

Week 1: Finding Community & Healing

Mark 2:1-12

WELCOME

INTRO

We live in a time of so many options:

- Instagram filters
- Spotify Playlists
- Brand of peanut butter in the grocery store

In college there are so many things we're needing to decide and have so many options to choose from. Both big and small questions:

- Which major to choose?
- Where will I eat for dinner?
- Where will I do my laundry?
- What time of day will I go to the gym?
- Which route will I take to class?

When it comes to relationships, there are equally as many options

- Which of the 1000 clubs will I join
- Will I be friends with the hundred students on the south side of the dorm or the hundred students on the north?
- 2000 close friends on facebook

But unlike instagram filters or "close friends" on facebook - choosing what kinds of relationships we will have is actually one of the most important decisions we can make. Our friends affect...

- What kind of people we will become
- Where we will give our time
- What kind of values will shape us
- Who will influence us far beyond our years in college

Turn in 2s: What is one crucial relationship you want to make or deepen this year?

- Of all the decisions we have to make in college, choosing what relationships to invest is one of the most important things we will ever do
- But how do we choose? Of the 46,000 people on this campus, how will we decide who gets to be in our inner circle and who will help shape who we become? How do we decide what types of relationships are actually crucial?

Intro Jesus:

- The exciting thing about this question is it's not a question that we're suppose to have to figure out all on our own.
- Instead I think this is one of the areas that God loves to speak into in our lives. He is the expert in this area. Not just a moral guy – but God himself.

Read Mark 2: 1-12

Point 1: The most joyful relationships are ones that center around radically getting each other to Jesus

Going to look at this story from 3 perspectives tonight:

- Four friends
- Paralyzed man
- Crowd

Friends:

- What's going on for them?
- Hear about Jesus – that he can heal people
- Friend they clearly really care about and want to see him get healed
- But when get there – there's no room because so many people want to be around
- So start digging a hole in the roof – repercussions of that?
- Like taking a sledge hammer to your professors office door while he's in the middle of an important meeting because you really needed a question answered about your upcoming exam
- But what happens after they take this crazy risk to get their friend to Jesus?

Watch Urbana Video: <https://vimeo.com/56505529>

As you watch it: Watch for where you see JOY

Joy:

- Did you see the joy of the friends?
- Can you imagine what it'd be like – after they dug the hole in the roof and then saw their friend go from totally paralyzed and unable to move to dancing? And then getting to dance with him?
- Insert a quick Healing Story: kidney healed – joy had that night
- This is what it's like when we are a part of a community that radically risks to get each other to Jesus. We get to see people be healed and filled with life because of Jesus.

Insert a story of a conversion that led to world changing:

- Student curious about Jesus- starts studying Bible
- Healed from wounds of sexual abuse and failing classes (with dream of becoming a nurse)
- Gives life to Jesus
- Brings 5 of her nursing friends to faith
- Now they are all nurses and doctors saving lives literally every single day

When I think about relationships where I've received the most joy –this is who I think about/ where I've had the most joy.

What will our time in college be about?

- Just getting great grades to have an awesome career to make a lot of money that one day won't matter
- Or about investing in the lives of people – and affecting all of eternity?
- Word to Christians: Don't just find a group of people that will make you feel good about yourself. Find friends that will do crazy things as breaking holes in roofs of famous people if it means someone will get to encounter Jesus.
- Word to non-Christians: IF you feel like this student- curiosity in you but you don't feel like you know Jesus personally – invest your time in a community like this one of people who will help you ask questions yourself – everyone owes it to themselves to make a decision about who Jesus is as an adult

Point 2. Relationship with Jesus is what every other relationship hinges upon

So we've looked at the friends perspective. Let's think about the paralyzed man. What do you think must've been happening for him throughout all this?

Context of paralysis:

- Paralyzed people – it was more than just not being able to walk
- Stigma – that you were sick because it was your fault. Because you were sinful. And God must be punishing you.

If this was his world, what would it be like to be carried by his friends through a hole in a roof to Jesus?

- Imagine the fear
- The shame
- The vulnerability to allow himself to go through that

And then he gets plopped in front of Jesus and ALL THE CROWD

- The crowd that had told him he was a screw up
- That his life was a mess because he must've done something wrong to deserve God's punishment
- The crowd that told him he wasn't welcome there

And he looks at Jesus' face – wondering if this man who has healed people before could possibly heal him too. And the crowd stares. And the friends are watching...

- (Live in the moment for a second) – What is going to happen?

And Jesus says "Your sins are forgiven"

- Why does Jesus say this? Is he affirming that his paralysis was indeed because he sinned? That it was God's punishment?

- No – what he’s saying is – I don’t care how many people have told you you’re not worthy of a relationship with God. I want to make it clear in front of all these people that there’s nothing that can separate you from the love of God – that you’re a part of the family too.
- Even now – as you are still paralyzed.
- He’s making a statement of what’s the most crucial.
- The most crucial thing in your life is healing your relationship with God.

Every other relationship in our lives hinges on our relationship with Jesus.

Share the Gospel:

- God created us for the purpose of relationship – to have a wonderful loving relationship with him and also with all the people and world around us
- But we damaged our relationship with God when we said we’re going to do our own thing – we’re going to lead our own relationships and we don’t need you anymore God – led to pain on so many levels – where anxiety, fear, greed, selfishness rule our relationships rather than God.
- Jesus loved us so much – that in our state of paralysis and disfunction with each other - he didn’t just drill a hole in a roof for us – he put a hole in death itself by dying a brutal death on our behalf – giving us his life – the very life of God himself – so that we didn’t have to be punished for our rebellion.
- And with his resurrection power he also gives us his authority to be a part of bringing people back into the family of God and restoring relationship with our creator.

We can’t have the best relationships with other people unless we first have good relationship with God. And we can’t have good relationship with God unless something is first done about our rebellion.

And Jesus is saying to this man: I am the one with the power to heal that damaged relationship with God.

Every other relationship in our lives hinges on our relationship with Jesus.

Case Study My Life:

- Let me tell you about 4 relationships in my life – how I was handling them and then how Jesus has been handling them. And you tell me who is doing a better job at leading the relationships in my life.
- Close friend-
- The other day she says to me, “you lied to me about this. And that hurt me.”
- Internal: anger, defensiveness, broiling...
- Jesus enters scene: you don’t need to defend yourself because I already have forgiven you. Listen to her because I want to heal your friendship.
- Able to say: you’re right. I did totally lie about that. It was wrong. I’m so sorry. Friendship has taken a new turn.
- Family
- Mom makes this really off handed racist comment
- I’m angry, shameful of being white, cry for 2 hours

- Jesus enters scene: You don't have to be ashamed of who you are and your family because I have already forgiven you.
- I go to my mom. She says "I don't know why I said that I just felt afraid." We repent of letting fear and shame control us.
- Last week she asked me to come speak to 50 of her mostly white friends all over the age of 60 about Jesus' plan for reconciliation for this world
- We've become reconcilers together.
- Job/Management
- Manage a lot of people – have deadlines. They often don't meet them.
- Get grumpy, frustrated, not in control
- Jesus enters: Your worth as an employee is not hinging on if everything goes perfectly and people do everything they're supposed to. Your worth is already there because of who I say you are. Go look for ways to use this opportunity to love those you're leading...even in their failure.
- Romance –
- After 30 years of being totally single, content, but also desiring to be married, met the man of my dreams. Perfect partner for me.
- Wrecked with anxiety – so afraid of doing the wrong thing – I couldn't allow myself to really love.
- Jesus enters scene: Love is the riskiest thing you've ever done. Trust me with your life and let me have control.
- Most exciting time right now – For the first time in my life I can say I am genuinely in love.

Without Jesus, I would be too defensive to resolve conflict with my roommate, too ashamed of my family and ethnicity to live in my calling as a reconciler, too irritated to be a good manager, too anxious to let myself fall in love.

What do you think? Is Jesus better at relationships than I am?

When we let Jesus heal our relationship with God, we can then allow him to have authority over all our other relationships. And he does a much better job of it than we do.

Some of you need to have your relationship with Jesus healed tonight. To see that as the most crucial relationship. Will you decide to give your life to Jesus tonight and let him lead?

When you think about which crucial relationships to invest in this year –will you consider letting Jesus be the first one you invest in?

Point 3: Jesus wants to give us what we need to believe that he is worthy of relationship

We've looked at the friends. We've looked at the paralyzed guy. Now lets take a moment to look at the crowd in this story. (Look at scripture again)

These are my favorite people in the story. They're skeptical. They're good people – they were there to hear a good teaching but they can't believe that Jesus would in fact be God himself and able to forgive people's sins.

Ever felt skeptical?

How do you think Jesus might address skepticism?

- Maybe be turned off by it?
- Annoyed?
- Angered?

I love how Jesus responds: I know you don't believe that I can forgive sins because anyone can say "I forgive you" but so you know who I really am and that I actually have power to forgive – I'll just make this paralyzed guy get up and walk.

He does a crazy miracle! I love this about Jesus. He doesn't judge them for having questions. He gives them what they need to see so they will believe him.

Jesus wants to give us what we need to believe that he is worthy of relationship

Do you know that Jesus knows exactly what we need in order to believe he is real and that he wants to give us that?

Story of Jesus turning skepticism

- Tammy (named changed for privacy) was Atheist her whole life – experiences miraculous healing. Leads to curiosity and starts studying Bible with me
- At one point we got to talking about how Jesus wants to know us and she said, well how do I know that? How do I know he knows me or cares about my life?
- God likes to speak. When we get in relationship with someone we like to talk to each other or show each other things. So sometimes all we need to do is be still and listen.
- Listened: She had a memory of being in her car and I saw an image of a teddy bear.
- Tears: It's been a year since I cried. I was in my car this morning thinking about my dad who recently passed away. The only gift my dad ever gave me was a teddy bear.
- That's Jesus telling you he knows you. He sees your pain.

Jesus is the best person to have relationship with because he is the only one who knows everything about you. He created you. And he wants to have relationship with you.

Many of us are looking for deep friendships because we want to be known. For someone to really know us. But the one who knows everything about you is here in this room tonight – wanting relationship with you.

When we have a relationship with Jesus – he releases healing to us – spiritual, physical, and emotional healing. He loves to do that for us and he knows everything about us.

Prayer for Jesus to Release Healing:

I believe Jesus wants to release some of that healing to some of us tonight. Stop right now – bring to the front of your mind an area you need healing – maybe physical, spiritual, emotional. If physical – put your hand on the place that hurts. I want to pray for you.

In name of Jesus may that place of pain be healed. Release your healing power right now. Amen.

Sometimes Jesus' healing comes right away – sometimes its more of a process. If you experienced a healing tonight – tell someone and write it on the response card afterwards. If you want someone to keep praying for you – we have prayer ministers. (move on quickly – don't linger too long here)

Exhortation on Risk:

- This paralyzed man's life is totally transformed because he encounters Jesus. But why does Jesus forgive and heal the man in the first place?
- Because of the friends faith. He saw their faith and then spoke to the man.
- What about their faith is Jesus honoring?
- Not that they know everything
- Not that they're 100% certain of who Jesus is
- Not that they're perfect people who follow all the rules
- But their faith is that they do something so crazy risky to get their friend to Jesus. Drilling a hole in someone's roof.
- Jesus honors their risk.

What kinds of risks is he inviting you to take tonight?

Set up Calls:

- Some of you need to let Jesus heal your relationship with him. To say yes to having relationship with him – for maybe the first time in your life or for the first time as an adult. Or recommitment.
- Others of you are being invited to live a life like the four friends. To be about investing in the lives of others while you're in college- to not just join a community that makes you feel good but to join this movement here to be challenged to grow as a witness. To be a part of taking radical risks such that every person on this campus may have access to Jesus.
- Introduce Listening Prayer: Believe God likes to speak. Going to create some space: Ask: Is Jesus inviting you into a relationship tonight? Listen for what he might want to say. Maybe you'll have a feeling of joy come over you, or a peace, or he might tell you something specific about your life or a way he's inviting you to release control or fear so that you can have relationship with him.

Response Song

Calls

- What is your soul saying to you as you stop and listen.
- Talk to first group: Is Jesus inviting you into relationship? That as an adult and in your time in college you want to commit to letting relationship with Jesus be the primary thing that you pursue?
- I believe Jesus is speaking so many of us here tonight
- INVITE Recommitments and adult decisions. Then ask people who've NEVER been Christian or around Christianity to stand and join too.

Things you Can Hit on:

- Now let me explain why I'm going to ask you to stand, I'm going to ask you to stand because sometimes we make decisions internally but unless we act on those decisions in a physical and in a real way, they can simply fade away.
- Believe Jesus is initiating
- Not asking us to be perfect – he wants to come into our lives while we're still a mess. All that Jesus requires is our recognizing we don't have what it takes
- Acknowledge that he is better at managing our lives than we are
- That him knowing us –and having relationship with the one who made us – is far better than if we try to do it ourselves
- Jesus loves you so so much and is inviting you into a deep intimate relationship with himself.
- Man – vulnerability – courage to let himself be brought face to face with Jesus – in front of a huge crowd
- Isn't for everyone in the room – but there are some – Jesus is initiating with you - don't ignore him. Choose to respond.
- Don't be controlled by your fears – be courageous
- Heart pounding – that's Jesus speaking to you
- Talk to those standing: Most significant thing you'll ever do. An amazing moment.
- Take one more risk and come get prayer right now. You each have a unique story. Come get prayer.

Call for Believers to be about His movement

- Now I want to talk to those of you that already consider yourselves followers of Jesus.
- Tonight, Jesus is inviting you to make your time in college about more than just yourself.
- Invite to stand
- Talk about Joy
- Not just about waiting until after college
- You're not on this campus on accident
- Have them stand: pray a blessing
- PRAYER MINISTRY
- RESPONSE CARDS / GIGS – write down your decision!

Response Cards: If you made a decision tonight but too nervous to stand up or tell anyone – write it on this card. Want to process with you.

Week 2: Community with a Purpose

Mark 2:13-17 Calling of Levi

MAIN POINT:

We are all sick and we all need Jesus, the marginalized, the outcasts, and the seemingly "healthy". Everyone needs to hear about this Jesus.

INTRO:

Groundhog Day clip. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gKGOG-Pr81E>

We are all sick and we all need Jesus, even if we don't realize it.

Last week we talked about how as we're invited into community we can experience Jesus in even deeper ways and we're able to bring each other to Jesus and receive what we can't give ourselves.

Jesus invites us into community and we want to look this week a little more, what does he desire for us in community? Is it just to grow closer to him and each other?

We're going to learn from Jesus himself and look at part of his interactions with those that chose to follow him while he was on this earth. We're going to look and see what it is Jesus invites them into and how he invites them to do it.

POINTS:

1. Jesus goes to the marginalized and invites us to do the same.

- a. What was it like to be Levi?
 - i. Traitor, idols in his life, loneliness
 - ii. Jesus offers new ID & purpose
- b. Jesus kingdom is an inclusive community: He wants everybody
 - i. He starts the conversations others aren't willing to start
 - ii. What conversations could he want you to have on campus (evangelism)?
- c. When Jesus starts this conversation it challenges the whole community
 - i. What are they going to be about? (being comfortable, being homogenous, being superior, or being about God's mission)
- d. One of the best parts of college: talking to people that are different from you & learning/listening/sharing
 - i. One of our core values: we all have a culture & experience to bring that can help us to see more of who Jesus is

2. Jesus isn't interested in what others are saying about how he lives his life.

- a. Pharisees saw him eating with the sinners and tax collectors and asked "why does he eat with tax collectors and sinners?"
- b. Jesus is making a point about who he chooses to relate to and do life with. It's almost meant for the pharisees to see it.
- c. He doesn't care about what they say about it. That doesn't keep him from his mission.
- d. It's kind of like the election, slanderous commercials. The pharisees are trying to slander him it's not going to make him give up the race.
- e. Lots of things can get in the way of us going to the marginalized, talking

about our faith, and sharing Jesus with people. Every time I am going to do a proxie things get in the way: I feel sick, my car won't start, etc.

3. **Jesus is the Good doctor to anyone that is able to admit they need him.**
- a. After Jesus shows us that he cares for and has come for those that society might overlook or we might overlook he goes further to tell us a bit more of who he came for and what he offers them.
 - i. Jesus makes this point that someone that thinks they are healthy doesn't go to the doctor, the sick go to a doctor.
 - ii. Similarly he says - the righteous, or someone that sees themselves as righteous, won't ask Jesus for help, its only the people that know and are willing to admit they are sick
 - b. Analogy: Two people have a broken leg. One person looks at it and says, wow, I've broken my leg, I need help, I'm going to the doctor. She gets a cast and eventually gets healed. Second person, looks at their leg and says, wow that hurts, but I don't need to go to the doctor. Who's leg is broken? ... Both. The main difference is he is able to see it, admit it and ask for help, the other either doesn't see it, or isn't willing to admit it and ask for help.
 - c. Jesus is saying, I am the good doctor, he has the ability to help us with our soul sickness but he can only offer it to someone who is willing to admit they need him.
Jesus doesn't force himself on people, but is always ready if we realize we need him and want to go to him.
 - d. What does this mean for us?

CALL TO FAITH:

If you are a follower of Jesus:

He is asking us to admit to where we lack or where we don't have it all together. You need to choose to be in a community and live a life of faith where you admit you need help and don't have all the answers, then he is saying I welcome you. You also need to realize who are the "tax collectors and sinners" in your life who Jesus is asking you to share this story?

If you aren't a follower of Jesus:

Maybe your understanding is that you have to have it all together. Are you aware that you fall short? That we all fall short? He is inviting you to recognize that you don't have it all together and you need help. What Jesus did on the cross allows you to get that help. Jesus' death and coming back to life gives us hope that we can change. And by admitting that we need help and committing your life to Jesus and a community, it begins the process of change. Would you do that right now?

Pray.

Week 3: Community in Process

Mark 2:18-22

MAIN POINT: Commit to a community that is going to learn together and grow together. Let's figure out together what we do not yet know that Jesus wants to offer us.

INTRO:

Hulk- "I'm always angry"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lwvAMPTWu6A>

What's your secret? How do you keep going?

I don't recommend Bruce's way of dealing with life. So what do you turn to? Video games? Food? Shopping? Social media? Partying?

We've been spending a lot of time talking about this community and what being a follower of Jesus looks like while we are at college. Last week we thought about who we need to share the story of this Jesus with. Today, we are going to a little more inward and talk about our relationship with Jesus.

POINTS:

1. When we decide to follow Jesus, we are choosing a new way of dealing with life.

Hulk transformation-

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SdkKB0-gQq8>

When you try to fit Hulk into Bruce Banner's clothes, what happens? They are ripped to shreds. Same thing Jesus is talking about. You can't put new wine into old wine skins, the wine skins would burst and the wine would be ruined as well.

When you choose to follow Jesus, you start using new wine skins. You make new habits, find new ways of dealing with life.

2. These new habits, are called spiritual practices. Spiritual practices help us understand more about who God is and who we are. They help us feel close to God, and close to each other.
 - a. Fasting—One that Jesus referred to in this passage is fasting. What is it and why should we do it?
 - i. What: Going without food and drink
 - ii. Why: Seeking the guidance and help of God- Ex. 34:28, Ezr. 8:21-23, Acts 12:2-3
 - iii. Jesus' example, Luke 4. In the wilderness for 40 days.
 - b. Reading the Bible
 - i. Jesus example. Jesus often quoted scripture. In our passage, immediately following, he talked about David in the days of Abiathar the high priest. He knew scripture and talked about it often. When he was being tempted by Satan, Luke 4:4 he quotes

Deut 8:3, again in verse 8, he quotes Deut 6:13, and again in verse 10 he is quoting a Psalm, Psalm 91, and yet again in verse 12, quoting Deut 6:16

- ii. Psalm 1. Read it a couple of times. Think about the tree and what that tree might look like, and how this passage is asking us to be like a tree. Consider showing Vincent Van Gogh's, *The Mulberry Tree*, 1889. Spend a few moments reflecting on the tree and its implications from the passage.
- c. Prayer—Prayer is worship.
 - i. "The Christian worships God when he adores, confesses, praises, and supplicates him in prayer." New Bible Dictionary. <http://learningandtalent.intervarsity.org/spiritual-formation-prayer/spiritual-formation-training/solitude-and-silence>, <http://learningandtalent.intervarsity.org/spiritual-formation-prayer/prayer-training/some-ways-pray>
 - ii. Jesus' example. Often went away by himself to pray, Mark 6:46. Also in the Garden of Gethsemane, Mark 14:35
- d. Sabbath- Resting, see <http://learningandtalent.intervarsity.org/spiritual-formation-prayer/spiritual-formation-training/discipline-rest>
 - i. One of the 10 commandments, Exodus 20:8-11.
 - ii. Started by God's example when he created the world, Genesis 2:2, rested on the 7th day
 - iii. Good for our bodies, our bodies need rest, our bodies need to sleep. God was looking out for us when he designed things that way.
 - iv. Jesus' example. Mark 6:30, Jesus recognized the need to rest.

We don't have it all figured out, and we can't just be angry all the time. These things were given to us as gifts. And it takes discipline to keep doing them, just like an exercise program or diet. I know personally when I make the effort, I feel closer to God and I have more joy.

3. Effect of practicing spiritual practices

- a. Personally
 - i. You experience more joy and overall spiritual well being. Think of the fruit of the spirit, Galatians 5:22. These things are made possible when we are practicing practices of spending time with Jesus and hearing from him.
 - ii. When you make space for Jesus, you are able to hear his voice.
- b. For our community
 - i. You're not alone in this journey of life anymore.

"At the end of the day,
What will you choose?
Will you keep moving on,
Or be forced to lose?
Look inside of yourself,
Cause the power's in you,

There is always hope,
You're not alone anymore."
- *Of Mice & Men*

- ii. We are better able to hear from God as a whole about what our chapter needs to be pursuing and overall spiritual and relational health.
- iii. We can pray and intercede for one another.

CALL TO FAITH:

If you are a follower of Jesus:

How does God want you to start creating new habits?

The only way we make close friends is by spending time with them. Which of these 4 practices do you need to make a real part of your life?

Who could you ask to help keep you accountable to these things? Text them tonight and let them know about what you want to do and how they can help.

If you haven't yet chosen to follow Jesus:

Jesus wants to know you. This stuff about new wine and old wineskins is really just an analogy to show us that we need to change our habits. Our habits need to include Jesus. If you have never made that decision to give up our old way of doing things and start doing them Jesus' way, now's your opportunity to do that. And Jesus provided that opportunity for you by giving up his life. Would you choose him right now and join this community to begin figuring out these new habits together?

Pray!