

Small Group Guide

Based on the Sermon: "Remember God's Purpose" | Mark 2:1-13

Overview

This sermon explores the account of four friends who tore open a roof to lower their paralyzed companion before Jesus. Rather than simply healing the man's physical condition, Jesus first forgave his sins, demonstrating his divine authority and revealing a purpose far greater than anyone in the room anticipated. The central takeaway is this: God's purpose always extends beyond what we can see, and he uses our unexpected circumstances to display his goodness and glory.

Key Takeaways

- Jesus has the authority to forgive sins, and the healing of the paralyzed man was evidence of that authority.
- God's purpose consistently exceeds our expectations and our limited perspective.
- As believers, we have two things the world does not: hope in eternal life and a community of faith.
- Our personal stories, including the difficult and unexpected chapters, are tools God uses to display his glory.
- We are responsible to do whatever we can, no matter how small, to bear one another's burdens.

Discussion Questions

Opening

1. Think of a time when you were trying to get someone's attention and had to get creative about it. What did you do, and did it work?
2. When you first heard the account of the four friends tearing through the roof, what stood out to you most? Put yourself in the crowd. What would you have been thinking as debris started falling from the ceiling?

Digging Deeper

3. Jesus saw the faith of the friends and responded by forgiving the paralyzed man's sins before healing him physically. Why do you think Jesus addressed forgiveness first? What does that order of events tell us about what Jesus considered most important?
4. The scribes and Pharisees were silently troubled in their hearts, and Jesus knew it. He then asked them what would be easier, to say the words or to back them up with action. What does this moment reveal about the relationship between words and deeds in the life of faith?
5. The sermon introduced the phrase "the miracle credentials the messenger." What does that mean to you in a practical sense? How does that principle apply to the way we live out our faith in front of others today?
6. The paralyzed man and his friends came expecting physical healing. Jesus gave them something far greater. Can you think of a time in your own life when what you received was different from what you asked for, and looking back, it was actually better? What did that experience teach you about God's purpose?

Personal Reflection

7. The sermon acknowledged that telling someone "God will work it all out" does not always help when life feels like it is falling apart. How do you balance the truth of God's long-term faithfulness with the very real pain someone is experiencing right now? What does it look like to sit with someone in that tension?
8. The sermon pointed to two things believers have that the world does not: hope and community. Which of those two do you find yourself leaning on more right now? Which one do you feel like you might be neglecting?
9. Carter shared a personal story about plans for college falling apart and how what he received instead turned out to be better. Is there an unexpected detour in your own story that you can now see God's hand in? If you are comfortable, share it with the group.

Closing Reflection

10. The sermon closed with a challenge to share your story with others, at whatever pace and level of depth you are comfortable with. Who is one person in your life right now who might need to hear how God has worked through your circumstances? What is one small step you could take this week to share that with them?

Practical Applications

- **This week, reach out.** Identify someone in your life who is going through a hard season. You do not have to have the perfect words. Simply show up, pray with them, or offer whatever small act of care you can. Be like the four friends who refused to give up.
- **Reflect on your story.** Take some time this week to write down two or three moments in your life where things did not go as planned but God worked through them anyway. Consider how those moments might be useful in a future conversation with someone who is struggling.
- **Lean on your community.** If you are carrying something heavy right now, bring it to this group or to a trusted fellow believer. The community of faith exists for exactly this purpose.
- **Sit with the long view.** When something feels overwhelming or confusing this week, pause and remind yourself that your current perspective is only a small part of a much larger picture that God is working out.

Closing Prayer Prompt

Close your group time by praying together. Ask God to help each member remember his purpose in the middle of life's unexpected circumstances. Pray for one another by name, and ask that God would use each person's story to display his goodness and glory to the people around them.