

## A MIRACLE OUT OF THIS WORLD

A Lingerin Thanksgiving Message  
Mark 2:1-12 – Pastor Richard P. Carlson

The events leading up to this mighty miracle—Jesus’ healing of the paralytic, might easily make many of us want to give up on trying to figure out what Jesus was doing, if we had been among Jesus’ disciples. Jesus’ disciples were following Jesus back and forth across the Sea of Galilee and on one of these trips, the disciples encountered a storm that could have taken their lives. The sailing back and forth across the Sea of Galilee gives us all pause to say, “I’m glad Jesus knows what He is doing when life seems to be going around in circles. Jesus knew how to face the ebb and flow of ministry without becoming discouraged or giving up. What seemed discouragements to His disciples, Jesus saw as opportunities. Most of us are capable of seeing discouragements in each of our opportunities. In fact, on one of these trips across the Sea of Galilee, Jesus healed a leper, and told the man not to noise his healing around, not to tell anyone but the priest who would pronounce him clean. But the leper told everyone in his world, so that Jesus could no longer openly enter a town because of the multitudes following after him and wanting the same healing. Turn back to Mark 1:35-45. This is the context of this miracle we are looking at today that happened at Peter’s home in Capernaum.

Mark tells us in our text of Mark 2:1 that Jesus returned to the very home where he had earlier healed Peter’s mother-in-law who lived with Peter and with Peter’s wife and family. Yet, Mark reports in Mark 2:1 that when Jesus had come back to Capernaum several days afterward, it was heard and noised about that He was at home. Yes, Jesus included Peter’s home as His own home as well as in His hometown of Nazareth. Mark 7:24 declares, “He could not be hidden, or He could not escape notice.” Matthew 9:1 in telling us the same account says, “Jesus returned to His own city.” The best explanation of Capernaum being Jesus’ own city and His being in His own home is that Peter was the disciple behind the writing of the Gospel of Mark. Peter was the eyewitness source for most of the book of Mark, written by his nephew John Mark. Peter saw his own home as Jesus’ own home, like Pastor Zaqueo tells people of his own home, “Mi casa es su casa.” No sooner did Jesus arrive than a paralytic was brought to him. Let’s put ourselves in this picture in this fishing city of Capernaum.

The main road going through this area ran through the city of Capernaum. Beside the road, and close to the Sea of Galilee, next to the seashore, were lines of box shaped houses built of stones. The roofs were made of tree saplings, intertwined with sand, mud and a tar like substance. The tiles were overlaid making roofs about two feet thick. One particular house would have caught our attention on this day. Crowds were swelling all around this house, with people lined up down the street, and both doors to Peter’s house were blocked. What I want us to see in this message today is to find in this miracle a number of all-important lessons to make us truly thankful on this lingerin Thanksgiving Sunday. What are these 4 lessons?

## **THANK GOD FOR SPECIAL TIMES WHEN JESUS HAS HEALED US. (I.)**

Mark 2: 1 tells us that “it was reported Jesus was at home.” Jesus was in one of His homes away from home, Peter’s home—one of his home offices for His ministry. Doctor Luke in his parallel account in Luke 5:17 wrote, “At it came about one day that Jesus was teaching; and there were some Pharisees and teachers of the law sitting there, who had come from every village of Galilee and Judea and from Jerusalem; and the power of the Lord was present for Him to perform healing.” Luke, being a doctor, wrote this interesting addition to the portrait of the miracle that happened that day. What does it mean that the power of the Lord was present to perform healing? Does that mean that sometimes Jesus doesn’t have the power to heal? Never! In Hebrews 13: 8 the Word declares, “Jesus Christ the same, yesterday, today, and forever.” Yet in Matthew 13:58, we read of Jesus being just northwest of Capernaum in His hometown in Nazareth. Matthew records, “And Jesus did not do many miracles there because of their unbelief.” So, does this mean that since Jesus had power to heal, that Peter’s house in Capernaum was full of believers in Him? No, many of these men were hostile to Jesus. Mark calls them in Mark 2: 6 about these scribes, hostile to Jesus and His Gospel. Any healing of anyone on this day would have had to include a confounding of Jesus’ hostile critics. So why were Jesus’ miracles in His own hometown of Nazareth few, although He didn’t have that same restraint in doing miracles in Capernaum, in Peter’s home? Many folks may have different answers.

It is dangerous to speculate on the reasons why God doesn’t always heal as some Bible teachers announce that Jesus always heals everyone. God didn’t heal Trophimus whom Paul left home sick. Paul had an unhealed thorn in the flesh. Timothy had stomach problems that weren’t healed. Epaphroditus was sick unto death, helping Paul in his ministry. It is a dangerous judgement to accuse sick people of not having enough faith, when “faith healers” do not see them healed. Jesus did not judge the lack of faith in the sick folk in Nazareth when He only healed a few. Those few were healed. But we find one clue worth mentioning. The faith of these four men who brought this paralytic to Jesus, their faith was present in Capernaum. In Nazareth, the moment Jesus began opening the Word, the people took offense saying, “Is not this the carpenter’s son? We know of no person actually brought to Jesus that He never healed. We also know that there has never been such a time of healing on the earth as when Jesus was on earth. Even those healed by contact with one of Paul’s sweaty handkerchiefs or coming under Peter’s shadow, in those times, they were doubtless times with great healing, but those healings didn’t hold a candle to Jesus’ miracles and His raising of the dead.

I cannot fully understand why we anoint some folk with oil, in faith, and they are physically healed, while others who have much faith are not physically healed. But I can tell you, many of us can join in praising God, thanking Him for those special times when He has healed us. How many of us here in this sanctuary have been as helpless as this paralytic that Jesus raised up to glorify Him? Can you say, “There have been special times Jesus has healed me!?” If you recall a special time when Jesus healed you, just stand up long enough for us all to take in the wonder of God’s healing among us, and that at special times we have been healed. Secondly,

**THANK GOD FOR FAITH HE GIVES TO OTHERS WHO NEVER GIVE UP ON US WHEN OUR CAUSE SEEMS HOPELESS.** (II.) In Mark 2:2-4.

Jesus was speaking the Word to a crowd in a packed-out house. We read, “And they came, bringing to Him a paralytic carried by four men.” Notice verse 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.” Why should we give credit to God first for the faith of others for us? Paul tells us in Ephesians 2: 8 that our faith is not of ourselves; it is a gift of God. That day God was motivating a perseverant, dogged faith in these 4 men. We can imagine the disappointment of this sick man when his weary eyes saw at the edge of the crowd that there was no hope for these four men to force a passage into the house to come in front of Jesus. Had these men been without faith, they doubtless would have said, “Sorry, we’ll carry you back home.”

But these men refused the coward’s way of claiming they could not do any more. Their mindset of faith was, “We must do more.” If we believe in the power of God, no crowd in front of a door will keep us back in our desire to help others. In being called to be stretcher-bearers for Jesus, difficulties will often test us. Rather than stop us, these difficulties can increase our faith. The Greek word for removing the roof means literally, digging out the tiles. It means removing the loose tiles or plates of burnt clay that covered the surface of the roof, and then digging through the earth and plaster that composed the roof itself. These four stretcher-bearers knew they did not know any conventional way to get this paralyzed man to Jesus. The doors were blocked, but in their persistent faith, faith from God led them to find a way. They found their way to the rooftop, and out came the close-packed twigs, compacted together with mudded clay and mortar. Under the twigs and clay were the tiles covered over. These men had too much at stake in helping this paralyzed man to quit because they worried about the people below who were doubtless getting sprinkled by roof rubbish and rubble.

Beloved, at this Thanksgiving time, afresh, I want to thank God for my wife Jinny who in 1974, refused to believe I would die from an A strain flu called Port Chalmer’s flu. That year, 4,800 people died from this flu, eight of them were men in Bloomington, Normal. Two men came to the house and carried me to the doctor, an old missionary doctor who told me it was Port Chalmer’s A-strain flu. I thought he would put me in the hospital, but he said, “Go home and rest. You will either live or die.” I felt like dying as it seemed as if there was a softball in my throat. I couldn’t stand up without excruciating pain hitting my head. Jinny told me I was going to live. She tore up the roof in prayer for me, when I was nearly paralyzed with a heart rate of 200 beats per minute, when I could not stand up to move, but had to crawl on the floor, whenever I would go to the living room, the dining room, or the bathroom. Thank God for the faith He gives others to lay hold of the horns of the altar in prayer for us, to attempt every means, and to exhaust all possibilities to help us get the Lord’s help. Thank God for those who won’t settle for being just outside the door from Jesus. They have faith to help lower us through the roof, down to Jesus’ precious nail-pierced feet.

Can you imagine the joy when these four men with eager, expectant faces looked down through the broken roof to discover their aim was perfect? Jesus stood looking up at them as they lowered the paralytic down in his bed to the Lord's feet. It must have been a pleasure for them to silently watch from above, with a keener pleasure than if they had found a way to get the man to Jesus through the door. They knew their act was inconvenient. How could these men have known that the scribes and Pharisees, on the front rows in front of Jesus, were getting a dirty, rubble dusting? Those VIP's looked on with disdain on their act of persistent faith. Persistent faith may not look pretty, but it pays dividends when we find ourselves face to face with Jesus and placing those we love at the feet of Jesus. Thirdly,

**THANK GOD FOR HIS DEEP UNDERSTANDING AND COMPASSION ON US IN OUR PARALYZED PLIGHTS.** (III.)

Notice verse 5a. "And when Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytic, "Son, your sins are forgiven." None of these men or the paralytic himself apparently spoke one word throughout this whole ordeal. This perseverant act of these four stretcher-bearers and the awful condition of this sick man spoke loudly enough to Jesus for Him to get the full message. Their faith was a visible faith, manifested by their actions. God could see their hidden hearts like an open book. The Greek word **paralutikos** for paralytic means: a condition of the body characterized by a loss of ability to move or control movements of the body, a disabled person unable to walk. Sometimes spiritually, we as God's people get paralyzed with fear or pride or anger or bitterness and we ourselves find it impossible to get ourselves to Jesus. Yet when those who love us, intercede for us, oh, the joy of being carried on our stretcher bed, until we are looking up into His tender eyes and hearing Him say, "Child," or "My son, your sins are forgiven." I am moved by the mingled love and tenderness and dignity Jesus gave to this paralytic man.

Jesus spoke to this man's conscience before He spoke to him about his bodily ailment. He met this sufferer's deepest and most deeply felt disease first. Jesus knows how to get to the bottom of every one of our maladies with His cure. It is of little use to cure symptoms unless there is a cure for our disease. What is the taproot of all misery? It is sin in this fallen world. We have no word to explain that this man's paralysis was due to some specific sin, but we know that his man, just like us, was a sinner. Why hack at the branches of sin—why hack away at the branchers of paralysis when the biggest need this paralytic had was for his sin to be forgiven. Jesus alone provides the only cure to forgive us by bearing our sins in His own body on the cross where He died for us in our place, by His substitutionary atonement at Calvary. Fourthly,

**THANK GOD HE SILENCES HIS CRITICS, HEALING OUR SOULS AND SPIRITS, AND SOMETIMES, HE ALSO HEALS OUR BODIES.** (IV.)

Did you notice in verses 6-12 what went on in that open-roofed home? Let me read it again to you all once again. This amazing revelation of God's understanding of what the enemy is even silently thinking, allowed Jesus to clear the path to healing this paralytic physically, and to heal us too. Listen as I read it to us. These enemies of Jesus rightly were protesting within that no one but God could forgive sin. They

knew if Jesus could forgive sin, He had to be God, for no mere man can forgive sin. Jesus' mind is like a mirror of us. He sees each of our thoughts, what we are thinking, what each of you are thinking right now. But the scribes had a mission to prove Jesus was a blasphemer, and not God, come in the flesh. In their mind, it was easy enough for Jesus to assume a power He claimed to have that could not be tested. They knew Jesus could pretend to do what could not be tested. Jesus seeing their seemingly brilliant unbelief, took on their unbelief with His own test.

Knowing their reasoning within, He asked them the question in verse 9, "Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, "Your sins are forgiven;" or to say, "Rise, take up your bed/pallet and go home?" Jesus' question turned the tables. To effect either spiritual forgiveness of sins or a physical healing from paralysis was beyond man's power. The scribes knew that. But one effect could be verified, while the other effect could not. How would Jesus' pardon of this man's sins ever be verified? His pardon of this paralytic must be tested. Jesus set up the test. The paralyzed man must walk. Jesus continued, "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 was going to strengthen His miracle by doing it in response to unbelief, rather than faith. Oh, these friends had faith, as I believe this paralytic did too. Jesus' word was enough.

Jesus never spoke the name of this man's disease or its cause, but He spoke to the suffering person himself. Jesus commanded this man to do an impossible thing for any paralytic to do. Jesus asked this paralytic to reveal his faith by obediently standing. What if a mere man tells a paralytic to rise and walk? His disease is that he cannot rise and walk. But this paralytic believed that Jesus had the power to heal him, so he did as Jesus bid him to do. As he rose in faith, the paralysis stole out of his unused limbs. The condition of healing was faith, the faith of all 5 men—a faith Jesus bestowed to each of them. The test of faith was the obedience of this paralyzed man. God never gives us strength to do what He asks us to do, until we start to obey. Our obedience qualifies as faith for what He calls us to do.

For this paralytic, his cure was immediate. This man felt God's healing power surge through his body. He rose and walked out of the house in the sight of the crowd that made way to view this remarkable, and unbelievable sight. When he had paralysis, the crowd blocked his way. Healed, this amazed crowd made way for him to walk. They made way as when God parted the Red Sea so the Israelites on the Exodus could cross over. God will always defeat His critics and naysayers. Jesus was glorified. One paralytic lost his title. He was one sight for everyone to behold. When we place our faith in Jesus obediently, others will say as they said that day, "We have never seen anything like this before." Bow your heads. On this lingering Thanksgiving Sunday, has God touched and healed you? Has He given faith to others to believe God for you? Has God had understood you and had compassion on you too, in your awful plights? Has God defeated the critics and naysayers that said you could never be helped, then forgiven your sins, and for many of you, even healed your bodies? If so, I call on you once more to stand to your feet in the sight of us all—to glorify God by rising in thanksgiving. Amen.