


**The Gospel of Mark**  
**Part 9**  
**A Forgiving Savior**

# TALKINGPOINTS WALKINGPOINTS

2024.1.14



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

Triangle Community Church aims to be a "transforming church". We exist to be used by God as He transforms ordinary people into extraordinary followers of Jesus Christ. TCC believes not only that life-change is possible—but that it is to be expected. Growth is God's will for his people. But transformation does not happen by accident. It requires intentional, intelligent action. 1 Timothy 4:7 instructs you to "discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness." Since "Talking Points, Walking Points" is intended both for individual reflection and for group discussion, questions vary in degree of vulnerability required. Generally it is best to begin group discussions with questions which involve less personal disclosure—but don't linger there. Be sure to "dive deep" too! The questions which require the greatest openness and honesty, as well as those in the section entitled "Digging Deeper in your Daily Quiet Time", are perfect for private reflection.

## Questions for Reflection or 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. In Jesus' day roofs were flat, and made of baked clay pavers placed on supporting beams. A thin layer of fresh clay was smeared over the joints to seal out the rain. The paralytic's friends went to a good bit of effort! They carried him up to the roof, dug through clay, removed several of the pavers, and lowered him down into Jesus' presence. What do you think motivated them?

After all that, do you think they were—or, would **you** have been—disappointed with "only" forgiveness? Why or why not?

Maslow's "hierarchy of needs" tells us that we **must** meet *physical* needs **before** addressing the *spiritual*. (Apparently Jesus' skipped Psych 101!) Read Mark 8:36–37. What does God's Word say about that idea?



- Pastor Doug noted that Jesus must have seen "repentant faith" in the paralytic's heart, and therefore forgave him. Have you come to such a point in your own life? Please tell us about it.
- Who has a friend who does **not** believe that Jesus claimed to be God? Would you tell us about him?  
What does he/she do in order to relieve the awareness of guilt? Religion? Charity? Morality?  
Have you had a conversation with him/her about forgiveness through Christ? If so, how did it go?  
What insights from today's text do you think he doesn't know, or, knows but doesn't believe?

# Sermon Summary

Key Text: Mark 12:1-12

I love Mark 2:1-12! In it, Jesus does something very surprising—and then poses a riddle.

**Three different groups of people were surprised by Jesus' teaching.**

**1. The seekers of the healing.** A paralyzed man had some friends who have heard and believed that Jesus heals people. They discovered that Jesus was speaking at someone's home in Capernaum, and they decide to bring their friend to Jesus. But the house was so packed they couldn't get in through the door. So what did they do? Picture the scene: Jesus is in the house teaching, when debris begins falling on the crowd! What was happening? They were digging through the roof to get to Jesus. The ceiling opens up and down comes this man on a stretcher! When Jesus saw their faith, he went over to the paralyzed man, and **didn't** say, "Rise, take up your mat and walk." Instead he said, "Son, your sins are forgiven."

This man's friends may have thought, "Don't you think that this man has a slightly more urgent, more immediate need?" By his actions Jesus is saying to them, "No, he doesn't have a more urgent need than to be forgiven." Lesson: there is nothing more basic, more critical than having a right relationship with God. Physical health and material prosperity are all good things, but nothing is more important than having a right relationship with God. Nothing. Yes, God created both body and soul, and some day he's going to heal both—that's what the resurrection is all about. God takes our physical and material well-being very seriously. But as significant as they are, they are not primary. Our eternal destiny is. What we need more than anything else is a right relationship with God, and for that to happen, our sins must be forgiven. No matter what you think your most pressing problem is, it is nothing in comparison with your sin problem. That's our most fundamental problem. Forgiveness is our most fundamental need. (Even if we received a physical healing today, we'd get sick again.)

And if your greatest troubles are emotional/relational abuse rather than an ailment, the main thing you need still is forgiveness. If you have been wronged, really wronged, there's one thing you need, more than anything else: you need to not be bitter. If you stay angry at others you will continue to suffer. You need to be able to radically forgive those who've wronged you. But you will never be able to forgive others if you have not experienced forgiveness yourself—you won't have the emotional humility necessary to forgive someone else. You will feel too morally superior. Until you see yourself as "a loved, forgiven and accepted sinner", you won't have the emotional "ballast" to forgive someone else. Forgiveness is our most urgent need.

**2. Us—the readers of the story.** Throughout the Bible, the iron-clad rule is that there is no forgiveness without a repentant faith. If you want God to forgive you, you have to repent and believe. There's no forgiveness before God without repentance and faith. Yet here is Jesus, walking over and saying to a man who has not said a word to him, "Son, your sins are forgiven." Did he not need to repent and believe? Look at v. 8. Jesus knows what's in people's hearts! Without a word spoken, Jesus saw his desire for mercy, grace, and forgiveness. God takes the initiative! So eager is he to be gracious, that even when the desire for forgiveness was inarticulate, he pounces, and grants forgiveness! Notice Jesus' tenderness: "Son, your sins are forgiven." And this is not an isolated case (also see Mark 5:22-43 and 9:14-27). Jesus, like the father in the parable of the Prodigal Son, doesn't wait at the house. No! When he sees him coming home, he runs to him, and before the son can announce his repentance, the father pounces on him, and kisses him. That's aggressive grace! What kind of God is this that we serve? He's facing the most implacable foe we know of, which is death, and he reaches right through death, takes us by the hand, and pulls us back into life. Here's what I want to say to you: "Trust this man!" Notice too, that for guilty sinners, forgiveness is the greatest gift!

We live in a society that says, "Right and wrong is really up to you. Don't let anyone put a guilt trip on you!" We say that we don't believe in sin and hell—yet we all have a sense of personal condemnation that we can't seem to shake. With our mouths we proclaim our innocence, but in our hearts we feel guilt and shame. Truth is, in our hearts we know we're sinners. We feel guilty because we are guilty. The good news is that Jesus offers us forgiveness.

**3. The leaders of the people.** The teachers of the law were shocked by Jesus' statement. They understood that when Jesus said, "Your sins are forgiven," Jesus was claiming to be God. How so? Think about it: there are three guys in a room—Jim, Bob and George. Jim reaches over and punches Bob in the nose while George watches. Jim punches Bob, got it? George says, "Jim, I forgive you." "What!" exclaims Bob. "George—**you** can't forgive Jim for hitting **me**! You can only forgive someone who has sinned against **you**." All of our sin ultimately is against God. This is an indirect claim to deity; and these religious leaders understood what Jesus was claiming. So, is he?

Jesus asked them, "Which is easier to **say**, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'You're healed'?" Well, it is easier to say, "Your sins are forgiven," because that's unverifiable. But healing a paralyzed man is both visible and verifiable! Jesus says, "To show you that I have the authority to forgive this man, I'm going to heal him." He does, and the man gets up and walks away!

Although it is easy to **say** that sins are forgiven, from the divine perspective it was harder to **secure** our forgiveness. Forgiveness required that Jesus go to the cross and suffer a shameful, painful death. Who can remove the stain of sin? There is only one person: Jesus. So I urge you to go to Jesus and place your trust in him.

## Digging Deeper in Your Daily Quiet Time

*There is no more gut-wrenching account of God's love than is found in Hosea. Use the "Five Question Bible Study" sheet below, let's study this God's amazing love.*

**Monday**—Read Hosea chapter 1-3.

**Tuesday**—Read Hosea chapter 4-5.

**Wednesday**—Read Hosea chapter 6-8.

**Thursday**—Read Hosea chapter 9-10.

**Friday**—Read Hosea chapter 11-12.

**Saturday**—Read Hosea chapter 13-14.

Need blank copies for doing more  
"Five Question Bible Study"?  
e-mail: [Dan.Clement.TCC@gmail.com](mailto:Dan.Clement.TCC@gmail.com)

### Five Question Bible Study

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?]