

# Abide in Me

*Mentored by the Master  
Discipleship in Real Time*



Volume 10 - Number 19

The Week of March 23, 2025

*Come and Follow*

**Which is Easier?**

Mark 2:1-12

The marvel of God's forgiveness is one of the most life-changing truths in all of Scripture. When a paralyzed man is lowered through the roof by his friends, Jesus declares his sins are forgiven. This shocking declaration stirs outrage among the religious leaders, who consider it blasphemy, for only God can forgive sins. Then, in order to prove His authority to forgive, Jesus tells the man to rise, take up his mat, and walk and the man is instantly healed.

When God forgives, He wipes the slate clean, lifts the burden of guilt, and heals the deep shame we carry. He doesn't just erase the record of wrongs—He transforms the heart. In Christ, we are made new, no longer defined by our failures, but by His mercy and grace. That is the true wonder of God's forgiveness.

## **OBSERVATION** (*What does the passage say and how does it say it?*)

Before your group meets, read the passage and perform the following prompts:

- Double underline all the temporal references.
- Circle all the verbs related to Jesus.
- Place a box around all the people mentioned.
- In the left margin of verse 5, write: *Jesus' Authority to Forgive*.
- In the left margin of verse 7, write: *The Scribes' Objection*.
- In the left margin of verse 10, write: *Jesus Proves His Authority*.

<sup>1</sup> And when he returned to Capernaum after some days, it was reported that he was at home. <sup>2</sup> And many were gathered together, so that there was no more room, not even at the door. And he was preaching the word to them. <sup>3</sup> And they came, bringing to him a paralytic carried by four men. <sup>4</sup> And when they could not get near him because of the crowd, they removed the roof above him, and when they had made an opening, they let down the bed on which the paralytic lay. <sup>5</sup> And when Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, "Son, your sins are forgiven." <sup>6</sup> Now some of the scribes were sitting there, questioning in their hearts, <sup>7</sup> "Why does this man speak like that? He is blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone?" <sup>8</sup> And immediately Jesus, perceiving in his spirit that they thus questioned within themselves, said to them, "Why do you question these things in your hearts? <sup>9</sup> Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Rise, take up your bed and walk'? <sup>10</sup> But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins"—he said to the paralytic— <sup>11</sup> "I say to you, rise, pick up your bed, and go home." <sup>12</sup> And he rose and immediately picked up his bed and went out before them all, so that they were all amazed and glorified God, saying, "We never saw anything like this!"

**INTERPRETATION** *(What does the passage mean?)*

1. What does Jesus do when all the people start crowding around Peter's home? Why is it important for us to know and remember this?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. What are some of the qualities you notice in the paralytic's friends? How does Jesus respond to them?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. Why does Jesus forgive the paralytic's sins before healing him? What does this teach us about our greatest need?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. How do the scribes react to Jesus' claim to forgive sins? Why do they view it as blasphemy?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
5. How does Jesus establish His credentials through the exchange in verses 7-11?
  - a. Jesus referred to Himself as the Son of Man. What does that mean and why would that be significant to everyone present—the disciples, scribes, and the crowd? (Read Daniel 7:13-14 for additional help).
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - b. How does the physical healing of the paralytic confirm Jesus' authority to forgive sins?

### APPLICATION *(How does the passage apply to our lives?)*

1. What are some of the things people around you believe they desperately need—whether emotionally, physically, or spiritually? How do these felt needs compare to what they need most?
2. Do you believe that the deepest need of every person is to be forgiven of their sin? How would you communicate this to a friend who doesn't yet believe in Christ? How do you explain the power of forgiveness?
3. Why do we often resist letting Jesus address the deeper issues in our hearts? What makes it easier to focus on surface-level problems rather than soul-level restoration?
4. What are some of the biggest obstacles that keep us from bringing others to Jesus? What would you be willing to do to help a friend encounter Jesus?
5. *Pause and reflect:* Have you grown numb to the wonder of being forgiven? Read Ephesians 2:1–3. Do you still see yourself as someone who was once spiritually dead—just like the man in the story? How does remembering that deepen your gratitude, stir your worship, and move you to action?

### LESSONS IN DISCIPLESHIP

- **Spiritual Priorities:** Disciples recognize that forgiveness is our greatest need.
- **Active Faith:** Disciples display trust in Jesus by bringing others to Him.
- **Glorifying God:** Disciples respond to Jesus' authority with worship and obedience.

Sermon Notes: *Which is Easier?*

Mark 2:1-12