

## **Week Two: *Choose to Forgive***

### **Mark 2:1-12**

#### **Spend FIFTEEN – Day One**

1. To begin your first FIFTEEN of the week, read Mark 2:1-12 on your own a couple of times. Note anything that jumps out at you.
2. Put yourself in the story; imagine you were in Capernaum. After healing many people, Jesus returns and is mobbed by adoring crowds. The crowds are so large, in fact, that there is “no room left, not even outside the door.” As everyone crowds around, you listen intently to every word Jesus speaks. Can you imagine what that was like? Can you put yourself in that room, listening to Jesus preach? What would that have felt like?
3. If Jesus was speaking somewhere near you today, would you put up with the crowds to be near him? Would you wait in line for hours just to catch a glimpse of him? Would you pack into a tiny room, pressed up against others, just to hear him speak?
4. Suddenly, men begin tearing the roof off the house and lower a man down into the room on a mat. As a result, verse 5 says, “When Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralyzed man, ‘Son, your sins are forgiven.’” What do you think that means? How did Jesus see their faith?
5. One way Jesus saw their faith was by their actions. They had so much faith in God that they were willing to tear the roof off the house because they knew Jesus would heal their friend. Now that’s faith! Can you relate to this kind of faith?
6. To finish your FIFTEEN for today, think about practical ways you have either proven your faith or shown doubt in your faith. You probably haven’t torn the roof off a house so Jesus could heal your friend, but what have you done? Then, ask God to help you continue to grow your faith and trust in him.

#### **Spend FIFTEEN – Day Two**

7. To begin your FIFTEEN for today, read Mark 2:1-12 again. Why do you think Jesus forgave the paralyzed man’s sins before healing him, even though the man was brought to Jesus for healing?
8. Notice in verses 6 and 7 that the teachers of the law didn’t say anything out loud, but Jesus still knew what they were thinking. How does that make you feel?
9. Which do you think is easier for Jesus, to forgive sins or heal a paralyzed man? Why?
10. Maybe we can’t miraculously heal people, at least not by our own power, but is it easy for you to forgive? Why or why not?

11. To finish your FIFTEEN for today, spend some time thinking about times when you've had trouble forgiving others. Why did you have trouble? Spend some time in prayer thanking God for the forgiveness he gives to each one of us and asking him to help you better forgive like he does.

### **Spend FIFTEEN – Day Three**

12. Read Colossians 3:13. What does it have to say about forgiveness?
13. What kind of qualifications does Colossians 3:13 put on forgiveness, if any?
14. Let's go back to Mark 2:1-12 again. Verse 10 says, "But I want you to know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins." Was Jesus more concerned with healing the paralyzed man or forgiving his sins? Why?
15. In verse 11, Jesus tells the man to get up and go home. Verse 12 simply says, "He got up, took his mat and walked out in full view of them all." Are you surprised by the seemingly ordinary explanation of the man's miraculous healing? Why or why not?
16. It seems that this passage puts more emphasis on Jesus' forgiving the paralyzed man than his actual healing. Why do you think that is?
17. To finish your FIFTEEN for today, spend more time thinking about times in the past when you had a hard time forgiving someone who sinned against you. Why do you think that was? Even if the other person is unrepentant, God still calls us to forgive them. Once again, ask God to help you better forgive like he does.

### **Spend FIFTEEN - Day Four**

18. Read Ephesians 4:31-32. What do these verses have to say about forgiveness?
19. Before talking about forgiveness in verse 32, what is required in verse 31?
20. Verse 31 says we are to "get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice." In your experience, is it easy to forgive someone else if you're still holding on to "every form of malice"? Why or why not?
21. Looking back at Mark 2:1-12, verse 12 says, "He (the formerly paralyzed man) got up, took his mat and walked out in full view of them all. This amazed everyone and they praised God, saying, "We have never seen anything like this!" What do you think the people were referring to in verse 12? Do you think they were more amazed by the forgiving or the healing?

22. To finish your FIFTEEN for today, think about the significance of Jesus' healing versus his forgiveness. Then ask God to help you not to take the forgiveness he offers you for granted.

**Spend FIFTEEN - Day Five**

23. To begin your final FIFTEEN of the week, read Mark 2:1-12 once more. Did anything new stick out to you this time?

24. It's easy for us to notice a miraculous healing like Jesus performed in this passage. We don't see that every day. Have you ever known or heard about someone who was healed after being given no hope by the doctors? How did you feel when you heard their story?

25. It can be hard, even impossible, for us to really understand what receiving a miraculous healing might feel like. It can seem like too much to believe. Yet receiving Jesus' forgiveness is even more important than physical healing. Do we tend to have the same kind of awe and wonder when we think about the miraculous forgiveness Jesus offers? Why or why not?

26. Think again of a time when you struggled to forgive someone. Looking back, who felt the pain of that more, you or them?

27. Often, the person withholding forgiveness is more hurt by it than the person in need of forgiveness. Why do you think that is?

28. Jesus wants to heal us from the pain and scars often caused in relationships. But to do that, we need to forgive. And with Jesus' help, we can do just that. To finish your FIFTEEN for today, ask God to once again help bring to mind those in your life you need to forgive. Then ask for his Spirit to give you the power and ability to forgive those you need to as God forgives you as well.