

LENT DEVOTIONAL MARCH 13, 2014

SCRIPTURE

Mark 2:1-12

1 When he returned to Capernaum after some days, it was reported that he was at home. 2 So many gathered around that there was no longer room for them, not even in front of the door; and he was speaking the word to them. 3 Then some people came, bringing to him a paralyzed man, carried by four of them. 4 And when they could not bring him to Jesus because of the crowd, they removed the roof above him; and after having dug through it, they let down the mat on which the paralytic lay. 5 When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, "Son, your sins are forgiven." 6 Now some of the scribes were sitting there, questioning in their hearts, 7 "Why does this fellow speak in this way? It is blasphemy! Who can forgive sins but God alone?" 8 At once Jesus perceived in his spirit that they were discussing these questions among themselves; and he said to them, "Why do you raise such questions in your hearts? 9 Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Stand up and take your mat 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, stand up, take your mat and go to your home." 12 And he stood up, and immediately took the mat and went out before all of them; so that they were all amazed and glorified God, saying, "We have never seen anything like this!"

DEVOTIONAL

What a great passage. This is one of the stories that children love. It presents such a vivid mental picture, and it's actually quite humorous. Four desperate people battle the crowds, scale the building, and descend through the roof—all to bring a paralyzed man to Jesus. When Jesus sees him, clearly unable to walk, he immediately responds by saying, "Son, your sins are forgiven."

That's it.

Jesus doesn't even acknowledge the obvious condition of the man before him.

It's only when Jesus realizes the confusion of the people around him that he heals the paralysis. The people are shocked—not by the authority over sin, but the ability to bring physical healing. They only perceive one part of what happened, and it's enough to amaze them.

Nonetheless, our author still packs so much into these words. Again we see what appears to be a supernatural healing, and our narrator explicitly highlights the fact that the healing is not the point. The event is merely to point us to Christ. The people respond appropriately, crying out, "We have never seen anything like this."

*Message provided by the **Miller Summer Youth Institute**.*

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