

MARK 1:40 – 2:17

^{1:40} And a leper came to him, imploring him, and kneeling said to him, “If you will, you can make me clean.” ⁴¹ Moved with pity, he stretched out his hand and touched him and said to him, “I will; be clean.” ⁴² And immediately the leprosy left him, and he was made clean. ⁴³ And Jesus sternly charged him and sent him away at once, ⁴⁴ 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.” ⁴⁵ 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. ^{2:1} And when he returned to Capernaum after some days, it was reported that he was at home. ² And many were gathered together, so that there was no more room, not even at the door. And he was preaching the word to them. ³ And they came, bringing to him a paralytic carried by four men. ⁴ And when they could not get near him because of the crowd, they removed the roof above him, and when they had made an opening, they let down the bed on which the paralytic lay. ⁵ And when Jesus saw their faith, he

said to the paralytic, “Son, your sins are forgiven.” ⁶ Now some of the scribes were sitting there, questioning in their hearts, ⁷ “Why does this man speak like that? He is blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone?” ⁸ And immediately Jesus, perceiving in his spirit that they thus questioned within themselves, said to them, “Why do you question these things in your hearts? ⁹ Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Rise, take up your bed and walk’? ¹⁰ But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins”—he said to the paralytic— ¹¹ “I say to you, rise, pick up your bed, and go home.” ¹² And he rose and immediately picked up his bed and went out before them all, so that they were all amazed and glorified God, saying, “We never saw anything like this!” ¹³ He went out again beside the sea, and all the crowd was coming to him, and he was teaching them. ¹⁴ And as he passed by, he saw Levi the son of Alphaeus sitting at the tax booth, and he said to him, “Follow me.” And he rose and followed him. ¹⁵ And as he reclined at table in his house, many tax collectors and sinners were reclining with Jesus and his disciples, for there were many who followed him. ¹⁶ And the scribes of the Pharisees, when they saw that he was eating with sinners and tax collectors, said to his disciples,

“Why does he eat with tax collectors and sinners?” ¹⁷ And when Jesus heard

it, he said to them, “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but

those who are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners.”

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Take time to read the passage carefully for yourself. Notice and mark down its structure, repeated words, key movements, and anything that stands out or raises questions. The questions below are offered as tools to help you notice, reflect, and respond to the text—use those that are most helpful for you or your group.

EXPLORING THE PASSAGE

- Jesus interacts primarily with three individuals in this passage: a leper, a paralytic, and a tax collector.
 - What do we know about each of them? How would you describe their lives before they encountered Jesus—physically, emotionally, socially, and spiritually?
 - What is significant about the way Jesus interacts with each of them? How do their lives change after meeting Him?
 - What do these encounters reveal about Jesus, His authority, and His Kingdom?
- How do others in the passage—especially the crowds and the religious leaders—view Jesus and respond to His actions?
- This passage marks the first recorded human opposition to Jesus in Mark’s Gospel. What is causing this opposition, and how might it set the stage for future confrontations?
- Why does Jesus tell the leper to remain silent about his healing and instead go to the priests? What are the consequences of the leper’s actions?
- The men who bring the paralytic to Jesus go to great effort and take risks to do so. What does this reveal about their faith?
 - Why do you think the passage specifically says that Jesus “saw their faith”?
 - How would you define faith based on their actions?
- Why does Jesus first say, “Your sins are forgiven,” when the paralytic and his friends were expecting physical healing?
 - How does the healing itself serve as proof of His authority to forgive sins?

- What is the significance of Jesus referring to Himself as the Son of Man in this passage?
- What does Levi's immediate response to Jesus reveal about the nature of discipleship and the Kingdom of God? What might it have cost him to follow Jesus?
- When questioned about eating with tax collectors and sinners, Jesus responds, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners." What does He mean by this? What are the implications for those listening?
- Summary:
 - What do we learn about Jesus, the gospel, and the Kingdom of God in this passage?
 - What do we learn about faith and discipleship?
 - In one or two sentences, summarize the main point of this passage. What is God's word for you from this passage? How will you respond?

PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE

- Each of these people—the leper, the paralytic, and Levi—experienced transformation after encountering Jesus. How has Jesus changed your life? Where do you still long for His touch? What have you seen about Jesus in this passage that draws you closer to Him?
- Where do you currently experience brokenness—physically, socially, emotionally, or spiritually? What would it look like to come to Jesus in faith and dependence? How does this passage give you courage to trust Him in those areas?
- Are there ways you are tempted to live in self-reliance, failing to recognize your need for the Great Physician? How might you cultivate a practice of reflection and confession, keeping your heart soft and open to His grace?
- The men who brought the paralytic to Jesus demonstrated great faith, which led to his healing and forgiveness. Who in your life needs to be brought to Jesus? How can you pray for them, and how might your words and actions invite them to trust in Him?
- This passage presents two forms of opposition: the obvious opposition of the religious leaders, who question Jesus' authority, and the more subtle opposition of disobedience, as seen in the healed leper's actions. How can you remain soft-hearted, listening, trusting, and obeying Jesus? Why do you want to?