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Carried In, Walking Out

Text: Mark 2:1-12

I was born in the most populous city in the United States. The 2019 population of New York City was 8.3 million. Every year, usually in June, I go to the town of Cassville, WI for a getaway. The 2019 population of Cassville was about 1,000. I enjoy city life *and* country life. So did Jesus.

In 1:35 and 45 of Mark, Jesus is in a solitary place, a desert setting, the country. In 2:1, He reenters the city. In 2:13, He leaves the city and goes out by the water. Whether in the country or in the city, Jesus could never hide. Whenever He entered a city, the word got out (v. 1). This is without the aid of Facebook, an e-blast, Twitter, CNN, Fox or Instagram.

Later on in the gospel, Mark writes that Jesus entered a house and didn’t want anyone to know, but “He could not be hidden” (7:24).

 Capernaum- literally *Nahum’s Village.* It was a fishing village on the northern shore of the Sea of Galilee.

In his writing, Mark frequently uses the word, “immediately”.

In a crowded house, Jesus preached. Jesus went to Capernaum for the purpose of preaching and teaching (1:38). However, even when it was to have been a preaching service only, miracles were often wrought, and exorcisms were performed (1:39).

When Jesus is in the house and people want access, not everyone will be able to get to Him. Equal access- a concept that bears exploring.

There are those who can provide access for people. Let’s call them **bed bearers** (3). They do what others cannot do for themselves. A paralytic, in our text, wants to see Jesus. He cannot get to Jesus by himself. His able-bodied friends will do whatever it takes to get their friend to Jesus. These **bed bearers** uncovered the roof (4).

As one who has been a homeowner, I want to know who’s going to pay for the broken-up roof. Clearly, the **bed bearers** aren’t terribly concerned about this. I see no permission requested, no compensation to the homeowner offered. When Jesus is in the house, seeing Him is the priority. Nothing matters as much as getting to Jesus. Not health care reform discussions; not the cost of repairing broken roofs. Not guest list management. Nothing!

These **bed bearers** and the paralytic have demonstrated faith by their coming to the house and the way they arrived. Mark says that their faith was visible(5a). Is ours?

Vs. 5- Jesus addresses the paralytic’s greatest need. I would think his greatest need was healing. No. His greatest need is forgiveness.

So is mine.

So is yours.

When I make a hospital visit, my primary concern is where the person stands spiritually. Don't misunderstand. I’m interested in their health. However, their *greatest* need is forgiveness of sin.

Who are scribes? What do they do? On this day, the scribes theologically disagreed with Jesus. What kind of ministry is the best for this occasion? Healing service? Miracle display? In the scriptures, sometimes forgiveness and healing are interchangeable terms.

Psalm 41:4 “...heal my soul, for I have sinned against thee.”

Jeremiah 3:22 “return you backsliding children, And I will heal your backslidings.”

In our text, Jesus forgives sins and heals. In a specific order. Sins forgiven first. Body healed second.

The commissioning, with which the narrative ends, is very interesting. It has three components (v.11)

1. Arise. This man has been lying down for a long time. It could be tempting to return to one’s pallet/bed even after healing. Maybe he’d received considerable money, lying down.
2. Take up your bed. That is, set yourself up for a new lifestyle. You won’t be needing that mat, and all it represents, anymore.
3. Go to your house. Be a witness.

Everyone who saw this drama unfold was compelled to conclude that they'd never seen anything like this. Ever. They never seen a miracle like this. They’d never seen compliance by the healed one like this (12).

This text is about authority (7). Who gets to wield it? How visibly can one exercise it? Who gives it? Who is qualified to receive it? The gospel of Mark ends with the not so subtle teaching that *we* have authority!!

**Application**

1.There are some listening to me today who have not served another person in any tangible, significant way for months or years ...or ever. I call you today to join me in being a bed bearer. Let’s find ways to carry the person in need. Let us be instrumental in getting them to Jesus, in getting them to resources, in getting them into a setting of hope and healing.

2. There are some listening to me today from a palette. You are paralyzed and in need of a touch from Jesus. However, pride has kept you from calling on four people to carry you. “I don’t need any help”, you say. I beg to differ. We all need, from time to time, the bed bearers. (v.4). You who are tired of lying on your bed, arise. Maybe you have no strength, no wisdom, no hope, no joy, no idea of what the next move is. Call the bed bearers. Accept the help offered by those who are willing to bust a hole in a roof for you.

3. Let me suggest that at any given time in our journey, we are either **bed bearers** or we are the **bed bound** and someone is carrying us. Wise is the person who knows what season he or she is in.

This man was carried in but walked out. May it be so for you and me as well.

James Rowe wrote a text I can picture the paralytic singing:

*1. I was sinking deep in sin,*

*far from the peaceful shore,*

*very deeply stained within,*

*sinking to rise no more;*

*but the Master of the sea*

 *heard my despairing cry,*

*from the waters lifted me;*

*now safe am I.*

***Refrain:***

*Love lifted me!*

*Love lifted me!*

*When nothing else could help,*

*Love lifted me!*

*Love lifted me!*

*Love lifted me!*

*When nothing else could help,*

*Love lifted me!*

*2.Souls in danger, look above,*

 *Jesus completely saves;*

*He will lift you by His love out*

*of the angry waves.*

*He’s the Master of the sea,*

*billows His will obey;*

*He your savior wants to be-be saved today.*

***Refrain***

Amen