

1. In 2:3-5, the paralytic's friends are so convinced that Jesus can help that they "removed the roof," literally in the Greek, "unroofed the roof," so as to let the man down on his bed before the Lord! Mark says that Jesus "saw their faith" (vs. 5). What does the determination and persistence of the paralytic's friends teach us about faith and bringing others to Christ? Who in your life needs to be brought to Christ through your prayers, encouragement, and witness? What obstacles might you need to overcome in order to help that person?
2. The man comes to Jesus with an obvious physical need, but the first thing that Jesus says to him, "Son, your sins are forgiven." Why does Jesus address the man's sins before addressing his physical condition? What does this reveal about humanity's deepest need? (Read 2:5-7; see also Isa. 43:25: "I, I am he who blots out your transgressions for my own sake, and I will not remember your sins.")
3. Jesus knows that the scribes were offended by his declaring that the man's sins were forgiven, because after all, "Who can forgive sins but God alone?" (2:7) Then Jesus asks, "Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Rise, take up your bed and walk'?" Since forgiveness is invisible, Jesus performs the visible miracle to demonstrate the reality of his authority to forgive sins. How does this miracle function as a sign pointing beyond itself to Christ's greater work of salvation? When you see God's works in your life, do you look beyond the immediate blessing to what they reveal about Christ?
4. The man "rose and immediately picked up his bed and went out before them all," while the people were amazed and glorified God (2:12). What does the man's immediate obedience and the crowd's response teach us about the appropriate response to Jesus' authority? Where is Christ calling you to respond with immediate obedience?