

A Divine Light in a Dark World


Part 3 A Forgiving Savior

2021.1.21&24



TALKINGPOINTS WALKINGPOINTS



A publication of , the adult discipleship ministry of Triangle Community Church.

Talk together about the glory of God's kingdom. —Psalm 145:11
Love the Lord your God and **walk** in all his ways. —Joshua 22:5

Questions for Community Group Discussion

- What from Sunday's message interested you? ...made sense to you? ...confused you? ...intrigued you? ...upset you? ...encouraged you? ...and **why?**
- Read Mark 2:1-12. If you were that paralyzed man or one of his friends, do you think **you** would have been disappointed when Jesus pronounced forgiveness rather than healing? **Why** do you think that?

Who do you know who's **dropped out of** church due to "disappointment with God"? Tell us about it.

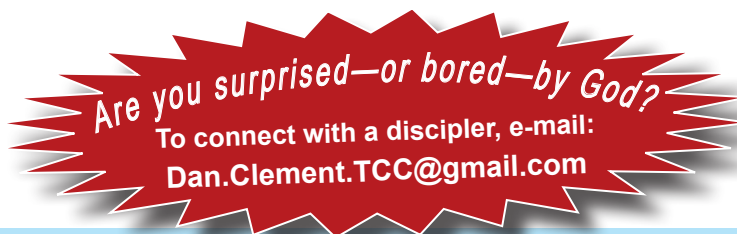
Who do you know who's **refused to abandon** their faith, in spite of great suffering or disappointment?

- Review Pastor Doug's illustration of "**Jim, Bob, and George**" (see the [Sermon Summary](#)). Now read Psalm 51:4, and it's background passage, 2 Samuel 11:1—12:7. Be honest now—how does Psalm 51:4 strike you? Do this woman and her dead husband **not even matter?! Are you OK with that? Why or why not?**

Yes, they **do** matter to God (see 2 Samuel 12:8-10)—but we **still** have to grapple with the truth found in Psalm 51:4 and 2 Samuel 12:13-14. How do we resolve such a tension? Were Bathsheba, Uriah, and Bathsheba's unborn baby unimportant? ...expendable?

God's infinite holiness renders our sin against him infinitely evil and infinitely offensive, whereas our sin against finite humans is finitely evil and finitely offensive (much like the penalty for breaking a Ming vase is greater than that for breaking something from Pottery Barn). **How** does that strike you—and **why?**

- Hebrews 2:1–3 warns us not to neglect "so great a salvation". **Are we?** How?



Application-Challenge

Be surprised by Jesus!

- Believe that sin is your biggest problem—and that Jesus can solve it.
- Believe that Jesus is more eager to forgive you than you can imagine.
- Believe that salvation is so very costly—**only** Jesus can forgive sins.

[1] The seekers of the healing were surprised by Jesus. A paralytic has some friends who want Jesus to heal him. But the house is too crowded to get to Jesus. Now picture this—suddenly the crowd hears noise on the roof, stuff is falling everywhere, and suddenly the paralyzed man is being lowered into the room. I'm not sure what the homeowner thought, but I imagine that the friends of the paralytic were confused or even irritated, because Jesus didn't say "Rise. Get up. Take up your mat and walk." No, he said, "Son, your sins are forgiven" (v. 5). Did they think, "Our friend has a slightly more urgent, more immediate problem!" Jesus shows us that there is nothing more critical than having a right relationship with God. Jesus does eventually heal him; suffering does matter. Yes, the Bible takes our physical and material well-being seriously—but they are not primary. What we need more than anything else is to have our sins forgiven. Here's why. Even if today's physical problems were solved, we'd still get sick again. Then, other bad stuff will come our way, and unless we know God as beloved heavenly Father, we're going to be whipsawed back and forth between fear and anger and dark despair. And for those of us who've been mistreated and abused, our greatest need is to not become bitter. And we never will be able to forgive serious wrongs done to us until we have experienced forgiveness ourselves. Until we see ourselves as forgiven sinners we won't have the humility necessary to forgive others. Instead, we'll feel too superior. Jesus is right; we need to have our sins forgiven more than we need anything else.

2. The readers of this story—we!—are surprised by Jesus. Throughout the Bible, it's an iron-clad rule that there is no forgiveness without faith and repentance. But in this story, Jesus said to a man who has not said a thing to him, "Son, your sins are forgiven." Where's the repentance and faith?! What's up with that? We should be surprised by that. Jesus is not breaking the Bible's iron-clad teaching that forgiveness requires repentance and faith. Instead, this incident is showing that Jesus can read human hearts (as he does again in v. 8). Jesus read the man's heart, saw faith and repentance, and responded. So eager is God to be gracious, even when he sees fragmentary, imperfect, inarticulate desire for forgiveness, he pounces and grants forgiveness! This teaches us about...

a. The trustworthiness of Jesus. Jesus is not like some stern schoolmaster who demands of a child, "If you want something from me, you must speak up. You must say, 'Please, please sir.' You must show me that you are deserving of your request." God's aggressive grace doesn't wait on us. Another time in Mark's Gospel Jesus tenderly touches the deaf-mute's ears and mouth and sighs deeply (7:31-37). Elsewhere in Mark there is the most tender of all of the miracles of healing when Jesus goes to the home of a little girl who's dead (5:35-43). Her dead body is lying there, and everyone is wailing and mourning. He sits down next to her and takes her by the hand and said, in effect, "Honey, it's time to get up." In Jesus, we see a man who is worthy of our trust.

b. The greatness of the gift of forgiveness. Jesus came to earth, eager to forgive, but we live in a society that doesn't even know right from wrong and tells us that we don't need forgiveness. Society says, "Don't feel guilty", and yet we all do! In our hearts, we know that we're sinners. We feel guilty because we are guilty. But here's the good news: Jesus offers forgiveness.

3. The leaders of the people were surprised by Jesus. They observed correctly that in forgiving sin, Jesus was claiming to be God (v. 6-7). Today, a lot of people ask, "Where in the Bible does Jesus ever claim to be God? I don't see it." But if you now how to read, it's on every page. Let me illustrate. Three guys are in a room: **Jim, Bob and George.** Jim reaches over and punches Bob in the nose while George watches. George replies, "Jim, I forgive you." To which Bob responds, "Excuse me George... I don't see your nose bleeding. You can't forgive Jim for hitting me! You can only forgive someone, who has sinned against you." When Jesus forgives people, it reveals that he ultimately is the one who was sinned against. He is God. These religious leaders understood what Jesus was claiming, and they called it blasphemy. And it would be blasphemy...unless he truly is God! So Jesus asked, "Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up, and pick up your pallet and walk?'"

Well, it is easier to say, "Your sins are forgiven, because forgiveness is an invisible and unverifiable transaction. But healing a paralyzed man is both visible and verifiable. So, to prove his divine authority to forgive, Jesus told the man to get up—and he walked away! But in another sense it is harder to secure a man's forgiveness than to declare his healing: forgiveness required that Jesus go to the cross! It required a divine-human sacrifice. It may be easy to say, "Your sins are forgiven", but to secure that forgiveness was anything but easy! We all have a sense of our moral guilt, but we can't just turn over a new leaf, we can't just say, "I'm going to try harder." The sin-stain on our soul is all but indelible; only one Man can remove it. Jesus can get the stain out, but he had to go to the cross to do it.

Digging Deeper in Your Daily Quiet Time

"Five Question Bible Study" (see page below) *is a simple way to study any passage.*
We can use it to learn more about God's zeal to save...

Monday—Deuteronomy 7:6-8a **On what basis** did God choose to save Israel? ...to save us?

Tuesday—Isaiah 43:25 **Why** does God "wipe out transgressions"? Are you surprised?

Wednesday—2 Timothy 1:9 **What** is our salvation "according to" (and "not according to")?

Thursday—2 Timothy 1:9 **When** was God's grace in Christ granted to us?

Friday—2 Timothy 1:8 & 10 **Why** should **we** be zealous to proclaim the gospel?

Saturday—***In preparation for worshipping your risen Lord with your church family,***
study **Mark 2:23—3:6.**

Bible Text: _____

Date: _____



What idea particularly strikes me from this text? [Note in which verse(s) it is found.]



What question does this text raise in my mind—and how would **this text** answer it?



What about Jesus Christ—his character and/or his redemption—relates to this text?



What action must I take as a result of this text? Be concrete and specific.



With whom will I share what I learned from this text? [and what was their response?]

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RUNNING OUT!



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