

## **CCH Sermon 4<sup>th</sup> November 2018 Mark 2:1-12 The Deep King!**

*V10 "But I want you to know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins".*

We turn today to a well-loved and well-known story- the healing of the Paralysed man. But to get into the story a little more so that we can all really feel what it was really like to be there, I'd like you to meet three characters from the story.

### **The first is Levi.**

**Hi Levi, would you like to introduce yourself.**

*Hi my name is Levi, I'm a fisherman, and I live in Capernaum with my wife and two kids. I support Galilee United FC, and I like running.*

**Great- thanks for being with us today, we're trying to understand a bit more about the healing of this paralysed man, can you tell us about your involvement on the day in question?**

*Well the first I heard of Jesus was down the pub. Us fishermen stick together, and there was a guy there who works in Simon Peter's fishing business, and he told me that Simon's mother in law was completely healed instantaneously of a fever. I thought he was just exaggerating like fishermen sometimes do, but others were talking about incredible healings and evil being driven away. And they said it was all being done by this man Jesus.*

**So how did you get involved?**

*Well my neighbour John has (...well had...) a terrible condition. He was paralysed from the neck down and had been like that since an accident as a young child. I grew up all my life being able to do things like run and jump and catch fish and mend nets, and have a family, but ever since he was a little lad he's been stuck on that mat.*

*So when I heard that Jesus was back in town, I just knew we HAD to get John to him. I'm not a religious man, but there's something about Jesus, something amazing, something powerful, and I can't put it any other way... I knew- we just HAD to get John to Jesus, and nothing must stand in the way.*

**How did it go?**

*Errr....not very well at first! You see Jesus was preaching, and the whole town had gathered to hear him. The house was completely rammed- the whole village must have been there. You couldn't even see the front door, let alone go in- there must have been a hundred people blocking it.*

*So that's when I had the idea. There's only one way we are going to get John to Jesus, and that is by de-roofing the roof.*

**Deroofing the roof?**

*Yep- deroofing the roof. We went up onto the flat roof, above the room where we could hear Jesus talking, and started to pull it apart, digging with a couple of old spades we found up there. We had also had a couple of ropes from the boat, so we tied them to the four corners of his mat and lowered John down. I never did discover what the owner of the house made about all this, but we didn't really think about that at the time!*

### **And how did John feel being lowered down like this?**

*He looked a bit worried at first, but I said "leave it to us old boy, we'll get you in the right place, if it's the last thing we do". And we lowered him down and I have to say it was a pretty good job- all these faces were looking up at us, but then they shuffled back a bit, by this stage Jesus had stopped talking and... bullseye, we lowered him right down by Jesus' feet.*

### **And what happened next?**

*Well it was a bit of a disappointment at the start to be honest. We'd gone to all this trouble to get John, a paralysed man to Jesus, and Jesus just started going on about his sins- the stuff he'd done wrong. Well I was gutted. First, I thought that was a bit rude, because John's not a bad person, and second I thought, 'why is he focusing on his sins?' I wanted to say to Jesus, "erm, excuse me, it's the legs!"*

**Now we're going to hear shortly that Jesus did mend his whole body and make him well, and today he can run and jump just as good as anyone. But why do you think he focused on his sins?**

*Well this is the big thing, and I didn't get this straight away, but as time went on and as I listened to Jesus' teaching I understood for myself. You've got to go to the root of the problem. If your house is sinking you don't just wallpaper over the cracks, you have to sort out the foundations. If you've broken your arm a plaster on your skin is not going to do much help.*

*And we all have two kinds of problems. Surface problems: and these can be pretty major, like for John he was paralysed, or for other people, they can't have kids, or can't get a job or get very worried about things, but then we all have a much deeper root problem.*

*And that is the problem of our sin. I didn't know about this much until I listened to Jesus, but I discovered that I have a really deep problem that affects me right at the core of my being, and that's my selfishness before God. I came to realise that I am a sinner. I can't know God until the barrier of sin is taken away. Wonderfully through Jesus that can happen. He did it for John, and he's done it for me. That's the root problem and Jesus came to fix it!*

Well thank you Levi for sharing that with us, please take a seat.

Before we go onto meet our second guest, Phil, a teacher of the law, there's a question for me to ask us in passing, and it's this.

**1) Have we understood that we have A DEEPLY ROOTED PROBLEM.**

If anyone here doesn't have any problems in their lives you are very fortunate. Most of us have problems. In the home, in the workplace, with friends, with addictions, with sickness, with family members, with money, with loneliness with relationships whatever.

And church is a hospital for the sick, not a club for saints. These problems can really hurt, and cause us pain. But I want to say that comparatively they are still surface issues. We have a deeper problem of sin- our selfish inward focus that puts us first.

And actually we'll never begin to address those other issues unless we come face to face with our root problem, the problem which Jesus puts his finger on here, and which Levi there was talking about.

John the paralysed man came thinking his legs might be helped. But Jesus went far deeper to the root. It was sin that brought brokenness into this broken world, and into our lives.

It was our own rebellion.

Just think if you had a choice- which would you choose...

A healing that fixes your body in this life, but then you have to face eternity without God. Or forgiveness of your sins, so that although you may still suffer in this life you are welcomed into heaven for eternity?

If we only get our bodies fixed, we will go to hell. But if we get our sins forgiven we will go to heaven.

Well wonderfully for the paralysed man, Jesus did both as we'll see.

But we need to make sure we understand our deepest problem. When Jesus looks at Huntingdon he sees many good things. But he also sees problems.

And the root problem is sin. And that's why the kindest thing that you can ever do for a friend is introduce them to Jesus.

Like Levi said, you have to go to the root.

If you are helping a homeless man, by all means give them a sandwich and help to find a bed. But tell them about Jesus too, so that they can have their sins forgiven. That's the big block and the fundamental problem in their lives. And actually with sin forgiven and power to change, that they find power to change direction.

If you are talking with a friend about their problems, or chatting in the office about what's gone wrong with the world, don't leave it on the surface. Say, "of course I think our biggest problem is that we need to be forgiven by God".

Only when we see that sin is our greatest problem, will we see that Jesus is the only solution.

They may like that, or they may not like that, and that takes us onto our next guest....

Let's introduce our **second guest, it's teacher of the law Phil.**

**Good morning Phil, thanks for being with us today. Can you tell us a bit about yourself?**

*The name is Pharisee Philemon. I am from the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews and a Pharisee of Pharisees, expert in the law schooled in the finest rabbi school in Jerusalem. And I was sent to Galilee with a few colleagues to investigate this man Jesus about whom there are so many rumours going around.*

**And what did you discover?**

*Well the man is out of order. We found evidence that he was blaspheming.*

**Now that's a pretty big charge, blaspheming, slandering about God, now slow down – whatever makes you say that?**

*Well I heard him- that day in Capernaum. He was seated in a house teaching, and we got there early before the crowds began to arrive. Pretty soon the place was packed. And to give Jesus his credit, I have to say you he is a very remarkable preacher - speaks with authority- unlike any rabbi I've ever heard. You could hear a pin drop. The people were hanging on his every word. But then we heard scratching...*

**Scratching?**

*Yes, scratching from above. There were men trying to burrow through the roof. They lowered a man in front of Jesus and he told him that his sins were forgiven. See..... blasphemy.*

**Can you just explain for the slow learners amongst us why that's blasphemy, and what blasphemy is anyway?**

*Blasphemy is dishonouring God by slandering him in some way. You see only God can forgive sins- all sin is against him- the God who made us. So no human the ability to forgive sins that are against God. But Jesus claimed to be able to forgive sins and by doing so he was putting himself equal with God. Blasphemy.*

**And so you said as much did you....?**

*Well I didn't say it out loud.*

**Hang on you didn't say it out loud, but Jesus knew what was going on in your brain?**

*Err... yes. He completely read my mind- it was rather uncanny.*

**Don't you think that he might be more than a crazy blaspheming rabbi if he can read people's minds? Maybe there is more to this man than you think. Just maybe he was sent from God.**

*No... it was blasphemy. He also used the phrase "Son of Man" about himself.*

**Doesn't that just mean a human being, a son of Adam?**

*No the way he used it took me straight back to Daniel chapter 7.*

*One like a "Son of Man" coming into God's presence (the Ancient of days) to be worshipped by all people everywhere. He's claiming to be a divine figure, the God- man.*

**So what are you going to do about him?**

*I'm sure we can come up with a plan. You leave it to us when we report back to Jerusalem.*

Well that sounds sinister. I don't think I want to hear more from Pharisee Phil. You can go and take a seat. Thank you for your time.

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Have we seen what a **DEEPLY CONTROVERSIAL FIGURE** Jesus is?

Occasionally you meet people who say that Jesus was just an ordinary bloke who had a big following, and the people around him exaggerated who he was and what he did. He never claimed to be God, that was added later. Oh Jesus was just a good bloke, a teacher, a figure of history.

But he's so much more. We see very clearly from the way his opponents treat him (and there's some more passages for you to look up when you get home in the dig deeper questions on the door) that they had no doubt Jesus was claiming to be God, and at first they tried to stone him, and then the crucified him.

You can't say that Jesus was just an ordinary bloke, he claimed to forgive sins, he claimed to be God. Either he really is God, or he is a lunatic or a liar. You can't sit on the shelf with Jesus.

Either you worship him, or you reject him. And do you see the hostility rising towards Jesus? We'll see it more in the next few weeks.

And you may even feel it rising inside you today. There's a little bit of us that doesn't want Jesus in charge.

It may even be that as we look at these stories, someone is both attracted to him, and repelled by him. You see something glorious, beautiful, attractive, but at the same time, you want to find a

reason to dismiss him, get rid of him, leave him out of your life because what he claims is so big.

Well don't let that negative voice win. Listen in as we hear the final guest. **Can I introduce Elizabeth.**

**Now Elizabeth, you were also there that day weren't you? Can you explain what you witnessed?**

*Yes, I work in a vineyard near Galilee, and we came to hear Jesus preach that day with my neighbour and their four kids.*

**What was it like?**

*I can honestly say it was amazing! Unlike anything I've ever experienced. When you listen to Jesus speak, it's like he knows you inside out. But as well as that being scary, it's also comforting, because he's so kind, and wants to heal and help. And he brings a message of God, of his good Kingdom and the overthrow of evil, A kingdom of grace and kindness and forgiveness.*

**Now I understand his preaching was interrupted by a paralysed man coming down from the ceiling. Can you tell us what Jesus said to this paralysed man?**

*First he said "your sins are forgiven". And there was a bit of discussion about that amongst the teachers of the law- I don't think they were too happy. He was claiming to do what only God can do.*

*But you see he went on to prove that he can do it.*

**How?**

*Well he gave us a choice.*

*He said "Which is easier.... A to say to this paralysed man 'your sins are forgiven' or to say B 'get up take your mat and walk'.*

**Hang on....Which IS easier to say?**

*Well the kids around me got it. They whispered to one another it's easy to say your sins are forgiven, because no-one can see if you've done it.*

*But It's hard to say 'take up your mat' because you are going to look a bit of a fool if it doesn't happen.*

**So what did Jesus do?**

*He kind of did both. He said, "your sins are forgiven".*

*And then Verse 10. "But I want you to know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins, so he said to the man " I tell you get up take your mat and go home".*

*He did both.*

*So He proved he could forgive sins (the invisible thing) by healing the man's body (the visible thing). He said "I tell you get up, take your mat and go home".*

### **And what happened?**

*Well you'd never believe it. A man who had been paralysed since he was a young lad got up, immediately took up his mat, and walked out. He just walked out the door. Without saying a word.*

### **What happened next.**

*At first there was silence. No-one said a word. But the Pharisees got more and more mad. But I was just in awe of Jesus.*

*I thought to myself.... In all my days, I've never seen anything like this. Only God can do this. In an instant my doubts about Jesus melted away, and I was praising God.*

### **Could it have been Chinese whispers, I mean just an exaggerated story?**

*No- I saw it with my own eyes.*

### **Could it have been a trick? Did Jesus stage it with John beforehand?**

*Not a chance- I've known John since he was a boy, and he's a changed man.*

### **You mean now that he's no longer paralysed?**

*Yes but it's not just his legs. It was wonderful for him to get his legs back. He could dance and run and do everything that we can all do.*

*But the big thing that happened that day was that his sins were forgiven. He was friends with God. He could go to heaven. He could look God in the eye. His life was changed.*

*And Jesus has changed my life too, ever since I put our trust in him.*

*Well thank you Elizabeth very much indeed.*

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As we finish off. Just a final question to ask.

### **3) Have we seen what a DEEPLY WONDERFUL SAVIOUR Jesus is?**

We need to have verse 10 written on our computer screens, or on our phones, or on our hearts. And I'd like us to finish here today.

**"I want you to know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins".**

Do you know that? As you see him giving life to the paralysed man's fallen body. He can give life to our fallen souls.

Do you know that he's the Son of Man- the God man who will one day be worshipped by people from all nations?

Do you know that he has authority, IN HUNTINGDON! To forgive sins.

Don't we need that when we feel we're too bad for God?

**"I want you to know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins".**

Don't we need to hear that when we are facing death?

**"I want you to know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins".**

Don't we need to hear that when we are tempted to make ourselves acceptable to God by doing more for charity or church?

Don't our friends need to hear that?

**"I want you to know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins".**

I called this sermon a Deep King. Because Jesus is so much more profoundly wonderful than we think, and because he really gets to the root of the problem.

He's not like a builder who papers over the cracks when your whole house is sinking. He gets to the root. And he did that when he died on the cross, as we are going to think about shortly in our Communion service.

And he loves you and he loves me, and he says come to me, your sins are forgiven. And that frees us up to serve and worship him.

Let's pray.