

Mark 2:1-17 | Sin and Authority

Tyler Velin | September 24th, 2014

We are spending the year working through the gospel of Mark, and what we really want to see as we go through this book is who Jesus is.

Everyone knows about Jesus, but do we really know Jesus. Even those who claim to be Christians seem to have a solid understanding about who Jesus is, but I can't tell you how many times I have seen a Christian come up to me and repent about the wrong view of Jesus they had over the years.

Last week we looked at three stories from Jesus' life which helped shape the purposes for which Jesus came, and today we are going to continue that in a more specific way.

We ended up looking at **Romans 8:3**. There is something drastically important in this verse as it pertains to Jesus' purpose on earth. Jesus came for sin. Because of sin, Jesus came.

Sin. Today, our passages in Mark are framed around the subject of sin. Sin is a vastly polarizing idea. There tend to be two cultures which surround sin.

The first is the legalistic camp. This is where just about everything and anything is sin. You can't dance, you can't watch movies, you can't listen to music because you might accidentally sin in the process. And what this leads is the idea that we have the ability to protect ourselves and purify ourselves from sin by removing ourselves from it.

For the legalists the idea of sin is a big idea, they have a great awareness of sin, and they do everything in their power to avoid it. Some of you may be more familiar with this culture than others. And it is this kind of culture which Jesus interacted with when he lived on the earth.

The second camp is the liberalist camp. I went to my favorite lexicon today, Urban Dictionary, and I looked up sin. The first definition, and most popular was: good, dirty fun, and one of the other popular ones was: everything. You see where the legalist says everything is sinful and they attempt to purify themselves from it, the liberalists see everything is sinful, and don't want to become burdened with it so they embrace it.

Liberalists either accept a notion of sin, yet disregard it as moral subjectivity, or they reject the notion of sin all together. This also can be found in Christian circles. Because Jesus came to deal with sin, some "Christians" think that they have license to sin. Because the final judgment of sin has been paid in Christ we don't have to worry about sin as much, and we can just have a good time.

This is more akin to the culture we live in today. We aren't scandalized by sin like the legalists, but we are numb to it as liberalists. Neither of these are clear views of sin. And if we want to have a clear view of Jesus, we need to have a clear view of sin.

So today we are going to look at two stories which inform of view of sin, and subsequently our view of Christ. Let's **pray**.

Last week we saw Jesus growing in popularity, and we saw crowds following him because of his healings, but we also saw Jesus remove himself from these people because he wanted to go to the next town and preach the gospel. Jesus came to preach a message, not simply to perform party tricks.

There is a time gap between the end of chapter one and where we pick up today and in this first story we are going to see our first point: **The Weight of Sin.**

Mark 2:1-2.

Mark loves telling us about the crowds which were following Jesus, and here, and maybe you literature majors in here picked it up, we see Mark subtly showing us how his popularity is growing.

You see look back at what Mark said in **1:33**, and now compare that with **2:2**. There is not even room at the door now. Jesus has gone from Bieber to Timberlake here. And what are they waiting for, healing. The word had gotten out that Jesus was a healer, and yet what is Jesus doing, he is preaching the word to them.

So you can imagine the angst going on here. All these people, pressing, waiting, putting up with his talks to get to his healing. But we meet some rabble rousers. **Mark 2:2-4.**

These men are not like the rest of the crowds. These men are actors. They know the power Jesus has and they are not willing to sit and wait. They are driven by the desperation of their friend and so they climb up onto the roof and begin to dig through it.

Can you imagine this? The guys took a big risk. They aren't pushing through a crowd, they are breaking through a building. Why? Because they have a desperate faith.

Sidebar: Do you have friends like this? There is such a thing as a theology of friendship. The proverbs are full of wisdom on your friends and the counsel of friends. Do not associate yourself with fools, but with friends who lead you to wise counsel.

Not it's ok, and important to be friends with that one guy. The dumb dumb who does dumb things. But do you have a close circle of friends, who when everyone else is off doing naked keg stands on the Clark Fork, is leading you to Jesus.

How I want to be a friend who risks awkward situations to pull my friends to Jesus, and how I need friends, who when my heart is crippled, will carry me, and dig for me, in order to present me to Jesus.

Time in: Good friends and a radical faith make a hole in the roof and lower down their crippled buddy.

And what does Jesus do. Does he rebuke them for their bold and arrogant entrance. Does he respond with a miraculous healing?

Look at the unique response of Jesus: **Mark 2:5.**

Jesus forgives his sins. Now imagine the murmurs that begin to happen here. The crowd was not expecting that. It seems like a pretty lack-luster event. We don't know how the paralytic and his friends respond, but we can imagine they are confused. But look at how the Scribes responded: **Mark 2:6-7.**

They are irate, and rightfully so. In the past when a person was healed in the temple it was the priests job to pronounce him healed, not to forgive his sins. Only God forgives sins. Why? Because God is the one who is ultimately sinned against. When God created us he created us in perfect relationship with himself and Satan came and said, do you really trust that God has your best good in mind. And we doubted the goodness of God, chose to listen to Satan and sinned against God.

From that moment on, we are all living in the sin of unbelief. The greatest sin the world will ever know is not genocide or slavery the greatest sin the world will ever know is unbelief because it bears the highest consequence.

Our sin may hurt men, but all of our sin is an attack on God's holiness.

So what Jesus did here in forgiving sin is blasphemy, it is heresy, it is a bold faced and dangerous lie if Jesus is not God.

I love what happens next. While the scribes are wondering in their hearts how a man can claim to forgive sin without being God, look at what Jesus does: **Mark 2:8-12**.

Jesus says what is easier: to say your sins are forgiven, or to say get up and walk? And for God, its child's play to heal. He breathed the earth into existence with his word, he can make legs move with it.

And yet to show his authority over sins, Jesus heals the paralytic and he gets up and walks home fully restored.

Why does Jesus heal? To testify to the reality of who he is. Jesus' miracles are a tool for his message. When Jesus forgave the man's sin, he had just received the world's greatest treasure. Forgiveness. And Jesus' healing puts in finite terms the infinite meaning of forgiveness. Complete and total restoration. Ultimately it was the sin of man that brought the paralysis. Sin hurts, but Jesus has the power not only to restore health, but to destroy the effects of sin all together.

And one day, this brief out breaking will be our reality. For those whose sins are forgiven by Christ, we will one day live in a world where we are not only free from the consequence of sin, but also the burden of it. This is our hope in redemption.

Jesus frees us from the weight of sin because he is God.

This next story helps us understand Jesus' attitude towards those who are sinful. Our second point is **The Desire of a Savior**.

Mark 2:13-14. So here we see Jesus calling another disciple and this scene unfolds almost exactly like the calling of the other four we saw earlier in the book. With a word Jesus calls men into fellowship with himself.

But the nature of Levi, who is called Matthew, and who went on to write the gospel of Matthew, is different. He was a tax collector. And Jews hated the tax collectors because they were thieves. They would charge exorbitant amounts of money to the Jews, pocket some themselves, and then give the rest to the Roman empire which was ruling the Jews.

The closest parallel I can see to these occupation are those phone scam people who prey on senior citizens and mentally handicap people calling and offering them bogus product or investments in order to blatantly steal their money.

And yet here we have Matthew, at his scam booth, and Jesus calls him not simply to be a follower, but to be a disciple, one of the twelve. This is pretty scandalous, but it gets worse.

Mark 2:15.

There is a lot which happened between verses 14 and 15. Luke fills us in: **Luke 5:29**. Matthew is so overwhelmed by Jesus that he gives up his life of debauchery but also wants to celebrate, and the only people who will come celebrate with him are his fellow thieves. And Jesus fellowships with them.

This was scandalous to the scribes: **Mark 2:16**. Jesus had grown to become a respected teacher in the synagogues, and as a teacher of the law he shouldn't be around such sinners. It was scandalous, it was like Mother Teresa hanging out in a casino run by slave cartels.

Why did he do this? Look at what Jesus says: **Mark 2:17**.

Jesus rebukes the legalistic scribes and he says that I have come for the sick, I have come for those who are dead in their sin because it is the unrighteous who need me. Jesus said: I have come for sinners.

Now as Jesus calls the scribes righteous, he is not actually calling them righteous. He is mocking them. Paul quotes as Psalm in **Romans 3:10-12**.

No one is righteous except God. The legalists need Jesus, and the liberalists need Jesus because your righteousness will not save you, but neither will your ignorance. Jesus saves. Jesus forgives. Believe in him.

Yet in the same way the scribes were overly shocked at who Jesus was hanging out with because they had a wrong view of him, I think often times we are not shocked enough at what Jesus is doing here because we too have a wrong view of Jesus.

It is hip to see Jesus as a friend of sinners, and indeed it is Biblical. But Jesus didn't befriend sinners because their sin was not offense to him. Jesus befriended sinners because he knew they were numb to their own disease.

Jesus hates sin. And sinners who are left in their sinfulness will not know the love of Jesus but instead they will face the wrath of God.

But here we see Jesus dining with sinners and lounging with the sick not because it makes a better story or a more acceptable Jesus. Jesus came to us because we needed him to.

Jesus came to call those who were dying to repentance and rather than sitting in heaven and picking up a phone he came to earth and picked up our filth in order to die for our sins.

You see these two stories show that Jesus is able to forgive our sins, and willing to forgive our sins. We should turn to him. You cannot hide from your sin. You may not feel the weight of it now, but often times a cancer patient doesn't feel the symptoms of cancer until it's too late.

You can't cover your sins, you can't hide your sins, you can't put make up on them, you can't solve them by church attendance or morals, you sin needs to be forgiven by Christ. And the cross makes that possible. This is why Jesus came.

You Christians, do not see Jesus' actions as an affirmation that sin is ok. But rather see Jesus' incarnation as the clearest picture that sin isn't ok, and that it needs to be put to death.

But let Jesus' actions drive our mission. We shouldn't be liberalist towards sin, but we shouldn't be legalistic with it either. Jesus didn't remove himself from the people who needed his message, he went to them. And in doing it he never compromised his actions or his message.

Are you willing to do that? Let's pray.