



WEEK OF 09/06/26

YOUR DEEPEST NEED ...

MARK 2:1-12

Silence (1-2 minutes)

Sit silently for a minute as a way to center your heart and invite the Holy Spirit to help you listen to and receive God's Word.

Opening Prayer (2-3 minutes)

Read: Mark 2:1-12

Devotional

We are continuing our study of the Gospel of Mark this week with the remarkable account of faith and perseverance – and unexpected results. Sometimes our perceived need is not our real need.

1. Do you like surprises (e.g., surprise gifts, parties, etc.)? Why or why not?

Mark 2:1-4 | Imagine having a gathering at your home when all of a sudden, huge chunks of your roof come crashing down around you! That's exactly what happened as Jesus sat and taught in a house in Capernaum! Back then, homes were about 18 feet long, with a main room and a courtyard. The room was crammed with people, so much so that people were spilling out into the courtyard. Four friends were trying desperately to get their paralytic friend to Jesus, but the crowds prevented them. So, they got creative – and literally started unroofing the roof so they could lower their friend down to Jesus!

2. What does the friends' persistence reveal about their view of Jesus and their commitment to their friend?
3. Jesus' miracles were never "free-floating displays of power" but were always tied to the ministry of the Word. While these men were focused on the paralytic's physical condition, Jesus focused on something deeper – something He could see that the others could not. How does this reshape how you think about God's work in your own life? Do you tend to seek God's power apart from His Word?

Mark 2:5-11 | The paralytic needed healing – Jesus offered him forgiveness. His first word to the man was "Son," or "Child." He did not address his condition, but his identity. Jesus saw

a deeper need than merely the inability to walk. The text does not indicate why or how this man became paralyzed, but in that time, he would have had no access to modern medicine. Many people believed that physical disabilities were a sign of punishment from God for personal sin. Therefore, he would have had no means of employment, depending instead on his family and friends to support him, or begging for survival. Jesus was restoring so much more than his physical health.

4. Why is it significant that Jesus redefines the man's identity before dealing with his need? How does this differ from how the crowd and scribes viewed Him?
5. Jesus' response presented a theological challenge – "Who can forgive sins but God alone?" The scribes were indignant – and correct in their questioning. What were they missing?
6. How does Jesus' willingness to heal the man's body publicly and verifiably function as evidence for His authority to forgive sins?

Mark 2:12 | Immediately... one of Mark's favorite words. On the word of Jesus, the man was instantly healed of his physical malady – as evidence of Jesus' authority to also heal his spiritual one. As with this man, his greatest need was not the most obvious one. The people were amazed; the scribes were resentful. Their nearness to Jesus did not bring about belief and surrender but further hardened their hearts toward him. The friends did whatever they had to get their friend to Jesus; the scribes had a front-row seat and missed Him. One group went away changed; the other lost.

7. The question this passage poses is this: Which is easier? To the scribes, is it easier to stay a scribe? Paralyzed in legalism, titles, power, and appearance? Or to open your heart and be vulnerable to the word of Christ? What does spiritual paralysis look like? Have you seen this happen, or experienced it yourself?

Here's today's big idea: ***Jesus meets our deepest need with His greatest gift: forgiveness.*** What is your deepest need today? What burdens are you carrying to the Lord? It's easy to think unforgiven sin isn't our biggest problem. But our greatest need is not the most obvious. A better question: Are you allowing God to define your deepest need?

8. "We bring burdens; He removes sins." Is there a burden you've been carrying to God repeatedly without ever letting Him address the sin underneath it? What would it look like to let Him go deeper?

9. These are the marks of someone who has truly grasped grace: being a student of God's Word, loving fellowship, loving worship, loving preaching, being willing to do what it takes to bring others to Jesus. Which of these is currently strong in your life? Which is weakest — and what might that weakness reveal about how deeply you've believed the gospel of grace?

Closing Prayer

Dear LORD, thank You for the gift of grace. Thank You for the gift of forgiveness, restoration, and reconciliation. We do not always see our deepest need, but You do; You meet us there, and You heal us. We thank and worship You. Amen.

Share Prayer Requests (10-15 minutes)