

Colossians 2

⁹ For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form, ¹⁰ and in Him you have been made complete, and He is the head over all rule and authority; ¹¹ and in Him you were also circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, in the removal of the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ; ¹² having been buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also raised up with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead. ¹³ When you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions, ¹⁴ having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us, which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. ¹⁵ When He had disarmed the rulers and authorities, He made a public display of them, having triumphed over them through Him.

These are statements of facts, not wishes or hopes. In Christ, you are complete without lack because He is the ruler over all. What else could you ever need. You were born dead in your sin, but Jesus forgave all your sin, cleansed your soul and the enemy's claim on you by nailing it all to the cross. And not only that, He raised you to new life and has disarmed the power of the rulers and authorities of this world over you. You are free. He has exposed their weakness and embarrassed them publicly through the triumph of the cross.

That is our heritage, our new birthright in this new life in Christ. We're complete, forgiven, free, victorious. We are His praise God. That is what we celebrate today around the table of the Lord. Servers come.

Today we begin the third part of our All Hail King Jesus series as we look at how He lived. Over the course of the next several weeks, we'll look at encounters Jesus had with people such as the Pharisee Nicodemus, the Rich young ruler, the healed leper, the woman at the well, blind Bartimeus, and many others. People ask me how long this series will go, and my answer has not changed – I don't know. Today we look at the story from Mark 2 where Jesus is teaching in Capernaum, and this happens.

Mark 2:1–12

¹ When He had come back to Capernaum several days afterward, it was heard that He was at home. ² And many were gathered together, so that there was no longer room, not even near the door; and He was speaking the word to them. ³ And they came, bringing to Him a paralytic, carried by four men. ⁴ Being unable to get to Him because of the crowd, they removed the roof above Him; and when they had dug an opening, they let down the pallet on which the paralytic was lying. ⁵ And Jesus seeing their faith said to the paralytic, "Son, your sins are forgiven." ⁶ But some of the scribes were sitting there and reasoning in their hearts, ⁷ "Why does this man speak that way? He is blaspheming; who can forgive sins but God alone?" ⁸ Immediately Jesus, aware in His spirit that they were reasoning that way within themselves, said to them, "Why are you reasoning about these things in your hearts? ⁹ "Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven'; or to say, 'Get up, and pick up your pallet and walk'? ¹⁰ "But so 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, get up, pick up your pallet and go home." ¹² And he got up and immediately picked up the pallet and went out in the

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sight of everyone, so that they were all amazed and were glorifying God, saying, “We have never seen anything like this.”

NEXT SLIDE

I have always loved this story. It tells us so much about ourselves and so much about God. We see four men who knew if they could just get their friend to Jesus, perhaps this was the day he could walk. The center of the story, the paralytic, is just along for the ride. He never says anything. He just lays there until Jesus tells him to get up and go home and he does just that – walks out. Meanwhile you have the crowd, probably 50-75 people because it was a home they were in. They had heard about Jesus and that He spoke differently than anyone ever and sometimes you might even see a miracle. They didn't want to miss out, so they were there. Then you have these scribes who were married to the law and saw this Jesus as an imposter, a charlatan leading Jews away from the faith, and it was their duty to stop this following of His from growing. They were there to catch him in a punishable crime to show the crowd that he was nothing more than a fraud.

The scene is Capernaum which is on the northern coast of the Sea of Galilee and had become kind of home base for Jesus' ministry in the area. Based on Mark 1:29, the scene here is probably the home of the brothers, Peter and Andrew who were following Jesus and would later be appointed apostles. Roofs in this time were made of thatch and dirt usually. There was usually an outside staircase to access the roof. It was not like they needed a jackhammer to get through even though tearing up the roof was an extreme measure.

The way I want to approach this is through the lives of the people in the scene and how they interacted with Jesus. Let's begin with the opposition, the scribes, who I'm going to call:

The Critic

Attached to the Past – All their lives, these scribes had been taught the law which included the promise of a coming Messiah. From early on, they were taught that one day in the future, a deliverer would come for the Jewish people. He would speak like no one had ever spoke. He would wield great power and authority. They believed He would defeat the enemies of the Jews and raise them to worldwide prominence.

They had all the Old Testament prophecies of this coming Christ, and this belief had become one of the core beliefs of the faith, the reason for their hope. This hope for the future Messiah had become so much a part of the faith, they didn't want to let go of it even if He was standing right in front of them. It's like they would keep saying, "Messiah's coming, Messiah's coming" and someone would say "He's here," and they would keep saying "He's coming." If He actually arrived, everything about their faith changes and even though it's the long-awaited change, the change itself was a complete paradigm shift, and they wouldn't let go of the past.

It reminds me of when my daughter was about 9-10. She loved a store called Claire's that was in the mall. They sold everything girl. No offense to Claire's, but I hate that store. Haley would go into that store, and it was like the blackhole. She would look at everything – twice. I was always pressing for a purchase. I'll buy you anything. Just decide. Why did she not want to make a decision – because it meant the shopping was over and to her, I think she was attached to the shopping more than the items she eventually purchased.

These scribes, and you can throw in the Pharisees were so attached to the current paradigm of a coming Messiah that they would do anything to put down a change to that even if it was the actual fulfillment.

We see the same thing today. As Christians, we've heard all our lives about the second coming of Christ. It's deeply embedded into our faith, yet there are critics today who don't want to hear about it coming soon. We've even known all

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along what the world will be like right before He comes and yet, the church remains strangely silent even though we see the signs of the times everywhere.

Attachment to the past makes a person:

Blind to the Present

Jesus, the Messiah, was right there speaking, but they couldn't see through their own preconceived ideas to understand the truth. They had expected the Messiah to be a conquering hero type of figure, not this peasant looking Nazarene. This couldn't be right, and they were just not going to have it. God must work in agreement with their expectations, or they would not believe.

Sometimes God is doing new, different things and we miss it because we have already decided how God needs to behave. If we're going to have revival, it will be through the traditional church doing church the way it's always been. But then we have this young man, Charlie Kirk, who arrives on the scene and goes to secular college campuses with the gospel message of Jesus Christ. He is unashamed and debates young people about not just faith, but their entire worldview. It is a popular movement that gains some momentum. Then the unthinkable happens and he is gunned down by an assassin. This voice for the kingdom silenced? – not on your life. The movement explodes. Students rise up and revival begins outside of the church. Young people on fire for the gospel. Sure, they don't do church the way it's been done, but people are coming to Jesus and being changed by Jesus. I say Praise God.

By the way, what generation do you think attends church more often according to Christianity Today and the Billy Graham Assoc.?

Gen Z – 15-28 year-olds.

Millennials – 29-44 year-olds

God does what He wants to do the way He wants to do it. He moves in ways you and I cannot expect. His methods are ever-changing to reach people with the never-changing gospel. Let go of the past, see what's happening and get on board. God is on the move. Don't be a critic.

The second group is the crowd that has gathered. Let's call them:

The Curious.

They have come to see what's going on.

The Curious are

Attached to the Temporary – What is it that makes the crowd amazed and turn their attention to God – they saw a man carried in on a stretcher walk out on his own two feet. They probably knew this man and maybe he had been a paralytic all his life. And then they see him walk on his own and they were amazed. Who wouldn't be? After all, this is most likely why they came. They had heard that Jesus could do the miraculous and maybe, just maybe, He'll do one that we can witness.

Imagine being in the crowd listening to Jesus teach the word, but you're missing what He's saying because your anticipation is all about seeing something supernatural. It's almost like the word alone didn't amaze them and turn them towards God; but seeing a man healed did. But let's think about that for a minute. The man comes down through the ceiling because he can't walk, and the entrance is blocked by the crowd. The crowd is stunned by the drama unfolding thinking maybe, just maybe we're going to see something supernatural.

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Then Jesus speaks and the crowd probably moans in disappointment. Jesus says “Son, your sins are forgiven.” “No, Jesus that’s not why we came. Do something spectacular. Heal him.” The curious are:

Blind to the Eternal – What Jesus did in forgiving the man’s sin was to welcome Him into the eternal presence of God. That day his body was healed but one day that same body died. That day his heart was healed and will never die. Which is the greater?

We have the same kind of thing going on today. People who seek the temporary spectacular instead of the deeper eternal. We could use healing as an example. I remember reading a sign once that said something like “Come to the Crusade where you will witness first-hand the physical healing power of the Holy Spirit.” Of course, the picture of the healer and his wife was on the billboard. My response is always this – even if a person gets their body healed, they are still one day going to die. And if they don’t come to faith in Jesus, they will be in a far worse place than they are now. We keep our eyes on the eternal, the redemption of our bodies into His glorious presence.

The paralytic himself is the center of the story and I’m going to call him:

The Convicted

At least, he was when he entered the scene. He was locked in the prison of his physical infirmity. But his problems were not just physical, he was spiritually sinful and separated from God. He was in a bad way. He needed help. The convicted:

Needs Others – Not only could this man not physically get himself to Jesus, but he had also probably given up hope and needed others to stand up for him. Ever been there? Ever needed help?

Early on in Cindy and I’s marriage, we would travel and that was without cell phones, or GPS. We didn’t have little people talking to us through the car telling us when and where to turn treating us like we’re idiots. No, we did it on our own. But occasionally we would end up somewhere where we didn’t know where we were. And Cindy would always offer the most heartfelt sweet suggestion of “Why don’t you ask someone for directions?” I can’t tell you the surge of emotion that pulsed through my body at the mere suggestion that I needed help. But she was right. Sometimes we are so stubborn, so self-sufficient, so prideful, that we refuse to let others carry us to Jesus.

That’s what discipleship is – it’s carrying people to Jesus. You will never be discipled, grow into Christ, until you let others in and admit you need help. Also, the convicted:

Needs Forgiveness

When we read the story of this scene, take note that the first thing Jesus says to the paralyzed man is “Son, your sins are forgiven.” Jesus completely changes the man’s life with those words. Let me illustrate it this way:

Let’s say you make a horrible choice and drive home from a dinner thinking you didn’t have too much to drink, but you had, and you hit someone causing them bodily harm. You immediately think of how you could rewrite the story of that evening. You are arrested and enter the criminal justice system of which you have no experience. But you know you’re guilty and feel absolutely horrible. The day of the trial arrives, and you stand before the judge who informs you that the person you hurt is forgiving you and dropping all personal charges and has encouraged the court to do the same. The judge says these words – “It is true that you have done an awful thing, but I want you to know that you are completely forgiven. You are free to go.” It’s like saying, “Pick up your mat and go home.” It’s done. It’s over. You are free. Don’t ever lose sight of the forgiveness of the cross and what Jesus has done for you. Never forget who you once were and now who you are in Jesus. It still amazes me that Jesus loved me enough to die for me, that He forgives me, that He wants to live every moment with me.

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The last group are the four guys who carry the man – the stretcher-bearers. I'm going to call them:

The Confident

Remember how this went down. They lower their friend through the roof and Jesus looks up at four heads peering through the roof. He doesn't actually say the following, but Matthew, Mark, and Luke when describing this scene all provide the commentary that Jesus saw their faith and told the man his sins were forgiven. These men would stop at nothing to get their friend to Jesus because they had the confidence that He could heal him. They get to the house and can't even get to the door. Imagine the disappointment that their way was blocked. Then one of the four spots the outside staircase to the roof. "Hey guys, over here. We can tear up the roof and drop him right on top of Jesus." They all agree.

The confident are:

Recklessly Relentless

We see examples of this kind of determination all throughout Scripture. In Luke 15, there is a story of a shepherd who has 100 sheep except one day one wanders off. He leaves the 99 and pursues relentlessly the lost one until He finds him. A woman loses one of her ten coins and sweeps and sweeps until she finds it. She will not stop until the lost has been found. In Mark 5, the woman who had the issue of blood pressed through the crowd pursuing Jesus until she got close enough to touch the hem of his garment and was healed. Nothing was going to stop her. How determined, how recklessly relentless are you in your pursuit of Jesus?

These people were desperate for the touch of the Master and maybe that's part of our problem – we're not that desperate. Would we go to our friend's house and load him on a stretcher, carry him down the road, be undeterred by the crowd, but just go to plan B, which is to carry him up to the roof, dig a hole, risk embarrassing ourselves because we are GOING TO GET TO JESUS. One way or another we will get there. The confident, the faith-filled will always find a way to:

Bring Friends to Jesus

There was nothing in it for these four guys. They weren't going to get an award. They weren't going to benefit. They were driven not by personal gain, but by genuine love for a brother. If I love you, I want the very best for you and His name is Jesus. He is the One who heals your wounds. He is the One who forgives all your sin. He is the One who makes the impossible possible. We must get our friend to Jesus!

Are you a critic? Are you just a curious onlooker? Are you paralyzed and need help? Are you a confident stretcher-bearer carrying others to Him? Everyone in the room that day saw what Jesus can do. Some scoffed. Some were amazed. One was healed. And four believed Jesus could do anything because He absolutely can. Can I bring you to Jesus today?