



ENCOUNTER

Unshackled
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Discussion Notes
The Crossing Church
Las Vegas, Nevada

OPENING

This Sunday, we are continuing our series called *Encounter*. Over the next few months, we are walking through the life of Jesus using the Gospel of Mark as the backdrop. Instead of just doing something new in 2017, let us become something new – let us become more like Jesus. The closer we get to Him, the more our lives will change. So, we’re going on a journey that has the potential to change our lives. We are going to get up close and personal with the life of Christ.

SCRIPTURE¹

Mark 2:1-12 “A few days later, when Jesus again entered Capernaum, the people heard that he had come home. So many gathered 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 paralytic, 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 and, after digging through it, lowered the mat the paralyzed man was lying on. When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, ‘Son, your sins are forgiven.’ Now some teachers of the law were sitting there, thinking to themselves, ‘Why does this fellow talk like that? He’s 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, your sins are forgiven, or to say, get up, take your mat and walk? But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins...,’ he said to the paralytic, ‘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 praised God saying ‘We have never seen anything like this!’ “

Isaiah 53:5 (NLT) “But he was pierced for our rebellion, crushed for our sins. He was beaten so we could be whole. He was whipped so we could be healed.”

OBSERVATION

Mark tells about a whole town coming to Peter’s house in Capernaum - the people were hoping that Jesus would heal them. This house would have had a flat roof with a thatch covering of grass, mud and sticks which was usually replaced once a year. The gathering was disturbed by a great hole in the roof getting bigger and bigger until a paralytic man was lowered down to Jesus’ feet by the man’s four friends.

Question: Which of your friends have you brought to Jesus for physical healing? What happened?

APPLICATION

So the first question is, “Whose faith brought them all here?” The four friends came thinking, “If we can just get him to Jesus, we know that our friend is going to walk out of here!” But Jesus doesn’t heal him

¹ All scripture is NIV unless otherwise noted

immediately. Instead, He says, “Your sins are forgiven.” The religious leaders are there, too, and they can’t believe that Jesus would say this because only God can forgive sins. After all, these are the men who explained how to get sins forgiven and they know that this process of sacrificing animals for forgiveness of sin is complicated, expensive, and temporary. So we have two groups in attendance on this day – one is disappointed and the other is angry! Here is Jesus announcing once again that He is the expected Messiah. But, the people are looking for a miracle – they need to lift their eyes and see Him through a spiritual lens – and so do we. Jesus is not just our wish-fulfiller, He is our God who died for us so our sins could be forgiven and we could reign with Him forever.

Question: Who is Jesus to you? How great is your faith? By what standard do you measure it?

Question: Which of your friends have been spiritually healed by Jesus because you brought them?

But Jesus knows something they don’t know: the man’s pressing need is not his primary need and the need he is feeling so sharply is not his deepest need. We usually think that our #1 priority is health; the next one is prosperity; #3 is companionship and #4 is recognition. But Jesus knows that our only need is forgiveness. The people were concerned about their physical problems and Jesus was concerned about their spiritual problems. It is through the lens of whatever felt need we have in our lives right now, whatever issue consumes us, that we see God and it causes us to fall short of His plan for us.

Question: Which one of these four needs are you concerned about right now? How are you handling it?

Then Jesus said that He had authority to forgive sins. What did He mean by this? He meant that He had the authority to remove the stain of sin and also authority over the consequences of sin. We know that sickness, disease and death are the result of a fallen world, so when Jesus said that He has authority over sin, He is going to prove His authority over the consequences of sin by healing the paralytic man.

Jesus healed people throughout His ministry to gain their attention and faith, but also because He had compassion on them. His most important reason, however, was that His physical healings demonstrated His authority to heal people spiritually.

Question: What sin is staining your life today?

Question: What consequences are you suffering as a result of that sin?

Question: What does the word authority mean?

Question: From where does your authority come? How do you use it?

Our deepest need is a connection with our Father God. The resolution of this need comes through His forgiveness – this is what is eternal. Our real problem is that we think we need health, wealth, companionship and fame, but they are temporary. It is when one of these is broken that we finally seek after God to heal us. But Jesus stretched his hands out on a cross and nails went through His flesh and He died to earn the authority to say to you and me: “Your sins are forgiven.” He paid the price for us.

Question: Tell us about a time when you went beyond your grief or anger to forgive someone. How did it feel?

Question: How much do you love Jesus? What are you willing to do to have a deeper connection with Him?

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, we live in a world that values material things and doesn’t consider forgiveness something to be sought after. Yet You value forgiveness above all else. Help us to have hearts that understand why our felt need is not our most urgent need, and that our suffering is not what needs healing. In Jesus’ name. Amen