

Mark 1:40-2:17

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[0:00] A man with leprosy came to him and begged him on his knees, If you are willing, you can make me clean. Jesus was indignant. He reached out his hand and touched the man.

I am willing, he said, be clean. Immediately the leprosy left him and he was cleansed. Jesus sent him away at once with a strong warning. See that you don't tell this to anyone, but go, show yourself to the priest and offer the sacrifices that Moses commanded for your cleansing as a testimony to them.

Instead, he went out and began to talk freely, spreading the news. As a result, Jesus could no longer enter a town openly but stayed outside in lonely places. Yet the people still came to him from everywhere.

A few days later, Jesus again entered Capernaum. Then people heard that he had come home.

They gathered in such large numbers that there was no room left, not even outside the door.

And he preached the word to them. Some men came, bringing to him a paralyzed man, carried by four of them. 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.

[1:19] When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralyzed man, son, your sins are forgiven.

Now, some of the teachers of the law were sitting there thinking to themselves, why does this fellow talk like this?

He is blaspheming. Who can forgive sins but God alone? 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?

Which is easier to say to this paralyzed man, your sins are forgiven, or to say, get up, take your mat and walk. But I want you to know that the son of man has authority on earth to forgive sins.

So he said to the man, I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home. He got up, took his mat and walked out in full view of them all. This amazed everyone and they were praising God saying, we have never seen anything like this.

Once again, Jesus went out beside the lake. A large crowd came to him and he began to teach them.

[2:23] As he walked along, he saw Levi, son of Artheus, sitting at the tax collector's booth. Follow me, Jesus told him. And Levi got up and followed him.

While Jesus was having dinner at Levi's house, many tax collectors and sinners were eating with him. And his disciples, for there were many who followed him, when the teachers of the law, who were Pharisees, saw him eating with the sinners and tax collectors, they asked his disciples, why does he eat with the tax collectors and sinners?

On hearing this, Jesus said to them, it is not the healthy who need a doctor, but those who are ill. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners. Well, I invite you to take your Bibles and to turn with me again to Mark chapter one, beginning in verse 40 and to the verses that were read for us. And as you turn up that page, a brief prayer. Make the book live to us, O Lord. Show us thyself within thy word. Show us ourselves and show us our Savior.

And make the book live to us for Jesus' sake. Amen. I wonder what your experience of going to the doctors is like.

[3:44] What is your experience of visiting the GP? Now, some of you may not be old enough to remember that far back, as it's almost impossible these days to get a face-to-face appointment with a GP.

Now, no one wants to have to go to the doctors, but when you go to the doctor, do you find them to be helpful? Do you find them to be understanding? Now, over the years and growing up and in my

line of work, I have known many people who don't like their doctor.

And do you know the reason why? Because the doctor will not give them what they want. I wonder if you have this attitude when you visit your GP.

You want them to give you what you want. And there are many doctors who will just give people what they want. Sick lines to declare them unfit for work and all sorts of prescriptions for medication.

But if a doctor is any good, they will be of the mind to give people what they need rather than what they want. A good doctor will always give people what they need.

[4:55] Well, the first day of Jesus' public ministry has just been witnessed in Mark chapter 1, verse 16 to 39. And what has been witnessed are things of stunning power and tremendous compassion.

Jesus healing all those who came to him. Those with diseases, disabilities, sicknesses, terminal illnesses. And he also drives out the unclean spirits.

Jesus also has powers over the demons. And as the demons come out, they scream, Have you come to destroy us, Jesus?

It's a good question, isn't it? Why have you come, Jesus? And you will notice that that question hasn't yet been answered. It's sort of just left hanging there.

Well, in verses 37 to 39, Jesus' mission is once again in danger. But this time it's from his disciples. Jesus has become a victim of his own success.

[5:59] The word is out in the streets that Jesus can heal and that he can heal anything. And people flood in from everywhere and buses and taxis and bikes. But Jesus, Jesus takes himself off to a solitary place.

Well, the disciples, well, they think they've won the lottery. Because here in Jesus, they actually have a religious leader who can actually do some practical good for a change. So they go looking for him.

And when they find him, they say to him, Get back to town, Jesus. Your popularity is on the rise. But Jesus says, No.

No, I must go on to the other towns to preach. Because that is much more important. Really, Jesus? Are you having a laugh?

Is preaching much more important than long life and good health? Now, with this context in mind, we come to our three stories for today.

[7:02] And what we will see this morning is that what Jesus is doing is infinitely more compassionate and infinitely more powerful. Because Jesus is the doctor who gives us not what we want, but he gives us what we need.

Jesus has come to deal with something that most people don't even recognize as an issue. the problem of sin. And he hasn't come just to deal with the symptoms. No.

He has come to deal with the root of the disease and not just in a temporary way, but forever by bringing a full cure. So we get three pictures.

Three pictures that show us why Jesus has come. Three pictures that finish with Jesus' statement, Those who are well have no need of a doctor, but those who are sick.

I came not to call the righteous, but sinners. Each story contains unbearable human suffering and the impossible grace of Jesus.

[8:05] Well, you will find our first picture there in verses 40 to 45 in the leper. It doesn't take much imagination, does it? This fellow was a leper. He was basically the living dead, dressed as a corpse, banished from his village, his city, not allowed to enter the synagogue.

All contact with his family would have been lost indeed. In fact, all human contact would have been cut off for they were not allowed to enter towns for the deadly fear of passing the virus on.

A wee bit maybe like the outbreak of the AIDS virus in the 80s. People were dead worried about how do you get it, how do you pass it on. Or, as we have been exposed to most recently in the past few years with COVID.

The leper had been robbed of everything, robbed of his family and his community, robbed of his place of worship, robbed of his reputation, and robbed even of his family name.

He was now defined by his disease. Mark doesn't even mention his name, only his condition. And if anyone passed by the leper, the leper was to shout out, unclean, unclean, to make them aware that he was a leper.

[9:16] Leprosy was infectious. It was disfiguring, unbearable, incurable. Only God could cleanse leprosy. And the rabbis, well, they had a saying. And their saying went like this, it was easier to raise the dead than to cleanse leprosy.

And that was a very fitting saying, as the sufferer experienced a living death. Leprosy was not just a sickness, it was a sentence, a death sentence.

And the leper, well, he's deeply aware of his own condition, his own need, and he comes to Jesus begging, if you will, you can make me clean. Or as we sing in the hymn, wash me, Savior, or I die. Now, when we go to the doctors, we believe the doctor is willing to help us. The question we have when we go to the doctors is he able to help us?

But not here. The leper believes that Jesus is able to help him, but he doesn't know if Jesus is willing to help him. He doesn't doubt Jesus' ability, but he does doubt Jesus' desire.

[10:26] Does Jesus want to help? Does Jesus even care? He's been a leper long enough to know that nobody cares well. Not really. Verse 41, moved with pity.

Jesus stretched out his hand and touched him and said, I will be clean. And immediately, the leprosy left him and he was made clean. It's absolutely breathtaking.

These are words of deep emotion. Moved with compassion. Moved with anger. Moved with fury. Not fury with the leper or because of the leper's doubts.

But fury with the ravages of this disease and all human suffering. Because leprosy encapsulates all that is evil. It encapsulates the death that we will all one day have to face as a result of sin.

And Jesus is angry and he reaches out his hand and he touches the leper. I wonder how long it had been since the leper had felt the touch of another human being.

[11:33] And again, these past few years, we've had a window into what that can be like. Don't touch. Stay safe. Stay two meters apart. Wash your hands.

Don't touch. Maybe only being able to see aging, dying family members through care home windows. Not being able to embrace each other at funerals.

And all of that stuff has been to the detriment of the mental health of our nation. Because human touch is part of what makes us human. It's part of our development. It's part of our socialization. Touch. The Lord Jesus Christ knows all this man's needs. Yes, he needs to be cleansed from this deadly disease. But he also needs to be made feel human again.

And friends, we wouldn't need to go very far in this town to find people for whom that is true. And so the Lord Jesus Christ reaches out his hand and touches him and says, I am more than one.

[12:39] Be clean. Before our very eyes, the disease leaves him. The physical disfigurement leaves him. It's like the scene out of a movie. Nerve endings that were dead have been made alive.

Muscles and digits that were damaged or maybe had fallen off altogether. They're made whole. Every symptom, we are told, every symptom left him immediately.

Not over time. All the medication in the world couldn't do that. He is made whole. He is made clean completely. He moves from death to life. It's a new creation.

It's a restoration. What is unbearable leaves and what seems impossible enters in. And friends, you will see here that Jesus touched what's in reverse.

When Jesus touches the unclean, he doesn't become unclean. They become completely clean. It's as if the Lord Jesus Christ absorbs the unclean condition.

[13:41] And so he says to the leper, now you need to go. You need to go and you need to go and see the priest. And you need to offer the sacrifice for your cleansing that Moses commanded. You need to go and obey the law.

And the priest will pronounce you clean so that you can re-enter society. But make sure you keep your mouth shut. But the leper, well, he can't help himself and who could blame him?

Verse 45. He went out and he spoke freely about it so that Jesus could no longer openly enter the towns. The leper was back in society, but it's now Jesus who's outside in desolate places.

And so we begin to see that Jesus is a different kind of doctor. The leper and Jesus have swapped places. The leper was outside, but now through the healing, the leper is received back into society. And it's Jesus who's out in desolate places. It's Jesus who is outside. Just like Adam and Eve, remember? Banished from the garden, outside the garden, under the judgment of God.

[14:45] It's the first picture of Dr. Jesus. And he hasn't come just to see a list of patients. No. He has come to take what is unbearable and to give us what seems impossible.

And he does that by changing places with us. And even here in Mark chapter 1, this story begins to cast the shadow of the cross over the Lord Jesus Christ.

Well, that's the first picture. The second picture is in chapter 2, verses 1 to 12. The man who is paralyzed. And this is a great story. This is one of the fundamental stories of the Christian faith. And here we go deeper into the heart of why Jesus came and deeper into what it is he is doing. So again, someone comes to Jesus. In fact, they are brought to Jesus.

This man can't do anything for himself because he is a paralytic. I remember 25 years ago when I first became a Christian and I was reading this story for the first time.

[15 : 43] I thought this guy was drunk because, you know, back in Glasgow, if somebody's paralytic, it means that they're absolutely steaming, that they can hardly stand up, you know. And I thought, man alive, that must have been some size of carry-out this guy had if it took four guys to carry him.

But he is a paralytic. He's no drunk. He's paralyzed. He can't walk. So this fellow is paralytic. He cannot move. And his four friends, well, they've obviously heard about Jesus and Jesus' ability to heal.

And they love their pal who's completely paralyzed. His life is basically over. So they grab his stretcher and they come to the house where Jesus is preaching.

And whenever Jesus is preaching, there is always a great crowd. No room. Unlike here, the place is so packed they can't get in the doors. There's no empty seats when Jesus is preaching.

But the four friends, well, they won't be put off. Such is their faith in Jesus. They won't stop. They won't let that put them off. They will not be stopped.

[16 : 47] And by the way, friends, this is a great picture of what us Christians ought to be doing. Bringing our friends to Jesus. Grabbing their stretchers. Bringing them to Jesus. Not letting anything stop us.

Inviting them to church. Inviting to read the Bible with them. Inviting them to Christianity. Christianity explored. Our Christmas things. Our Easter things. Not letting anything put us off.

Well, they can't get in the house by the way of the front door so they go up onto the roof. It's a flat-roofed house. The house has stairs up the side to enable you to get up onto the roof and so they get up onto the roof. The roof is made of straw, wood, wood and timber.

And they listen for where Jesus is preaching and then they start dismantling the roof above him. Extreme measures, maybe. But their friend is not just a stretcher case.

His life is over. And the only hope he has, the only hope he has, is if this healer can see him and heal him. It's a wonderful moment.

[17 : 50] And if any of you have seen the Mark drama, the Mark drama captures this moment brilliantly. The crowd are all packed in and Jesus is preaching. And these four guys are pulling the roof apart above him.

Now I've had some distracting things happen when I've been preaching. The child that's constantly crying and the parent that won't take the hint and take them out. Folks constantly speaking to each other throughout the sermon.

And I've even had people falling asleep and snoring. It was my wife. I mean, she's heard it all before. But I have never had anybody pull the roof apart above me.

Well, the roof is pulled apart and down comes the stretcher containing the paralyzed man lowered by his four friends. And what does Jesus do? Well, look at verse 5. And when Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, My son, your sins are forgiven.

You can just imagine the four guys on the roof. Did he say sins there? Aye, I think it. Sins! Hold on a minute. That's no why we brought our friend to you, Jesus. That's no why we brought him.

[18 : 56] It's his legs. The guy is paralyzed. Will you no heal him, Jesus? He's not come to have his sins forgiven. There is no evidence that this fella is aware of any sins.

Isn't alter Jesus just being a wee bit impractical and a wee bit over-spiritual? Well, before we get an answer, things become even more disturbing because Jesus can't just see into the heart of the paralyzed man.

He can read the minds of the clergy who are watching him. They have not said a word in verses 6 to 9. But Jesus knows what it is they are thinking. And they are thinking, no one can forgive sins but God alone.

And so, therefore, this is a blasphemous thing for Jesus to say. Which is true in a way. No one can forgive sins but God alone. But now what Jesus does is what Jesus often does with controversial and uncomfortable questions.

He brings them out into the open and he says, I know this is what you are thinking. And then he puts a question to them, verse 8 and 9. Why do you question these things in your hearts?

[20:05] Which is easier to say to the paralytic, your sins are forgiven? Or to say, rise, take up your bed and walk? Well, it's probably easier to say, your sins are forgiven.

Because you can't actually see whether that's true or not. But the reality is, both things are impossible. But Jesus carries on, verse 10. But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins, he said to the paralytic, I say to you, rise, pick up your bed and go home.

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, you never saw anything like this.

Again, it's absolutely instantaneous. This man's body is healed. We don't know how long he was paralysed for, but muscles that had wasted away, tendons and sinews that had forgotten how to work are made whole.

He doesn't need any help getting up. He doesn't need any crutches going out. And he's not given any appointments to go for a year of intense physio, which is just as well, because he would probably wait five years for a face-to-face appointment.

[21:22] But we are told, he rose. He picked up his mat and he walked out a new man. He moves from death to life. It's a recreation.

It's a restoration. What is unbearable leaves? And what seems impossible enters in. And we have two miracles for the price of one. There are two miracles happening here. The forgiveness of sins that we can't see and the healing of a paralysed body that we can see.

From Jesus' point of view, this man has two problems, not just one. So firstly, Jesus forgives his sin. And then he demonstrates the power and the reality of his forgiving word and restores his body. Two separate miracles. It's not that he was paralysed because he had committed some great evil and needed an encouraging word. If that were the case, when Jesus forgave his sins, then he would have got up and walked.

But that's not it. The physical healing is a second thing. It's an outward and physical demonstration of what Jesus has done inwardly. And when Jesus says, My son, your sins are forgiven, Jesus isn't just announcing that he is forgiven.

[22:35] Jesus is actually in that moment forgiving him. And Jesus tells us why he does this in verse 10. Why he heals the man's body. So that you may know the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins.

That's why he's come. The healing of his body. Wow! Absolutely wonderful. But the forgiving of his sins. Infinitely more wonderful.

I remember I was preaching down in New Milnes down in Ayrshire. And there was a lady there who had recently come to faith. She had a wee boy who was 12 years old.

He was paralysed for the neck down. He'd never walked a step in his life. He got about in one of these big wheelchairs that had a controller thing that went into his mouth. And this lady as I said had recently come to faith.

She was doing Christianity Explored. And if any of you have done Christianity Explored you know how certain weeks begin. You begin with a wee bit of Bible and you discuss it and stuff like that. And this night the wee bit of Bible in question was Mark chapter 2 verses 1 to 12 in the paralysed man.

[23:46] And in discussing it the table leader said this question. Why do you think Jesus forgave the man's sins first before he healed his legs?

And this lady who had a wee boy who had never walked a step in his life put her hand up and she said this. Jesus forgave his sin first because his sin was crippling him more than his legs.

His sin was crippling him more than his legs. So you see friends just like the leper before paralysis is a picture of death. The paralysed man is lowered into the house the way a dead body would be lowered into a grave.

The only difference is this when he gets to the bottom he doesn't meet death. No. He meets life in the person of Jesus Christ and in his word of forgiveness. I wonder if you noticed Jesus uses the

word twice the word rise twice in these verses.

Firstly in verse 9 and then again in verse 11. That word rise it's a resurrection word. Twice Jesus uses the word rise and we read verse 12 and he rose and immediately picked up his bed and went out before them all.

[25:03] It's a picture of this wonderful new life he has received through the forgiveness of his sins. Again the hymn writer he speaks and listening to his voice new life the dead receive.

Now that he had been physically healed he could go and live a full and normal life he could get a job he could get married he could have children contribute to society and his community but as wonderful as all this may be what we are meant to see is that there is something far more wonderful infinitely more wonderful and that is the forgiving of his sin.

The healing of his body meant he could rise to a new life but the forgiveness of his sins meant that on that day the day of judgment he would rise to eternal life.

And friends this is one of the great truths of the Bible. God doesn't treat us according to our sins. He doesn't deal with us as we deserve. He deals with us as we don't deserve.

Forgiveness is a massive power but let's be absolutely clear about what that means. It's not just wiping the slate clean. Not just forget about yesterday.

[26:18] It's not about turning over a new leaf. No. It's about being given a new life. It's about being raised from death to life. That's why the apostle Paul begins Ephesians 2 as he does.

And in Ephesians 2 1-10 there in those verses is contained the testimony of every Christian believer there has ever been. We have to be absolutely clear about what has happened to us through the gospel.

If we think that our behavior being modified and changed is what the gospel has achieved in us then we have it all wrong. If someone were to ask you what has being a Christian done for you and your answer was oh well you know I used to be a drug addict or an alcoholic but I don't do that anymore or you know I was very immoral I used to sleep around a lot or every second word that came out of my mouth was a swear word or you know I used to go to Celtic Park and Ibrox and oh man the sectarian bigoted bile that would come out of my mouth or you know I was so in love with money I was so in love with sports I was so in love with politics my career my education I was so in love with myself but you know I have all these things in the rightful place now I know the things now that should take the priority in my life well friends all that stuff is good and well but these things are the symptoms of the gospel at work in our lives they don't actually tell us what the gospel has done in our lives and Paul spells it out for us in Ephesians 2 and you were dead dead

I often have people saying to me I hate it I hate it I often have people saying to me I wish I had a dramatic testimony like you Terry you know you were a drug addict a wild living man and now look at you I wonder do you often think that do you wish that you had a dramatic testimony well friend let me tell you if you are a Christian believer here this morning you've already got a very dramatic testimony indeed it doesn't get any more dramatic than being dead now you're either dead or you're no dead right now there's no degrees of deadness there is degrees of rigor mortis but you're either dead or you're not dead and friends what has happened to us in the gospel is not rehabilitation not behavior modification or moral reform although we'd expect to see change in our lives so it's not rehabilitation what has happened to us in the gospel is not resuscitation you know like we just needed a wee spiritual shake you know we just needed to be woke up no not rehabilitation not resuscitation you were dead and what has happened to us in the gospel is resurrection we were dead and we have been made alive by God through Jesus Christ and we were made alive only through the forgiveness of our sins and Jesus says that he has the power to forgive sins here on earth now that is absolutely startling because the forgiveness of sins is the verdict the Bible says will be given on the last day the day of judgment but Jesus says

I bring that verdict of the last day and I can pronounce it now I bring it into time space history it's not something you need to work towards you can know that your sins are forgiven and forgiven completely you don't have to go through life wondering doubting lacking assurance you can have that verdict now Jesus has the power and the authority to remove every barrier of sin between us and God he offers new life resurrection this is the authority of Jesus and it comes into our lives now not just to fix up our lives so we can live 70 80 maybe 90 happy years here no it's to bring us back to God to give us life for all eternity well that was picture number two and lastly we have picture number three and picture number three is a picture of a wonderful meal and it's a big deal and it shows us the result of forgiveness a picture of what we have been saved from and what we have

been saved for verse 14

[31:08] Jesus passes by the tax booth and there is Levi son of Alpheus who is a tax collector and Jesus says follow me and we read that Levi rose and followed Jesus there is that resurrection word there again is this one off no we good thank you it did go quiet for a second I probably don't need to tell you that tax collectors were Haiti you remember Israel at the time in their history were an occupied nation under the control of the Roman Empire the Romans ruled Israel and in order to fund their great world empire they levied taxes and all the nations under the control the tax collectors were Jewish but they collected tax for Rome so they were seen as absolute traitors turncoats because they were working for the enemy and becoming rich on the misery they were heaping upon their fellow countrymen and to top it all off it was very well known that the tax collectors were cheats taking more tax from the people than they were authorized to take they were seen as real scumbags they had sold out their people they had sold out their nation they had sold out their

God and even if they wanted to change and reform they would never be accepted back amongst! the people they would always be seen as a scab people would say oh he's made his bed he's going to just lie in it as far as I'm concerned he is dead to me that's what people would say about tax collectors but it's to one like this that Jesus calls follow me notice what Jesus doesn't say he doesn't say Levi clean up your act become an honest tax man give you six months and prove yourself and then you can follow me no Jesus just says or Jesus commands follow me it's the voice that said to the leper be clean it's the voice that said to the paralyzed man son your sins are forgiven get up and walk and now the same voice that says to Levi follow me it's the voice that spans the years speaking life stirring hope bringing peace to us and on hearing

Jesus voice we read and Levi! Rose resurrection language again he becomes a new man he leaves the tax collecting business behind and begins a new life following Jesus he moves from death to life again it's a recreation it's a restoration what seems unbearable leaves and what seems impossible enters in and what is impossible becomes the focus of the passage because what happens next as we go into this beautiful meal which is a picture of the restoration that Jesus brings verse 15 and as he reclined at table in his house many tax collectors and sinners were reclining with Jesus and his disciples for there were many who followed him this is a big meal you see Levi does what everyone who begins to follow Jesus does he takes what he has and he begins to serve Jesus and all that he has is money and a whole load of friends who are right shady characters and so he brings these things together with

Jesus it's absolutely wonderful and the religious guys well they're horrified verse 16 because eating with someone was a very big deal because it demonstrated and communicated acceptance and identification for a man like Jesus to eat with these guys it would make him unclean in their eyes but you see friends that's what forgiveness does it opens the door to a very different kind of community a very different kind of acceptance not a community based on our success or failure not a community based on our moral standing or rightness or wrongness not a community based on our riches or poverty true forgiveness leads to feasting this is the kingdom of God to follow Jesus is to be made clean by him and to be made alive by him and those who are forgiven will be long to be together that's one of the reasons we gather Sunday by Sunday it's a foretaste of the great feast of the kingdom that's why

Jesus has come Jesus hasn't come for those who are confident in their goodness or their own spirituality or their moral uprightness no listen to Jesus I've come for sinners those who are sick and dead in sin friends you may be here this morning you may be like the leper you may be sitting here this morning thinking I am just too unclean and the uncleanness well it goes too deep you may feel like an outsider just like the leper Jesus wouldn't be interested in someone like me would he want someone like me would he be wanting to cleanse someone like me well I urge you come to him ask him if he is willing and I guarantee you Jesus will say I came for you maybe you're like the paralyzed man you may not even know that sin is an issue for you but your life is full of all sorts of outward crippling problems maybe your marriage is in a mess or maybe you're struggling secretly with an addiction or something else and you think to yourself if only

[37:02] I could sort out X Y or Z then my life would be okay but friend the most important thing you need to hear is this my son my daughter your sin is forgiven listen to his word of forgiveness it will give you light or maybe you're someone who is morally compromised you've maybe come by things like the tax collector in an immoral way cheating robbing stealing forgiveness you hear Jesus

calling you to follow him rise up to a new life and follow him you may maybe have been a Christian for a long time but you feel like you've messed things up in fact you have messed things up go back to Jesus receive forgiveness forgiveness is not just something we get at the start of our Christian lives forgiveness is ongoing all throughout our lives now friends just imagine just imagine we could interview these three guys and we get them up on the screen there 2000 years after they had met

Jesus what would they say firstly the leper he says you know I could have pretended to be clean I could have stole clothes off a washing line and tried to cover up my condition and I can tell you I was tempted to but that would have just dealt with the symptoms but what Jesus did was to give me his purity that day and over these last 2000 years that I have been with him that purity has been a growing delight to me I worry about a paralyzed man he says well the day Jesus came to me in fact the day I was brought to Jesus and he healed family I went on to live a full and productive life but do you know that now I have been with him these 2000 years I realized that the forgiveness he gave me was far more important than those 50 years or what about Levi

Levi says you know I was just sitting at my tax collector's booth I was not looking for Jesus or any other kind of religious experience to be honest but Jesus just he just came out of anywhere and he entered my life and he called me and I want to tell you following Jesus wasn't easy in the end people killed me for following him but see those early meals see those early meals with him and my mates they were a great foretaste of what it is to be to be with him now you see friends forgiveness is such a massive power it's stronger than all of our uncleanness stronger than all of our weakness it's stronger than all of our sin without forgiveness we can't make ourselves really clean all our religious activity all our good works they just can't do it and without forgiveness we will never get to the root of who we really are for we will never see the new life that comes from forgiveness forgiveness restores us to

God it's not something we can earn it's not something we deserve but we can have that verdict here today forgiven not through me or a priest or anyone else but only through Jesus there is a way back to God from the dark paths of sin there is a door that is open and you may go in and at Calvary's cross that's where you begin when you come as a sinner to Jesus have you ever come to Jesus Jesus has come for you if you haven't already come then today would be a good day new life and forgiveness can be found in Jesus Christ that is good news but only in Jesus Christ he has the authority here on earth to forgive sins because here on earth on the cross he died for sin and then he was raised to new life and we we are raised with him death is dead love has won

Christ has conquered and you can have that verdict here today forgiven fully finally and forever let us pray together our loving heavenly father we indeed give you great thanks for your son our savior the lord Jesus Christ our great physician the doctor who has come to give us what we need thank you for raising us from the dead forgiving all of our sin and as those who have been rescued and believe this message help us now to go as messengers!

[42 : 36] to this dark and dead and decaying world and to proclaim to this world that in Jesus Christ death is dead love has won Christ has conquered for he lives Christ is risen from the dead for the good of this world and for his glory alone amen amen