

- 1 **"In His Steps: Contagious Faith"**
Mark 2:1-12 NLT
- 2 **This clip is from the Jesus Film which came out in 1979.**
 - Since 1981, The *Jesus* film has been translated into 1,049 languages and shown in 228 nations.
 - With a cumulative audience of over 6 billion, we can safely say the *Jesus film* is the most-watched movie ever produced.
 - As such it has been an incredible tool for evangelism all over the world.
 - I like it because it is very accurate to the scriptural text of Luke.
- 3 **I also like it because it brings to life familiar passages we've heard time and time again.**
 - And so today we start with Jesus returning from a preaching tour around Galilee.
- 4 **Mark 1:1-2 When Jesus returned to Capernaum several days later, the news spread quickly that he was back home. ² Soon the house where he was staying was so packed with visitors that there was no more room, even outside the door.**
- 5 **Where does he return? To Capernaum, a fishing town on the sea of Galilee where Peter and his family live.**
 - And the place was packed. Why?
 - Well, after a dramatic rescue of a demon possessed man, Mark 1:28 says "*immediately His fame spread throughout all the region around Galilee.*"
 - It wouldn't always be so, but at this point in His ministry, Jesus attracted crowds wherever He went.
- 6 **Notice that Jesus was focused on preaching the word to them.**
 - We don't know exactly what he preached.
 - But, it is clear that preaching and teaching was primary with Jesus.
 - It may be that he went to a house, because on the streets he was constantly besieged with requests for healing and the casting out of demons.
 - In any case, Jesus is so popular that the house, the doorway, and outside was filled with people.
- 7 **³ four men arrived carrying a paralyzed man on a mat. ⁴ They couldn't bring him to Jesus because of the crowd, so they dug a hole through the roof above his head. Then they lowered the man on his mat, right down in front of Jesus.**
- 8 **Certainly this was a strange interruption to a sermon.**
 - How many sermons have you seen interrupted by a man being dropped through a roof?
 - Obviously the man's friends were not going to be impeded by a crowd.
 - Think about it - it took some guts, wouldn't you say, for the friends to climb on the roof and dig a hole through the ceiling.
 - How many of us would be so persistent to get to Jesus?
 - Think of the reaction of the crowd – "the nerve of these guys to crash in - literally!" "Who do they think they are?!"
 - Think of the reaction of the owner of the house.
 - Well there goes the roof!
- 9 **Now there are some strange interruptions from time to time in church.**
 - Not too long ago, a pastor performed a wedding and was interrupted when the church doors flew open, and a man hurried up the aisle, dragging an obviously pregnant woman.
 - The man shouted, "Stop the wedding! You can't let this go on - look at what Joe did to

- my sister!"
- The bride looked horrified, but the pastor calmly said, "There's no Joe here."
 - The man looked confused, and said "Oh no! Wrong wedding!" and left the church.
- 10 **In any case, Jesus is unperturbed by the interruption, but he does give an unexpected response.**
- If I were there, I'd guess that the paralyzed man and his friends wanted healing.
 - Seems obvious, right?
 - Yet Jesus sees something deeper. He sees the *deeper need*, doesn't he, and goes straight to that.
- 11 **⁵ Seeing their faith, Jesus said to the paralyzed man, "My child, your sins are forgiven."**
- 12 **Notice that Jesus saw their faith.**
- Jesus focuses on the faith of the friends.
- 13 **Jesus looked up at the four men struggling with crude ropes tied to each corner of the stretcher with a paralytic on it. He looked at them and saw their faith. It was evident to all.**
- Their faith could be *seen*.
 - Their bold, determined action to bring their friend to Jesus proved they had real faith.
 - Can it be said of us, that others can see our faith? There is something lacking in our faith if we keep it "all bottled up" and it can never be *seen*.
- 14 **Also, notice that the friends had faith beyond just themselves.**
- We need to have faith for more than ourselves, our own needs, but also have faith that Jesus can and will meet the needs of others whom we bring to Him.
 - Do you and I care for more than ourselves? Do we believe that Jesus can meet the needs of those we love – of our friends and family.
- 15 **Yet seeing the friends' faith, what does Jesus say to the paralyzed man? "Son, your sins are forgiven you."**
- 16 **We can imagine how the friends on the roof felt.**
- They went to a lot of trouble to see their friend healed of his paralysis, and now the teacher only wants to *forgive his sins!*
 - We might imagine them shouting, "No, he's paralyzed! We brought him here to walk! Wait a minute!"
 - Yet, Jesus knew what the man's *real* need was, and what his *greatest* need was.
 - What good was it if the man had two whole legs, and walked right into hell with them?
- 17 **Listen closely, whenever there is a problem, almost always, *sin* is the real problem – whether we see it or not.**
- You see, Jesus got right to the core problem.
 - Jesus did not mean that the paralyzed man was especially sinful, or that his paralysis was directly caused by sin.
 - Instead, He addressed the man's greatest need, and the common root of all pain and suffering - our sinful condition.
 - A Warren Wiersbe says, "Forgiveness is the greatest miracle that Jesus ever performs. It meets the greatest need; it costs the greatest price; and it brings the greatest blessing and the most lasting results."
- 18 **⁶ But some of the teachers of religious law who were sitting there thought to themselves, ⁷ "What is he saying? This is blasphemy! Only God can forgive sins.**
- 19 **On one hand, the scribes use the right kind of logic.**
- They correctly believe that only God can forgive sins, and they are even correct for

- examining this new teacher.
- But their error is in refusing to see who Jesus is: God the Son, who has the authority to forgive sins.
 - You see Jesus is pushing to the limit the dilemma we talked about last week.
 - He is either a liar, a lunatic, or he is the Living Lord of the Universe with power to forgive sin.
 - “Again and again during the life of Christ the same dilemma was to re-appear. If he were not divine, then he was indeed a blasphemer; there could be no third way out.” (Cole)
- 20 **⁸ Jesus knew immediately what they were thinking, so he asked them, “Why do you question this in your hearts? ⁹ Is it easier to say to the paralyzed man, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or ‘Stand up, pick up your mat, and walk’?”**
- 21 **Which is easier? For men, both real forgiveness and the power to heal are impossible. But for God, both are possible.**
- So it is a logical assumption that if Jesus has the power to heal the man’s disease, He also has the authority to forgive his sins.
 - In a way, it was “harder” to heal the man than to forgive his sins, because forgiveness is invisible - no one could verify at that moment the man was forgiven before God.
 - Yet it could be instantly verified whether or not the man could walk.
 - Jesus is willing to put Himself to the test!
- 22 **¹⁰ So I will prove to you that the Son of Man has the authority on earth to forgive sins.” Then Jesus turned to the paralyzed man and said,¹¹ “Stand up, pick up your mat, and go home!”**
- 23 **¹² And the man jumped up, grabbed his mat, and walked out through the stunned onlookers. They were all amazed and praised God, exclaiming, “We’ve never seen anything like this before!”**
- 24 **Just imagine for a moment the tension in this scene.**
- The scribes are tense, because Jesus challenged them, and said He would demonstrate He was the Son of God.
 - The paralyzed man was tense because he wondered if Jesus really would heal him.
 - The crowd was tense because they sensed the tension of everyone else.
 - The owner of the house is tense, because he wonders how much it will cost to repair his roof.
 - And the four friends are tense, because they are getting tired by now of peering through that hole in the roof.
- 25 **In fact, the only one *not* tense was Jesus, because He had perfect peace when He said, “Arise, take up your bed, and go to your house.”**
- 26 **Isn’t that amazing and comforting?**
- When we are all uptight and intense in a situation, Jesus isn’t. He’s there in perfect peace, ready to work if we let him.
 - When everyone around us is losing it, Jesus the Lord is present – calm, unperturbed and in control – ready to work.
- 27 **What happened? Immediately he arose. And Jesus’ *power* to heal and his *authority* to forgive sins was immediately vindicated.**
- Imagine if Jesus *had failed*. His ministry would be shattered. The crowd slowly makes their way out of the house.
 - The scribes smile and say, “He can’t heal *or* forgive.”
 - The four men struggle to pull up the paralyzed man who looks more dejected and embarrassed than ever.
 - The homeowner looks at his roof and thinks it was all for nothing.

28 **But Jesus did not, and could not fail, because all He needed to heal this man was *His word*. Amen?!**

- There is wonderful healing power in the word of Jesus, in the promises of Jesus, for those who *come to Him in faith*.
- This man came to Jesus in faith, even if it was the “borrowed” faith of his friends.

29 **And the man took up his bed:**

- Why did Jesus tell the man to carry his bed out of there?
- He had four friends who would gladly carry it, and it might have been easier to pull it back up out of the roof than carry it through the crowded room.
- But Jesus told him, “take up your bed and go to your house”, and that is exactly what the man did.
- When Jesus saves us, he sets us on our own two feet, and says take up your bed and walk.
- He saves us not to sit idle but to get to work – to get busy living!

30 **This, my friends, is contagious faith!**

- It is faith that tells us rise up and walk and get busy living each day!
- It is faith that challenges us to follow in the steps of this amazing man, Jesus, and to follow where he leads.
- Where is Jesus leading you today? How is he speaking to you through his word? How is he calling? Let us pray?

31 ***Acknowledgement to David Gusik for his excellent commentary on the Book of Mark for many concepts in this sermon.**