

The Paralytic and Persistent Faith

Week 24 Mark 2:1-12

Mark 2:1 A few days later, when Jesus again entered Capernaum, the people heard that he had come home. 2 So many gathered 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 paralytic, 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 and, after digging through it, lowered the mat the paralyzed man was lying on. 5 When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, "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 the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up, take your mat 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 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!" NIV

- Jesus wanted them to see the **proof** of who He was and what He was doing.
- The carpenter, turned teacher, turned **miracle**-worker was back in town.
- They needed **persistent** faith.
- Just maybe we need to focus on who Jesus is and the **grace** He offers to us all.

Six truths we need to learn about God and about persistent faith:

1. Persistent faith does the **unexpected**.
 - They did the unexpected...the **inconvenient**. They climbed, they cut, and they lowered the man down into the presence of God.
 - Desperate **situations** call for more than just man's ability.
2. Persistent faith always gets God's **attention**.
 - Difficulty will give us a real **consciousness** of our need of faith.
 - Difficulty will test and **stretch** our faith.
 - Difficulty will **increase** our faith.
3. Persistent faith **leapfrogs** the physical and deals with the spiritual.
 - What they wanted would be **temporal**.
 - Jesus gave him something **eternal**.
 - Their request was valid but timid. Before he could *stand* **upright**, he had to be *made* upright.

- He wanted a new body so he could walk, but God gave him grace so he could really live...forever!
4. Persistent faith believes God and takes Him at His Word. (Believe means to trust in, cling to, rely on.)
 - Persistent faith has to respond to God and whatever He is initiating.
 - Persistent faith is rewarded far above our hopes. They just wanted healing, but He gave life and hope.
 - Persistent faith always manifests right conduct.
 - Persistent faith, when tested, is always followed by obedience.
 - Persistent faith will always look past the difficulty to the Savior.
 - Persistent faith moves from total dependence on self or others to dependence on God and what He says.
 5. Persistent Faith will always be opposed.
 - The opposite of faith is unbelief. The comfortable, the calloused, and the self-confident will always be made uneasy when confronted with persistent faith.
 6. Without persistent faith we will miss the lesson of faith.
 - The lesson of faith is this: apart from the healed man we have no record that day that anyone was convinced or changed.

Final thoughts

- Amazement without change is a poor result.
- Astonishment without persistent faith will lead to forgetfulness.
- Without the forgiveness, the healing would not have been enough.

The lesson is, persistent faith is followed by: devotion, dedication, and dependence.