MARK 2:1-12

Chapter two begins by showing the result of the man healed from leprosy telling everyone about his healing (1:45); people wanting healing mobbed the house where Jesus stayed (most scholars believe this is still the house in which Jesus healed St. Peter’s mother-in-law). The house was so crowded that four men, desperate to bring their paralyzed friend to Jesus, created an opening in the roof of the house and lowered their friend to the floor. Jesus was pleased by their faith, and healed the man.

The scribes were shocked by what they considered to be Jesus’ blasphemous forgiveness of the man’s sins, because only God can forgive sins. At first we may be puzzled by Jesus’ question in response to the scribes: is it easier to grant forgiveness or healing? He asked this because there is no immediate, obvious proof that a person has been forgiven of sins, whereas it is easy to tell whether a person has been healed. Jesus used the healing as evidence that He had the authority to forgive sins because, if He didn’t have this authority, the man would not have been healed.

FAST FACTS

- Jesus healed a paralyzed man who was lowered through the roof of the house where He was staying.
- Jesus refers to Himself as the “Son of Man,” a title first used in Daniel 7:13.
- Levi (St. Matthew), one of the disciples, was a tax collector when he was called by Jesus.
- Jesus ate with tax collectors and sinners at a party thrown by Levi, demonstrating that He came to call sinners to repentance.
- Jesus’ disciples didn’t fast because He was with them; He prophesied that they would fast when He left (in His Ascension).
- Jesus is the Lord of the Sabbath.

IT’S IN THE BIBLE...

The title “Son of Man” comes from Daniel 7:13, where a messianic figure comes down from God to exercise His rule. As we shall see, in St. Mark’s Gospel Jesus refers to Himself as the “Son of Man” in three ways: describing His activity and authority on earth (2:10, 28; 10:45), predicting His suffering and death (8:31; 9:31; 10:33), and prophesying His glorious return and rule (8:38; 14:62).

OUR FAITH TEACHES

The fact that Jesus is the Son of Man emphasizes that He is fully human, just as His being the Son of God (John 20:31) emphasizes that He is fully God. Jesus’ full humanity is very important for us as humans, as St. Symeon the New Theologian, a tenth century saint who defended Orthodox spirituality, explains:

_The purpose of the incarnate economy of God the Word, which is proclaimed by all the divine scriptures and which we read but do not understand, is surely summed up by saying that He has shared in what was ours to let us share in what was His. The Son of God became the Son of Man in order to make us men the sons of God. By grace He lifts up our race to what He is by nature. He gives birth to us from on high in the Holy Spirit, and then straightway leads us into the kingdom of heaven; or rather, He gives us the grace to have this kingdom within us. We therefore have more than just the hope of entering here; we really possess it as we cry out: ‘Our life is hidden with Christ in God’ (Colossians 3:3)._
WHAT DID I LEARN ABOUT FOLLOWING JESUS?

- What does it mean for me that Jesus Christ is fully human?
- What did Jesus tell the scribes at Levi’s party was the reason for which He came?
- St. Mark relates several of the things Jesus said about fasting and the Sabbath. How can I engage in fasting and observing a day of worship to deepen my relationship with God?