

## LOVING JESUS, LOVING PEOPLE, PLOWING A COUNTER-CULTURE

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[Fall Season: September 27 – December 6 | Winter Season: January 11 – March 14]

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### LEADER DETAILS

- **MAIN TEXT:** Mark 2:1-12 (Supporting Texts: 1 John 5:13; John 3:16)
- **MAIN IDEA:** Our greatest need is not for our circumstances to change, but for our sins to be forgiven.
- **GROWTH FOCUS:** Since this is the first week of the season, focus on helping everyone participate. Draw quieter people into the conversation without putting them on the spot, and resist the urge to fill the silence.

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### ANNOUNCEMENTS (Full details at: [emergence.church/digital-bulletin](https://emergence.church/digital-bulletin))

- **Applied Podcast - Subscribe Now!**
  - Applied is a weekly episodic podcast from Emergence Church where Pastors Ryan Baitzel and Doug Becker (with others dropping in as well) provide additional context, insight, and application from the Scriptures behind each week's sermon. Available wherever you get your podcasts!
- **Family Dedication - October 22 & 25 - Both Campuses**
  - **The Why** - By publicly declaring their intent to raise their kids to love Jesus, parents will be encouraged to keep that commitment in the highs and lows of parenting. A great opportunity for those families to invite family/friends to hear the Gospel. Sign up on the Digital Bulletin!

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### GETTING STARTED:

- **Introductions:** If someone is new, have everyone introduce themselves before jumping into discussion.
- **Ice-breaker:** What was one highlight for you from the Summer break?
- **Pray:** This helps everyone prepare their heads and hearts as you turn to the discussion.
- **Watch Community Extras Video** (length 3:56 – questions from video are included below)

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### SERMON DISCUSSION

*Prioritize meaningful conversation over getting through every question.*

### Big Weekend Highlights!

We just wrapped up Big Weekend. Last Thursday we were blessed with a powerful message from Hebrews by Pastor One Mokgathe, Friday night we had an amazing time praising Jesus at our worship night, and then this past Sunday we saw dozens of people declare their faith in Jesus through baptism as we continue in our series in the Gospel of Mark.

- For those who were able to make it out to any or all of the gatherings over Big Weekend, what is one highlight that you experienced?

### **Bringing People to Jesus**

#### **Read Mark 2:1-4**

Jesus is teaching in a packed house when four men arrive carrying their paralyzed friend. When the crowd prevents them from reaching Jesus, they climb onto the roof, tear through it, and lower their friend down in front of Him. Pastor Ryan pointed out that good friends bring their friends to Jesus and are willing to remove obstacles that might keep them from Him.

- What stands out to you about the determination of these four friends? What do you think drove them to go to such extremes?
- Who has played a significant role in helping bring you toward Jesus? What did they do that made an impact on you?

### **What Really Matters?**

#### **Read Mark 2:5-7**

Everyone watching probably expects Jesus to immediately heal the man. Instead, His first words are, “Son, your sins are forgiven.” As Pastor Ryan shared in the sermon, while we may think our greatest need is for our problems to be solved, our true greatest need is for our sins to be forgiven - which only Jesus can do.

*[Leaders: “When Jesus saw their faith” does not mean the man was forgiven because his friends believed for him. The plural “their” may include the paralytic himself, although Mark doesn’t tell us explicitly. What is clear is that their faith was visible in their determination to bring him to Jesus. Their faith brought him before Jesus, but Jesus alone had the authority to forgive his sins.]*

- What are some ways we can unintentionally treat Jesus more like a solution to our problems than a Savior from our sin?
- How might knowing that your greatest problem has already been dealt with through Jesus change the way you face problems that are still unresolved?

## **Forgiven, and Knowing It**

### **Read Mark 2:8-12; 1 John 5:13**

The religious leaders correctly understood that only God has the authority to forgive sins. Jesus then heals the man as visible evidence that He possesses the invisible authority to forgive. Pastor Ryan emphasized that Scripture doesn't present eternal life as something Christians merely hope they might receive; because of what Jesus has done, those who believe in Him can know they have eternal life.

- Why do you think people struggle with knowing whether they are really forgiven or right with God?
- According to these passages, what gives someone confidence that their sins are forgiven? How is that different from confidence in our own goodness or performance?
- For those who would say they know their sins are forgiven and they have eternal life in Jesus, how did you come to that assurance? What helped you grow in confidence in what Jesus has done for you?

## **The Hope That Lasts**

### **Read John 3:16**

The healed man in this passage, like all of us, eventually died. Physical healing was an incredible gift, but it wasn't his greatest gift. The sermon ended with the reminder that the most important question is ultimately whether we have believed in Christ.

- What's the difference between knowing about Jesus and actually believing in Him?
- How does the promise of eternal life change the way we face suffering, loss, or problems in this life that God doesn't remove?

### GROWTH STEP THIS WEEK

- **Outward Action:** Identify one person God has placed in your life who may be far from Him, and take one intentional step toward them this week: pray for them, invite them, offer to pray with them, ask a spiritual question, or share something about your faith.
  - **Inward Prayer:** Ask God, “Where have I allowed a secondary problem or desire to become more important to me than knowing you and walking with you?”
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### PRAYER PROMPTS

*[Feel free to have yourself or someone else in the group just pray to end the time. However, these prompts are provided if some guidance is helpful]*

- Thank Jesus that He has the authority and willingness to forgive sin.
  - Pray for confidence and assurance rooted in what Jesus has done rather than in our own performance.
  - Pray for friends, family members, coworkers, or neighbors who do not yet know Christ.
  - Ask God to make us the kind of friends who faithfully help others move toward Jesus.
  - Pray for anyone in the group facing difficult circumstances, asking both for God's help and for deeper trust in Him regardless of the outcome.
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**NEXT WEEK'S TEXT: Mark 2:13-28**