering and death.

“When Jesus expels demons and heals the sick, he is driving out of creation the powers of destruction, and is healing and restoring created beings who are hurt and sick. The lordship of God, to which the healings witness, restores creation to health. Jesus’ healings are not supernatural miracles in a natural world. They are the only truly ‘natural’ thing in a world that is unnatural, demonized and wounded. .” - Jürgen Moltmann, The Way of Jesus Christ

The miraculous works of Jesus are signs pointing to the kingdom of God, and marking Jesus off as the king and administrator of that Kingdom.

1. Jesus the Healer

1. In this episode - Mark 2:1-12 - Jesus’ popularity has reached new heights - news of his healing power has spread all around, so much so, that Jesus is no longer able to enter into the villages or synagogues because of the massive crowds that flock to him.
2. It is upon such an occasion that Jesus is at Peter’s house and so many gathered to hear him teach that the house and all around the house is filled.
 1. It is in this setting that Jesus is going to reveal or unveil something about the nature of his person and his mission.
3. Four friends bring their paralyzed friend to be healed by Jesus - but they can’t even get near the door - because of the crowd. So, they climb onto the roof and start dismantling it in order to lower their friend down to Jesus.
4. As this man is being lowered it says, Jesus saw their faith (The faith of the friends) They are so confident in Jesus power to heal their friend that they have climbed on to the roof, dragged their lame friend up their with them, dismantled the roof, and figured out a way to lower him into the presence of Jesus (A long but powerful description of Faith)
5. Jesus sees their faith, and he says, to the paralytic - Son, your sins are forgiven you...

2. A Deeper Healing

1. (Picture the moment)
2. I imagine the friends, the crowd and even the paralytic must have thought, “wait, what? That’s not why we are here.” Doesn’t Jesus seem to be missing something glaringly obvious? This man is paralyzed, this is why he’s come to Jesus, he can go to the Temple to take care of his sin...
3. But Jesus knows something that we don’t know, that the crowd doesn’t know - that suffering isn’t our biggest problem.
 1. You could have all of your problems and suffering healed today and guess what - it isn’t what you are really looking for; it isn’t really what you need. Our biggest issues are not physical, but spiritual - the physical is just the glaring manifestation of our spiritual problem.....
 2. What do you mean? - The lame person wants to walk, the blind person wants to see, so let’s say that miracle takes place - give it a month and they’ll be just as miserable and hopeless, and lost as the rest of the human race. Even in our own lives sometimes we act as though physical healing, or physical filling, is all we need, or is what we really need.
 3. I’m not trying to be unsympathetic with those who suffer or are currently suffering but only to say that our biggest problems in the world are not physical suffering - that is simply a symptom to our greater problem. **Do you ever look at the thing that you are longing for whether - healing, a relationship, money, an incredible career and ask, are those people that have what I want any happier, or any more peaceful than I am?** It’s not wrong to want those things, but guaranteed, they won’t satisfy for long, they cannot make you whole. They cannot heal what is truly wrong with you. You and I need a deeper healing.
4. Jesus’ work of healing our bodies, our sickness and disease is real, but the work Jesus wants to do is deeper still, Jesus wants to heal our lives at the very root and core of our being.
 1. Jesus words to this paralytic give evidence to the reality of a sin sick soul, and of our separation from our creator and heavenly Father. All physical infirmity has an indirect relationship to sin. Sin, sickness, disease and death occur because we are not under the reign of God in the way that the creation was meant to be. Disease, sickness and death were not an original part of God’s good creation, but they came about when the Human

Race, through Adam and Eve, rebelled against God. Mankind severed itself from the life that is in God and we have been suffering the consequence ever since.

2. You see the healing work that our bodies and souls need is to be brought back to God and that can only come through the forgiveness of sin.
 1. Personally, I think that many churches talk too much about sin to the neglect of other aspects of God's salvation and redemption. (What is the Gospel?) But salvation is not less than the forgiveness of sins but so much more. And in order to experience God's restoration, redemption, salvation in order to experience his kingdom reign and rule - we must have our sins forgiven us. Each one of us are sinned against sinners. Whatever has been done to us; however we have been sinned against; we have all lived in such a way as to ensue debt to God (That's actually how the bible speaks of sin, as debt). What do I mean? God created us for himself, for relationship, to be his image bearers - to model his righteousness and self giving love - all of this creates an atmosphere of Shalom, of Peace. But instead all humans have all lived selfishly, We have not loved and honor God as God, we have not loved our family as ourselves, we have not loved our spouse as our self, we have not loved our children as ourselves, we have not loved our neighbor as our self - we have not loved our enemy... and selfishness is truly at the root of all sin - we prefer ourselves before God, we prefer ourselves before others. Sin and selfishness makes the world a miserable place. So when we talk about all of us being sinners it is in the sense that we have all added to the chaos and destruction in the world around us. And all of this sin - is ultimately against God, because he created us and we aren't living for him, he created life and relationships and order of the world and we aren't honoring any of that - That pollutes and destroys God's good order - and because of this we owe a debt to God
 2. And when Jesus says to this man, and even to us that he forgives our sin - yes those are specific sins but also, in the more general way that we are talking - We have punched holes, lit on fire, and vandalized God's creation and creative order, he is forgiving that, he is forgiving our iniquity, and rebellion..

3. Jesus has come to do something about the root of evil, the root of pain and misery in the world, Jesus has come to deal with sin.

3. Jesus the Healer King

1. We are told specifically that when Jesus uttered these words the religious leaders were appalled.
 1. Wait, what? Why does this man speak like that? He is blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone? - The Scribes, and religious leaders
 2. Jesus - knowing their thoughts - **“Why do you question these things in your hearts? Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, your sins are forgiven, or to say, ‘rise, take up your bed 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 say to you, rise, pick up your bed, and go home” - Jesus, the Son of Man**
 3. **“And he rose immediately, picked up his bed and went out before them all. So - all were amazed and glorified God, saying, “we never saw anything like this.”**
2. Do you ever wonder why Jesus often calls himself the Son of Man? In fact it is Jesus most common, or favorite self identifier in the gospels. If we go back to Daniel 7 there is this scene where the Ancient of Days (God the Father) is seated on his throne with heavenly beings all around him, and he has just administered judgement over the wicked rulers of the world - and then it says that, **“I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed.”**
3. Jesus is here identifying himself with God’s king - the son of Man - the one who rules over the kingdom of God - The Kingdom of flourishing, of life, of peace, of justice and goodness. What Jesus is claiming is - as The king, the son of man, he has authority over God’s kingdom to forgive sin, to pardon, or to offer admittance into God’s kingdom.... Jesus doesn’t play out here how all this is possible - that comes to light in a later Son of Man passage - **“He**

then began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and after three days rise again.” - Mark 8:31

1. YHWH appoints the Son of Man to rule over the nations forever and ever... and Jesus is saying that this Son of Man must first, be rejected, suffer, die, and rise again.. In fact, in Mark's gospel, Jesus says this three times almost back to back.. so what is that about? See, before God's kingdom can truly be established - God as king, creation restored, humanity brought back into the presence and purposes of God - Sin, evil, and death must be overcome - Otherwise no one can actually be a part of God's kingdom - because the poison of sin is in each of us, we are enslaved to sin and the demonic world - and we owe a debt to God. All the evil, sin and rebellion beginning with adam and stretching all the way into today - must be dealt with. Jesus, the son of man, comes to remove the barrier that blocks us from the kingdom and the purposes of God. Peter puts it this way -
 1. **“He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed. For you were straying like sheep, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.” - 1 Peter 2:24**
2. The same healing power that God is going to bring to the whole earth at the end of time can be brought into your life presently. The removal of guilt and shame, the cleansing of your conscience, the filling up of your hopes and desires, peace with God, peace with yourself, peace with those around you. That healing can take place today through the healing power of Jesus, because he bore your sin, the root of all evil in his own body, on the cross..
4. **Closing:** The healing that Jesus wants to bring in us and through us. Through Jesus not only can we have our sins forgiven us, but we can also, have the sin done to us forgiven. Jesus doesn't just pay for the sin we have committed but also the sin done to us - he brings healing to those who have been victimized by sin - And through applying the forgiveness of Jesus to our own lives, he makes us into forgiving people,

1. *“Forgiveness is truly the grace by which we enable another person to get up, and get up with dignity, to begin anew. To not forgive leads to bitterness and hatred. Like self-hatred and self-contempt, hatred of others gnaws away at our vitals. Whether hatred is projected out or stuffed in, it is always corrosive to the human spirit.” - Desmond Tutu, The Book of Forgiving*

1. Maybe today you desperately feel your need for forgiveness, you feel that, you feel your sin and your guilt and shame has a hold on you, Jesus offers you freedom from that sin, but that is not freedom to live for yourself, but to live for him
2. Maybe you feel as though you need Jesus to work forgiveness in your heart towards someone who has wronged you - Jesus offers that to you this morning as well - Jesus we pray that you would teach us - show us great physician what it means cathartically, practically what it means - that by your wounds we are healed. Heal us Lord, down to the core of our being, set us free from the sin that has held us, set us free from the sins that have been done to us having power over us - heal us by your wounds