

# Connect360: Whatever it Takes

December 22, 2020

- *Lesson 6 in the BaptistWay Press Connect 360 unit “The reMARKable Journey Begins” focuses on Mark 2:1-12.*

Capernaum, the home of Peter, Andrew, James, and John, was the center of Jesus’ early ministry in Galilee. When Jesus returned to Capernaum after ministering throughout the region, word quickly spread that he had come home. Soon the house where Jesus was staying—possibly Peter’s—was filled with people, and the crowd spread into the street outside. Jesus responded to the growing crowd by preaching the word—the good news that the kingdom of God was near.

As Jesus preached, a group of four men approached the house. The four friends carried a paralyzed man on a mat. They wanted Jesus to heal him, but the crowd was packed so tightly they could not get to Jesus. Instead of trying to push through the door, the men climbed up to the roof of the home. In Jesus’ time, houses often had flat roofs used for things such as storage, drying fruit, or sleeping on warm nights. These roofs were typically made from mud smoothed over a layer of thatch. Since the men could not get to Jesus through the door, they dug a hole in the roof and lowered the paralyzed man down on his mat.

We can only imagine what the people inside were thinking as pieces of dirt and straw began to fall and a hole emerged in the ceiling. Surprise? Bewilderment? Anger? The Bible does not say what the people thought about the men’s audacity. It does say what Jesus thought about it. He recognized it as faith (2:5). The men believed that Jesus could help their friend and acted based on that belief. Actions that demonstrate our trust in God are evidence of faith.

# Forgiveness and wholeness

When Jesus saw their faith, he spoke to the paralyzed man: “Son, your sins are forgiven” (2:5). This statement may seem surprising to us. The man was obviously paralyzed. Why wouldn’t Jesus just heal him? Jesus saw the man’s physical need, but Jesus responded first to the greater spiritual need. We should not assume that the man’s paralysis was because of some specific sin.

Nothing in the text suggests that. However, we know that all sin and suffering is ultimately rooted in sin and that none of us are without sin. Jesus knew that true wholeness and healing are more than just physical. True wholeness comes when we are restored to a right relationship with God. The only way we can achieve this restoration is through the forgiveness of our sins. Forgiveness opened the door to the man’s complete healing—spiritually and physically.

We need to remember that forgiveness is key to wholeness. While we know this is true, hurting people do not often identify their need for forgiveness and a restored relationship with God as the root of their need. When our friends tell us they are hurting, we are more likely to hear about a strained marriage, a problem with a child, financial stress, difficult situations at work, or physical ailments. These problems are very real and can be intensely painful but dealing with any one of these problems in isolation cannot make anyone spiritually whole. For true healing and wholeness, we need to bring our friends to Jesus.

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