

Has Jesus forgiven you?

Mark 2:1- NASB

“When He (Jesus) had come back to Capernaum several days afterward, it was heard that He was at home. ²And many were gathered together, so that there was no longer room, not even near the door; and He was speaking the word to them.

³And they came, bringing to Him a paralytic, carried by four men. ⁴Being unable to get to Him because of the crowd, they removed the roof above Him; and when they had dug an opening, they let down the pallet on which the paralytic was lying. ⁵And Jesus seeing their faith said to the paralytic, ‘Son, your sins are forgiven.’”



Ruins of ancient Capernaum

“But some of the scribes were sitting there and reasoning in their hearts, ⁷ ‘Why does this man speak that way? He is blaspheming; who can forgive sins but God alone?’ ⁸Immediately Jesus, aware in His spirit that they were reasoning that way within themselves, said to them, ‘Why are you reasoning about these things in your hearts? ⁹Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, “Your sins are forgiven”; or to say, “Get up, and pick up your pallet and walk”?’

¹⁰“But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins’—He said

to the paralytic, ¹¹ ‘I say to you, get up, pick up your pallet and go home.’ ¹²And he got up and immediately picked up the pallet and went out in the sight of everyone, so that they were all amazed and were glorifying God, saying, ‘We have never seen anything like this.’”

Scripture is packed with life-enhancing stuff.

Today’s text gives us much-needed information.

Most preachers hope to draw big audiences.

Jesus drew crowds wherever he went.

That rarely happens to me.

After Jesus moved from Nazareth to

Capernaum, he possibly taught in his home.

Jesus literally packed the house.¹

Yet, not all the “jammers” wanted to hear God’s word or to improve their lives.

Sceptics and critics joined those who crowded close and jammed the doorway.

Four men brought a paralyzed fellow, who hoped Jesus could make him walk.

Those crammed near the door evidently would not give way even to a paralyzed person.

No problem; many houses then had outside stairways to the roof, where folks could spend evenings away from the street stench and din.

¹ Some think this incident took place at Peter’s residence.



The quartet of guys acted boldly. They carried the guy to the roof, removed tiles and other roofing material, and let the guy on his pallet down in front of Jesus.

How you would feel about someone cutting a hole in the roof of your house?²

Jesus did the unexpected; seeing the faith of the paralyzed man’s buddies, he said:

“Son, your sins are forgiven.”

Jesus made a remarkable comment, didn’t he? I’ve seen scores of alleged healings by so-called faith-healers.

Never did I hear a faith-healer first say, “Child, your sins are forgiven.”

The front row skeptics saw the implications of Jesus’ statement and scolded:

“Who can forgive sins?”

They meant, “Who does this guy Jesus think he is? Only God can forgive sins.”

In a way, the skeptics assumed correctly.

For example:

- If you offend me, I can and must forgive you if I want God to forgive me.

Jesus had taught:

“¹⁵ But if you do not forgive others, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions.”³

The Apostles emphasized this principle:

“Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.”⁴

- Regardless of the person’s title or claims, no human being can forgive another’s sins.

I can forgive your offenses toward me, but I can’t forgive your other transgressions. Only God can do that.

Jesus’ critics got that part right.

“To the Lord our God belong compassion and forgiveness,” (Daniel 9:9).

- Still, the critics didn’t recognize Jesus’ divinity—he was/is God.

Lawrence Richards pointed out crucial truths concerning *forgiven-forgiveness*.⁵

Richards noted the use of forgiveness in *Psalms* 32.

“¹ Blessed is he/her whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered.

“² Blessed is the one whose sin the LORD does not count against him/her and in whose spirit is no deceit.

³ Matthew 6: 15 NIV

⁴ Ephesians 4: 32 NASB

⁵ *Expository Dictionary of Bible Words*, p -289.

² Many scholars think the house may have belonged to Peter.

“³When I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long. ⁴For day and night your hand was heavy on me; my strength was sapped as in the heat of summer.”

In verse 1, the term translated forgiven is the Hebrew word pronounced “**nasa**,” which means to “**lift up**” or “**carry or support**.” “**In three different ways**,” Richards says, “**the OT links ‘nasa’ with sin.**”

- (1) **By our ungodly actions, we human beings “take up” sin or iniquity.**
- (2) **The guilt or punishment for sin is taken up by the sinner or a substitute.**
- (3) **God can act to take up and carry away sins.**

Here’s how this works in real life.

Stage 1 – We take up (nasa - נָשָׂא) sin.

Let’s say that Colton goes in the other room and leaves his wallet on the pew.

His wallet appears to be fat with money.

No one else is around.

So I think, “Colton has all of this cash. He’s rolling in dough. Last time I saw him, he didn’t stop to talk with me. I’m going to lift his wallet. I need the money, and he won’t miss it.”

That’s my justification.

So I “**lift up**” Colton’s wallet —carry it.



Stage 2 – But I discover that Colton’s wallet gets increasingly heavy.

At first, it weighs no more than a few ounces. **But after I lift it, I feel guilty even before he misses it.**

I also see Colton’s pain.

I begin to feel unworthy and that God is punishing me for things not connected to Colton’s wallet.

I become grouchy, irritable, and depressed; maybe even sick.

Friends, to whom I admit my lifting, say:

“Don’t worry. Everyone’s doing that now. Take a few sleeping tablets, and we’ll find some uppers for you cheap.”

Colton’s wallet gets heavier and my life more complicated.

I find myself constantly taking up (nasa) and carrying my guilt.

Psalm 32 refers to that condition in verses 3 &4:

“When I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long. For day and night your hand was heavy upon me; my strength was sapped as in the heat of summer.”

Do you feel a guilt that haunts you at times?

Unresolved sin-guilt sickens and alienates us.

A little verse about chiggers (I think Ogden Nash wrote it) **also applies to guilt.**

"Here's to the chigger, the bug that's no bigger than the end of a very small pin. But the itch that he raises, simply amazes. And that's where the rub comes in.



The scriptures instruct us to repent and sin no more. But we find that hard to do.

We are sinners. The question for each of us is, "What can I do about my guilt?"

For some people, this is no problem. A newspaper cartoon showed a man dressed like a prophet carrying a sign on which was written **RESIST TEMPTATION**. A seedy looking character sees the sign and responds, **"I'm not interested in resisting it. I'm interested in finding it."**

Some people don't carry a burden because of their sins. Joseph Stalin is said to have killed twenty millions of his own countrymen. Yet he showed no sign of guilt. On his deathbed, he asked his wife to read him some short stories by Jack London and then he went peacefully to sleep.

Seared consciences seem to feel no guilt.

Yet most of us carry burdens of guilt and regret. We become depressed, anxious, and ill.

Years ago I had breakfast with a teenage boy in Los Angeles. A few years, before he'd been in his basement calling out to Satan for help.

He asked me that morning if I thought that God would forgive him.

Burdens of guilt and regret depress us; make us anxious and ill.

"Robert Butler did a sociological study of older people. He found that if they...could review their lives and feel good about the way they lived, then they were able to face death peacefully. If, however, these older people were filled with regret, death was very, very hard to face."⁶

The Bible clearly informs of truth our society doesn't want to admit.

God didn't design our bodies or minds for sin.

Not any more than a Piper Cub airplane was designed to do backward loops.

Or a 737 was meant to be flown with neglected bolts.

Human beings weren't made to ignore God, to lie, cheat, steal, commit fornication, hate, worry, gossip, or any other kind of sin.

Sin harms us—and harms other people.

You know the chain of events.



⁶ From Sermon, "What can I do about my guilt?"

- a) **We do something wrong.**
- b) **Our conscience bothers us.**
- c) **Continuing wrong-doing depresses us.**

Compare guilt to a pebble in your shoe causing discomfort.

Instead of connecting our guilt-pain with wrong-doing and removing the cause, we take uppers, downers, sleeping pills, alcohol, and extended vacations that don't ease our minds.

Or we pay vast sums to professional counselors, who tell us not to worry and then over-medicate us.

If we are doing wrong things, only one solution helps—we stop sinning.

Stage 3 – I confess my sin to Colton, return his wallet, and his money that I spent on sleeping pills, and selfishly.

Then I confess my sin to God and I accept Jesus' forgiveness.

“Let the wicked forsake his way and the evil man his thoughts. Let him turn to the LORD, and he will have mercy on him, and to our God, for he will freely pardon.”⁷

Notice how Isaiah 53:4 (NIV) shows us the theme of lifting up and carrying in forgiveness:

“Surely he took up (nasa) our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted.”

Isaiah foresaw what Jesus would accomplish for all people, all of us, on the cross.

It doesn't matter what we've done, whether it's theft, sex sin, dishonesty or whatever.

If our burden is heavy, and we're tired of lugging it, the Lord will gladly carry it for us.

Want change in your life?

The Lord will help you.

Jesus already carried your sins to the cross and will gladly lift them from you right now.

Quit sinning. Make proper restitution.

Be baptized into Christ for forgiveness.

You'll enjoy new life in Christ.

Walking by faith in him, you will sleep better and walk more strongly.

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⁷ Isaiah 55: 7 NIV