

Discussion Questions

The Time Has Come: The Gospel of Mark

These questions are designed to invite reflection on today's Bible passage and life application of the themes introduced in today's sermon.

Week 4: Authority to Forgive

Mark 2:1-12

1. Have you ever had someone forgive you for something you didn't know you'd done? Have you ever badly wanted to be forgiven by someone but either didn't have the opportunity or were afraid to ask?
2. In today's passage, Jesus is confronted by someone with one obvious, urgent need. What is it? Why might this person seek Jesus' help with this particular problem? What are the signs that this person is desperate for Jesus' attention?
3. If you were Jesus, what might be your immediate reaction to such an intrusion? What does Jesus' response suggest about Jesus' attitude toward those who come to Him for help?
4. What does Jesus say in response to the intrusion? Who might you expect to be shocked/disturbed by this response? Who, according to Mark, *is* offended by Jesus response?
5. What is the specific objection to Jesus' words? What are the objectors technically *right* about? What are they wrong about?
6. What are some contemporary objections we, or others, might have to Jesus' statement: *Your sins are forgiven*? What sins, and *whose* sins, are you most offended by and most likely to point out? In the past, how have you responded when someone else pointed out *your* sins? Can you think of personal sins you have rarely or never disclosed? Are they hard to carry? What would it feel like to confess them *and* to hear – from someone with authority: “Your sins are forgiven”?
7. If you were the paralyzed man, what would you rather hear – “Your sins are forgiven” or “Get up and walk”? What are some of the needs you prioritize over forgiveness in your relationship with Jesus?
8. How does Jesus respond to the objections to His offer of forgiveness? What two things does this teach us about Jesus' desire for all people?
9. Based on Jesus' action, does Jesus seem to separate humanity's need for forgiveness from our other needs? In the encounter with the paralyzed man, what do we learn about the relationship between our need for forgiveness and our other needs?
10. What is the difference between absolution and atonement? What is the goal of atonement? What deepest human need does Jesus' offer of forgiveness represent?
11. What are some of the benefits of asking for, and receiving, Jesus' forgiveness? What changes and responsibilities result from accepting Jesus' words: *My child, your sins are forgiven*?

Pray: Invite the Holy Spirit to identify the sin that stands between you and God's love; receive God's offer of forgiveness through Jesus Christ; embrace your new status as a reconciled child of God; ask for grace and guidance as you seek to offer others the forgiveness you have received.