

The Divine proof for the greatest need

Introduction

The most distinctive thing the gospel offers the world is not:

- A high **moral standard**, or a sense of purpose
- The most significant thing the gospel offers corresponds to man's greatest need: which is the **reality that sinners stand guilty before an infinitely** Holy God and are **justly condemned** to go to Hell because of their rebellion and sinfulness.
- God does not send **people to Hell because of sin**, but because of unforgiven sin.
- Hell is populated by **people whose sin** has never been forgiven.

The difference between **those hell bound** and those heaven bound is one word: **forgiveness**.

Those in heaven were **granted Divine forgiveness** and with that comes God's imputed righteousness, by Grace through faith in Jesus.

Every person's greatest need is **forgiveness of sin**.

No other religion provides the means for **full forgiveness** and therefore every other religion is collecting souls for Hell.

This is what our passage is about today.

Jesus has the authority to provide Divine forgiveness **for your sins**

Historical background

Mark wrote to Christians in Rome = between 64 to 70 Ad. Nero had burned down the majority of Rome and blamed it on the Christians. The believers were **facing mass arrest** many forms of capital punishment.

They needed encouragement to believe and trust in Christ's authority to forgive them for their sins as they were quiet possibly facing death soon and as sinners would meet their maker either **forgiven or not**.

Proposition

Your and My greatest need is the forgiveness our sins.

Mark proves to you and I that Jesus has the authority to forgive your sins

5 proofs of Jesus' authority to forgive your sins

1. **Jesus commends their faith** 1-5
2. **Jesus cancels the guilt** 5
3. **Jesus confronts the hearts** 6-7
4. **Jesus confirms His authority** 8-11
5. **Jesus causes amazement** 12

1. Jesus commends their faith 1-5

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." Mark 2:1–5 (ESV)

¹ And when he returned to Capernaum after some days, it was reported that he was at home.

- Mark 1:45 we read that Jesus could no longer openly enter a town.
- He in fact had toured Galilee and had ministered in desolate places 1:45
- He had returned to Capernaum (village of comfort)
- **After some days:** is a broad phrase indicate that a sufficient amount of time went by
- The fact that it was reported, or heard that Jesus was home implies that Jesus had most likely returned to the Home of Peter and Andrew unnoticed initially.
- But the secret came out and the news quickly spread that Jesus was home.

² And many were gathered together, so that there was no more room, not even at the door.

- So as usual when the news got out that Jesus was there, the crowds formed.
- They were most likely miracle seekers, wanting to see what miraculous sign Jesus would perform next in their midst.

4 An evil and adulterous generation seeks for a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of Jonah.” So he left them and departed.

Matthew 16:4 (ESV)

And he was preaching the word to them

- Despite the possible wrong motives, Jesus continued to explain the word of God(=He was explaining the gospel) to them, knowing that the Father would draw some to Himself.

⁴⁴ No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him.

And I will raise him up on the last day. John 6:44 (ESV)

Application

- Why do you come to Jesus?
- Is it only to see the miraculous, or the spectacular?
- Do you think of Jesus as the Genie in the bottle?
- Or is it because you know how spiritually dead you are as a sinner, destined to hell and that only Jesus can forgive you?

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.

- Four men brought a paralytic to Jesus on what is called a poor mans bed in the Gk..
- Now unlike the leper that was shunned by society, the paralytic would not have been shunned by society, except for the fact that Jewish society believed that any disability was the immediate consequences of sin.

- Job in the OT and Jesus in the NT teaches us that **sufferings and sickness** are not necessarily the result of their own sins.

² And His disciples asked Him, “Rabbi, **who sinned, this man or his parents, that he would be born blind?**” ³ Jesus answered, “It was neither that this man sinned, nor his parents; but it was so that the works of God might be displayed in him. John 9:2–3 (NASB95)

- But this man may have been **stigmatized by society.**

could not get near him because of the crowd

- Upon arrival the five could **not get access** to Jesus **because of the crowds.**
 - The crowds play an important role in the gospel: mentioned 40 times before ch 10
 - **They are the audiences** for His teaching
 - Are the **objects of His compassion**
 - They react to the **miracles with amazement** and praise but are passive with regard to **repentance and faith**
 - Here they actually **obstruct access to Jesus**
 - Despite Jesus popularity, the crowds are not a **measure of success**
 - They either **stand as outsiders** in ambivalence or **opposition** to Jesus.

(Are you one of the crowds that is **simply passive in your relationship** with Christ, or are you that **individual who repents**, trust Christ and pursues Him?)

- So they **went to the roof**, (Typical Jewish homes had a flat roof accessible by an **external stair case**. It was constructed with **wooden beams**, smaller pieces of wood and covered with grain, twigs straw and mud and tiles)
- They removed **the roof tiles, and** digging an opening they let down the pallet with the paralytic lying on it.

⁵ **And when Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, “Son, your sins are forgiven.**

- Jesus **sees their faith.**
- This faith is the cause that Jesus **spoke** saying : Son your sins are forgiven.
- Note that Jesus is their object of faith.

- They came to Jesus believing that He could heal their friend.
- Jesus does not take them on because:
 - They broke the roof
 - They disrupted his teaching
- No Their faith is commended: its recorded in a positive way: Jesus saw their faith.
- Its commendable faith because it was true **faith seen by their actions.**

¹⁸ *But someone will say, “You have faith and I have works.” Show me your faith apart from your works, **and I will show you my faith by my works.** James 2:18 (ESV)*

- It highlights the link between **faith with actions** rather than just knowing and feelings.
- We know nothing of **these men’s faith except** the fact that they **take action to circumvent the crowd and bring their friend to Jesus.**
- Faith is **first and foremost not just knowledge** about Jesus, but **active trust** that Jesus is **sufficient for ones** deepest and most heartfelt needs.
- The plural pronoun **“their” faith** indicates that all five are included.
- All 5 had **come to Jesus believing** that Jesus could heal the paralytic.
- Note:
 - that their faith **produced action.**
 - It was **faith & action** that brought them to Christ and Jesus sees their faith.
 - Jesus as God knows that **true faith in Him is faith that produces** action and good works
 - Seeing their **faith was the cause** for Jesus declaring that the **Cripples sins were forgiven.**

But the fact that these men **believe**d and did so much effort to meet Him tells us something about them and something about Jesus.

It tells us that Jesus is worthy to be pursued,

It tells us that Jesus can be trusted in,

It tells us that Jesus can bring healing, both spiritually and physically.

Jesus authority and power over the physical and spiritual healing and realms

Application

1. Jesus is worthy to be **trusted** and believed in.
2. True saving faith is **seen** by actions.
3. If there is no action, James 2 tells us that it **may be dead faith**.
4. Jesus sees your and my faith by its actions.
5. Salvation is not based on works or actions, but faith alone, but saving faith produces actions that prove its real faith.
6. Do you see your faith in action or is your faith merely intellectual faith?

2. Jesus cancels the guilt 5

⁵ **And when Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, “Son, your sins are forgiven.” Mark 2:5 (ESV)**

- Jesus would have **healed many** who suffered from paralysis
- Yet all three gospels Mt 9:1-8, Luk 5:17-26 and Mark here draw attention to this **particular man’s healing** and were left with a question why?
- The issue is **not the healing of the Body**. The **main issue is what Jesus did more than healing his body**.
- Everyone in the room could see the **physical need of the man** being lowered down in front of Jesus.
- Jesus looks and sees different needs.
 - 1 He sees the **faith of these men in action**
 - 2. He sees the **more serious problem** which is that the man is a sinner and is sinful.

And then **Jesus states “Son”** (Term of endearment) **Your sins are forgiven**

We note the following

1. This was done on the **initiative of Christ**
2. It was based on the **Grace of Christ** as this man had **done nothing to deserve** such a declaration
3. It tells us that its part of **Christ nature to forgive**.

⁵ *For You, Lord, are good, and ready to forgive, ... Psalm 86:5*

4. The bible teaches that without the **shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins.**

²² *And according to the Law, one may almost say, all things are cleansed with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness. Hebrews 9:22 (NASB95)*

5. It is based on the **death and resurrection of Christ** that **would occur** in the future.
- The OT sacrifices **never brought forgiveness of sin**, but was simply a **foreshadow of the ultimate sacrifice** of Christ on the Cross
 - God **temporarily passed over former sins**, **withholding justice** on it for a **certain period** of time until it was **poured out upon Christ on** the cross

²⁵ *whom God **displayed publicly as a propitiation** in His blood through faith. This was to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the **forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed**; Romans 3:25 (NASB95)*

Forgiveness : GK = **to release from legal or moral obligation or consequence, cancel, remit, pardon**

*Primarily, **forgiveness is an act of God, releasing sinners from judgment and freeing them from the divine penalty of their sin. Since only God is holy, only God can forgive sin***

- Sinful mankind has no **greater need than forgiveness.**
- Sin is **considered a debt and forgiveness** is the **discharging(clearing) of that debt**
- It's the **only means to be reconciled to God**, that brings eternal life.

Application

- What this highlight is that God does **not 1st look at what we perceive** to be the need. Rather He **looks at what is the most important need**, which is the need for our sin to be dealt with.
 - God is **more concerned about dealing with our sinful hearts** than our broken bodies and circumstances

- This highlights to you and I that we find forgiveness for our sins through faith in Christ's finished work on the cross

- Since Jesus forgave our sins, how much more should we be willing to forgive those that have sinned against us.

Our sin against an infinite holy God leads to an infinite debt that was paid on our behalf on the cross.

This then is the biblical basis for our forgiveness and the motive to forgive others.

³² Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you. Ephesians 4:32 (NASB95)

¹³ bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you. Colossians 3:13 (NASB95)

- Mt 18:23-35 teach us that the readiness to forgive others is a sign of true repentance and there is no limit to how many times we should forgive others.

Forgiveness = "Verbal covenant. Forgiveness is a covenant or agreement with two sides. For the offender, it involves a humble admission of his sin and a request that the other person erase his unpayable sin debt. For the one sinned against, forgiveness is a gracious verbal assurance that the debt has been erased" (James 2016, 57)

Practically

- I will not continue to think about what you did or say. Brooding over an offence is no less a sin than lust, or covetousness or any heart sin. A willful choice needs to be made to turn away from this kind of thinking.
- I will not bring up the sin again to punish or embarrass you.
- I will not make you pay for what you did. (James 2016, 58)

3. Jesus confronts the hearts 6-8

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? Mark 2:6–8 (ESV)

⁶ **Now some of the scribes were sitting there, questioning in their hearts,**

- Note that this attack was **not verbal but inward**. They were questioning Christ **in their hearts**. (Their inner control centre, The heart = the inner being describing the persons spirit, soul, mind , emotions and will= the core of who we are)
- How often do you question God or Christ in your heart?
- How often do you offend Him and rebel against him by sinning in your heart

⁷ **“Why does this man speak like that? He is blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone?”**

- Jews commonly believed that **sin was the cause of illness**, but forgiveness was **exclusively the realm of God’s privilege**.
 - Not even the chief priests could **forgive sins or provide** promises thereof
 - The classic description of the **Messiah did not appear to mention His ability to forgive sins**, this remained the right of God alone.
 - The reason is that **every sin even though committed** against a neighbour is ultimately against God.

⁴ *Against You, You only, I have sinned... Psalm 51:4 (NASB95)*

- Their premise was that **only God can grant forgiveness** which is absolutely true.
- AS the supreme judge **only He can eternally pardon** wicked people since every sin is **ultimately rebellion against God**.

⁴ *Against You, You only, I have sinned And done what is evil in Your sight, So that You are justified when You speak And blameless when*

You judge. Psalm 51:4 (NASB95)

- The right to forgive and the right to condemn **belongs to God alone.**

They believed: **He is blaspheming!**

From Jewish perspective Blasphemy was the most horrendous crime a person could commit and the 1st century Jew **Identified 3 levels of blasphemy**

1. You **blasphemed** if you **spoke evil of the Law of God.**

and they set up false witnesses who said, "This man never ceases to speak words against this holy place and the law, Acts 6:13 (ESV)

2. You **blasphemed** when a **person spoke evil of God** directly.

⁷ *"You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain. Exodus 20:7 (ESV)*

Lev 24:10-16 a Israelites son was stoned for cursing the name of The Lord

3. The most extreme form of blasphemy took place when a **sinful human claimed to possess divine authority equal with God.**

This was then the charge that the religious leaders later would charge Jesus with.

¹⁸ *This was why the Jews were **seeking all the more to kill** him, because not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even **calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God.** John 5:18 (ESV)*

³³ *The Jews answered him, "It is not for a good work that we are going to stone you but for blasphemy, **because you, being a man, make yourself God.**" John 10:33 (ESV)*

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?"**

Jesus response demonstrates His deity in 3 ways

1. He **reads their minds.**- perceives = fully know in His mind

And immediately Jesus, **perceiving in his spirit** that they thus **questioned within themselves**,

The fact that he knew their thoughts proved his **deity since only God is omniscient**.
(All knowing)

⁷ *But the LORD said to Samuel, “Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him. For the LORD **sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart.**” 1 Samuel 16:7 (ESV)*

¹⁰ *“**I the LORD search the heart and test the mind**, to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his deeds.” Jeremiah 17:10 (ESV)*

2. He **did not argue** against their basic premise, that **God only can forgive sins**, Rather **He affirmed that truth**.

Jesus knew they were **accusing Him of blasphemy of claiming equality with God**.

His claim **to forgive sins was nothing** less than a claim that **He was actually God**.

3. We see that He backed up **His claim by demonstrating His divine power**.

Application

- Jesus knows your **rebellious heart**, because He is all knowing
- He knows **every wicked rebellious evil** thought even now this morning.
- So simply agree with God, what He all ready knows, call it sin, (confession) change your thinking by instructing your heart with God’s word and find forgiveness at the cross
- If in your heart you don’t believe that Jesus is fully God and man, **repent** today.
 - Turn to Jesus and ask him **to change your heart**, to give you **faith to believe** that He is who He claimed to be.
 - Don’t **continue as an enemy** of the cross.

4. Jesus confirms His authority

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.”

Mark 2:9–11 (ESV)

Jesus asked them 2 questions: 1) **Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’** or 2) **to say, ‘Rise, take up your bed and walk’?**

- Jesus is not asking which is **easier to do** since both are **beyond human ability**.
- Rather He is asking **which is easier To say** : to claim as a convincing reality.
- It's easy to say that **someone's sins are forgiven**, since there is **no objective way to confirm or deny that reality here**.
- But telling a **paralyzed person to get up** and walk is something that can **immediately be tested**.
- Jesus purposely **waited** to heal the paralytic **until after he declared His authority to forgive sins**.
- The healing of the paralytic **served to prove his power over sins effects** and proved His **authority over sin itself**.
- This miracle would demonstrate that He had the **authority to forgive sins**.

Blasphemers **cannot read minds**.

Blasphemers **cannot forgive sins** and cannot **validate their claims by healing** paralyzed people.

Jesus in effect was proving:

1. That He is **not a Blasphemer**
2. That **He was God**
3. That He had the **authority to forgive sins**

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.”

- **But that-** Tells the reader that the statement that is made is proven by the command given to the paralytic
 - **Statement:** that the son of man has authority to forgive sins
 - **Proven by:** I say to you rise, pick up your bed and go home.
- The term **Son of man** in the OT referred in some **places to human beings** (Ps 8:4, Ezek 2:1) and in Dan 7 :13 refers to the **Deity of Christ.**
- Why does Jesus use this term?
- **For ambiguity(vagueness).**
- It could refer to an **ordinary human being or to deity?**
- By using this Jesus is **forcing people to make up in their own minds** as to what kind of person He is.

has authority on earth to forgive sins

- Has (Gram) = He has continues authority to forgive sins
- Here Jesus is emphasizing the fact that forgiveness is **not only allocated** to the **heavenly realm** , but **also here on earth**, because of the presence of the Son of man.

I say to you, rise, pick up your bed, and go home.”

- Jesus turns his attention to the paralytic
- Here we see the proof provided for the statement given with 3 commands
 - Rise
 - Pick up = take up your bed
 - Go home= depart

Vs 12 reveals the enactment of the proof

Application

- You must make up your mind.
- Will you look at Christ and simply call Him a mere man, or will you acknowledge Him for who He truly is: The God man
- God in human flesh, who has the authority to forgive your sins.

5. Jesus causes amazement 12

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!” Mark 2:12 (ESV)

And he rose and immediately picked up his bed and went out before them

Here we see that Jesus claims were validated.

Note

- **He rose & went out and this happened in front of all(it was public= lots of witnesses)**
- that the man got up **instantaneously**.
- This was an **immediate, complete recovery** with no **recuperation** period.
- The moment the **words left Jesus’s mouth** the man regained **feeling, function and full strength in every part** of His body.
- This was the answer to the question? **Who can forgive sins but God alone?**
- The readers and **you and I are invited** to supply the **name Jesus does** what **God only can do?**

so that they (the crowd) were all amazed We see the same parallel reaction that the crowd had when Jesus had **delivered a man from an unclean** spirit proving that He was **teaching with authority** in 1:27

Gk amazed= **exístēmi**; *ek* (1537), out, and *hístēmi* (2476), to stand. To remove out of a place or state= to be out of one’s mind, beside oneself= **be astonished**, of the feeling of astonishment mingled w. fear, caused by events which are miraculous, extraordinary, or difficult to understand

Mark adds: **and glorified God by saying: saying, “We never saw anything like this!**

- This was a genuine miracle, not seen by the crowd before but also not fully understood.
- The Scribes understood **Jesus words as the blasphemy** because this was the **God’s privilege**, the crowds understood Jesus as acting **for God and with His**

approval

Even though astonished and giving glory to God they still viewed Jesus as a man to whom God had granted authority and remained unconvinced of Christ deity.

Mt confirms this

⁸ *But when the crowds saw this, they were awestruck, and glorified God, who had given such authority to men.* Matthew 9:8 (NASB95)

They only saw Jesus as a man with delegated authority from God, but they did not believe in Him for the forgiveness of their sins.

John comments about the people:

³⁷ *But though He had performed so many signs before them, yet they were not believing in Him.* John 12:37 (NASB95)

- Jesus miracles functioned as signs validating His claim that He had divine authority to forgive sinners.
- But performing the signs does not produce saving faith, they simply validate the messenger.

6. In summary

Being amazed by Christ, even praising Him and giving Him glory cannot replace acknowledging your own sinfulness, repenting of it and turning to Him in faith for the forgiveness of sins.

Jesus still today speaks the same words to those who come to Christ in faith: “ your sins are forgiven”

Will you too this very morning come to Jesus in faith?

Will you believe:

- That Jesus Christ truly is God
- That Jesus Christ did die on the cross and rose again providing the basis for the forgiveness of sins.

- That He will also say to you: your sins are forgiven if you repent and totally rely upon Him to heal you from your wickedness.

7. In conclusion

Your and My greatest need is the **forgiveness our sins.**

Mark proves to you and I that Jesus has the **authority to forgive your sins**

5 proofs of Jesus' authority to forgive your sins

1. **Jesus commends their faith** of the 5 men because They believed, acted, came to Jesus and obtained forgiveness, meaning that he is worthy to be trusted and he is the spiritual and physical healer
2. **Jesus cancels the guilt** of the paralytic on His own initiative, based on His grace, and His death and resurrection which forms the basis for forgiveness.
3. **Jesus confronts the hearts** proving His' omniscience, affirming the premise that only God could forgive sins and
4. **Jesus confirms His authority** to forgive sins, by the miraculous healing of the paralytic. (proving spiritual healing through physical healing)
5. **Jesus causes amazement** because the paralytic was instantly healed proving that Jesus indeed has **the authority to forgive sins.**

You and I are left with a choice this morning:

1. Will you meet your God as a forgiven sinner because you repented and trusted in Christ for the forgiveness of sins?
2. or will you meet him unforgiven because you did not believe that Jesus is God and has the authority to forgive your sins because of His substitutionary death and resurrection.

Bibliography

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