

LOVING INTERCESSION

March 18, 2018 | Pastor Randy Remington

Introduction

This week Stephen Hawking died. We were just singing great are you lord. He said, great are you Universe. People said he was the greatest mind since Isaac Newton. I grieved this week because of his passing. I wonder if there was anybody in his life who sought to tell him about Jesus.

In Mark 2, we see a story of someone who was a paralytic and could not function without people to help him.

The reality of the cross starts to come forward first in this story.

Mark 2:1-12 , "A few days later, when Jesus again entered Capernaum, the people heard that he had come home. 2 They gathered in such large numbers that there was no room left, not even outside the door, and he preached the word to them. 3 Some men came, bringing to him a paralyzed man, carried by four of them. 4 Since they could not get him to Jesus because of the crowd, they made an opening in the roof above Jesus by digging through it and then lowered the mat the man was lying on. 5 When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralyzed man, "Son, your sins are forgiven."

6 Now some teachers of the law were sitting there, thinking to themselves, 7 "Why does this fellow talk like that? He's blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone?"

8 Immediately Jesus knew in his spirit that this was what they were thinking in their hearts, and he said to them, "Why are you thinking these things? 9 Which is easier: to say to this paralyzed man, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up, take your mat and walk'? 10 But I want you to know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins." So he said to the man, 11 "I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home." 12 He got up, took his mat and walked out in full view of them all. This amazed everyone and they praised God, saying, "We have never seen anything like this!"

THE CONTEXT IS THIS:

Jesus has been doing miracles. Word is spreading. People are following after Jesus. It says in the first verse that Jesus "came home." We always assume Jesus never went home. We know that Jesus moved to Capernaum at one point in his life, so this story could very well have been in his home. And some many people came to where Jesus was. Some men made a decision (not sure if they were friends of the paralytic) to take a him to Jesus, and some of them (four) lowered the man through the roof. The roof would have been made of slabs of wood with mud. Jesus looked up as dry mud was falling from above. He saw the men, and saw their faith.

Faith is action. Faith is moving towards Jesus based on what we know. What the men did know about Jesus, they acted on. And Jesus saw their faith.

Faith is birthed out of need.

JESUS CALLED HIM "SON."

When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic "Son..."

This is the only time Jesus called someone "son." In the 1st Century, the ones responsible for caring for the disabled would be the family. Imagine the paralytic man who would have never imagined someone calling him "son" is called "son." Before he needed physical healing, he may have also needed relational healing.

JESUS FORGAVE HIS SINS

Jesus forgiving sins is making a profound claim, putting him in uncharted territory. There must have been tension right away between Jesus and the teachers of the law. Forgiving sins was blasphemy. This deserves death. This is why some say it is the first shadow of the cross.

But Jesus knows what the people around him are thinking. Forgiving sins is the exclusive domain of God. We cannot forgive if someone else has been the one hurt from sin. God is the one who has been offended by sin. Thus, Jesus is the one with authority to forgive sin.

The greatest need of the paralytic man was not physical healing. His greatest need was forgiveness so that he could stand before a holy God.

The main problem in humanity is not suffering. It's sin. At the heart of the gospel is the need for forgiveness.

The gospel addresses the real root issue. Just being able to walk isn't going to meet the man's deepest need.

Mark 2:8-9, "Immediately Jesus knew in his spirit that this was what they were thinking in their hearts, and he said to them, "Why are you thinking these things? 9 Which is easier: to say to this paralyzed man, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up, take your mat and walk'?"

Jesus is saying "if I could do the harder thing, the other thing will be valid as well."

So, Jesus heals him with the missional purpose of the man going home and telling everyone the story of what has just happened.

SO WHAT ARE THE LESSONS HERE?

1. When we are moved by love towards the suffering of others, that activates faith in us. (In prayer and intercession, we are bringing people to Jesus, ripping the roof off, in faith). I never prayed for Stephen Hawking. That is why I was so grieved.
2. There is always going to be risk. There is risk in ripping the roof off.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Who in your life do you need to rip the roof off and in faith bring to Jesus?
2. Who is someone who ripped the roof off for you and brought you to Jesus?
3. What are the areas in your life where you need healing from Jesus (i.e. physically, relationally, spiritually, etc.)?
4. What is a risk (a stepping out in faith towards Jesus) that Jesus may be calling you to take to bring someone to Jesus?