

Grab a Corner

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[0 : 00] Let's turn to Mark chapter 2. Mark chapter 2, we are talking this month about first things first. And that is the new guy coming in, wanted you to know the priorities that stir me.

I wanted you to know what it is that sets my focus and seems to guide my direction as a pastor. Just to put it bluntly, I want you to know my heart. I want you to know what makes me tick and what gets me up in the morning because we're family.

I don't know everybody's name, but I've been to some family reunions like that before. So now I'm just trying to figure out who's the ones that bull through the lines and get all the food and then leave and don't speak to anybody.

You know, so those type of things. So we've been talking about first things first. We began to talk about the need of knowing that you are saved. There's doubt in your mind.

We need to nail that down because the reality is you won't grow. You won't share. You won't thrive in your Christian walk if you're struggling, whether it's even there or not.

[1 : 09] So you need to know that. And if you don't know the Lord Jesus today, I want you to know that of all the things that we talk about and all the things that we do, the most important thing that we want you to know is the Lord Jesus on a personal basis, surrendering your life to him.

So I believe it's important. I believe it's bedrock to know that you know the Lord, you're saved. Then if you do know him, I think you'll live for him.

That includes spending time daily with him. And we've shared that, a plan of reading the word of God daily and implementing that and allowing God to speak to you and use that in your life.

I'm going to speak to that again in coming days because I just believe that it ought to be a part of our life, you know, like brushing your teeth. And if you don't do that at least a couple times a day, you need to, okay?

You need to brush your teeth, but you also need to spend some time in God's word. So I believe it ought to be as natural as that. You know, when I say that, I think, well, some people may not think it's natural to brush their teeth, but I hope you do. And if you don't, your neighbor will let you know it.

[2 : 18] So, and then I think we ought to spur one another on because I promise you there's always going to be times of discouragement. There's always going to be times when we need one another and we try to hide that on Sunday, okay?

We try to look our best and we try to act like that all the pieces of our pie are in place and all those things. But the reality is we need the Lord Jesus and he established the church because we need one another.

And we need to be spurring one another on in so many different ways that we can do that. Today, I just want to encourage you to do a simple thing and that is grab a corner.

Just grab a corner. Mark chapter 2, beginning in verse 1, it says this. And when he, speaking of Christ, returned to Capernaum after some days, it was reported that he was at home.

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. And they came, bringing to him a paralytic carried by four men.

[3 : 35] And when they could not get near 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. And when Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, son, your sins are forgiven.

Now, some of the scribes were sitting there questioning in their hearts, why does this man speak like this? He's blaspheming. Who can forgive sins but God alone?

And immediately Jesus perceived in his spirit that those questioned within themselves, that they questioned within themselves. And said to them, why do you question these things in your heart?

Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, your sins are forgiven? Or to rise, take up your bed and walk? But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins. He said to the paralytic, I say to you, rise, pick up your bed and go home. And when 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.

[4 : 52] When Jesus entered Capernaum again, there was a buzz in the air. His reputation had preceded him.

Jesus was in town again. When he had previously been there, Scripture tells us that he had taught in the synagogue. After teaching and eating at Simon's house, literally across the street from the synagogue, the whole town came and more were healed.

He pulled up the next morning and went to pray. And when he got up, he went and preached in Galilee, that same region, that larger, greater region around Capernaum.

That is a beautiful area. All of it overlooks the Sea of Galilee. It is pretty rolling pasture. It smells of Jesus up there.

It's just a special spot. You can sense his influence. And still today, the Galilean people are different. There's a different flavor to them.

[6 : 01] There's a pleasantness about them, a different countenance than you see in other folks in that area. They look Galilean. They act Galilean. And when they first told me that, I didn't really understand what that meant.

But once I met them, I understood what they meant by that. It's pretty neat. And while this morning in our passage, he returns to Capernaum, he had taught folks.

He had healed folks. He had fellowship with folks. And they had spread the word about that. And folks were coming because they had spread the word about what God was doing.

While stopping at someone's house, a crowd began to gather and surround the place. And Jesus began to teach. It was a crowd.

An overwhelming crowd surrounded the house, hung in the windows, all those things. As much as they do wonderful in reaching out and how you need to take advantage of the opportunity, they didn't have Facebook ads in that day.

[7 : 07] And they didn't have yard signs in that day. They just had word of mouth. Now, I will say that we've got BBS yard signs. If they're still available, they're out there. Pick them up.

Put them in your yard. Invite some kid. Get off my lawn and come to BBS and learn of the love of Jesus. But the reality is, the best way to share the news of Jesus Christ is to tell somebody.

Just tell them. And that's what they had done. They told them. And the result of them telling that was a house that was overflowing with people.

Church, don't ever underestimate your influence. God has placed you here to use you here.

Tell somebody about Jesus. The evil one wants you to underestimate your influence.

[8 : 11] To say you don't know what to say. To worry about questions someone may ask. Just share what you know. The room was filled.

The doorway was filled. The windows were filled. People were everywhere. And there was a special need on the outer edge of the crowd. And thankfully that man had help.

He was a paralyzed man being carried on a cot by his friends. And they had a burden. They wanted this man well. They wanted this man well.

And when they heard of Jesus and they heard of his power, they wanted to get that man to Jesus.

When it comes to seeing lives changed by Christ, I believe we have a lot to learn from this account.

And I believe we ought to practice what we learn. He came to Christ because of his friends. He came to Christ because of his friends.

[9 : 12] He could not come on his own. He was physically unable to. Jesus may pass by him. But he was not going to pass by Jesus because the man was paralyzed. He was incapable of coming.

That reminds me of a spiritual, biblical concept in Romans chapter 3, 10 and following when it says, None is righteous, no, not one.

For no one understands, no one seeks for God. All have turned aside. Together they become worthless. No one does good. Not even one.

This man was physically incapable of coming to Christ. But there are a lot more that are spiritually incapable of coming to Christ. We are not brought unless we're drawn.

And God uses his own people through the Holy Spirit of God to help draw folks to Christ Jesus. You don't wake up to the fact one day that you need Jesus on your own. God always makes the initiative.

[10:13] And listen, he uses us believers in that process of making that initiation. He has commissioned us to join him in the task of bringing others to Christ.

It is his last words. I've been at the bedside of those who are dying. I've heard their last words. And people hang on the very end to see what it is they last say.

And Jesus, of all things, right before he ascended, told us to go. Just like the ladies sang just a few minutes ago. Go tell folks the difference that Christ makes.

He's commissioned us to do that. We ought to live by that. Now having said that, it is challenging today. It seems that less come to Christ.

Why? Because our country's filled with so many spiritual options. America is a melting pot that has brought in people from all over the world.

[11:11] And they brought their gods with them. And what we found is we have a spiritual mess on our hands. We are a very enlightened bunch. Plus, we've tried our best after breaking off from Europe.

We've tried our best to become more like Europe. And you know what? It's happening. It's happening. America feels too smart for God. We've become so open-minded our brains are falling out.

And another reason that happens is because Christians have decided, whether in their head or just in their practice, that they'll just keep their faith to their self.

They'll just mind their own. To be blunt, the devil is pulling out all the stops. To discourage Christians from sharing their faith and to allow lost people to stay lost.

If you're a Christian today, the devil can't have your soul, so he'll try to rip your testimony out of your life. And if you don't know the Lord Jesus, he don't want you to.

[12:29] The reality is, he is trying his best. And he'll oppress the Christian. He'll influence the society.

He'll indoctrinate the carnal man. The reality is, as the Apostle Paul tells us, we're in a war. And if we're not sharing Christ, we're losing that war. Most people will never come to know the Lord if Christian friends don't bring them to Christ.

He allows us to play a part in that process. We are responsible for that. We think it's none of our business when Scripture tells us that it is.

We think that they can see the Christ option clearly when Scripture tells us that they can't. Why can't they see it? John 1 verse 5 says that Jesus is the light that has shined in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it.

Never expect someone spiritually in the dark to become spiritually enlightened without the outreach of a Christian friend. God chooses to use us in that process.

[13:33] All folks in need must know the Savior that solves their needs. And God chooses to use believers. I want you to notice something else.

I want you to notice that his friends had to make an extreme effort. They had planned to lead him through, but the crowd was too great.

They couldn't get through. So they went to the nth degree. Four of them carried him up to the roof. Now typically, in that day, a house in that region would be a flat-roofed house.

And on the side of that house would be clay steps that led up the side of that house to allow them to get to a flat place. It's where you dried out things.

It's where you stored things. But they climbed up the top and began to tear through that roof, that roof of hay and dried mud, and that began to fall in that room with Jesus.

[14:41] Can you imagine the scene there as Jesus is teaching, and the roof is beginning to fall? What if the friends would have said, that's too much work? I mean, we tried.

We got him this far, but why bother going any further? What if the friends would have said, well, let's try again later? Or what in the world are people going to think?

A good question is, what will the owner think? I mean, you know. What will Jesus think? I mean, we're interrupting him. Maybe we ought to do this next time.

All of those reasons would have been unacceptable because it was a day of a miracle, and none of these friends knew when they got up that morning what they were going to see happen. You never

know what God is going to do and when he's going to do a miracle in somebody else's life, and he uses your effort to carry that out.

So the question is, what is too much? When have you went too far to lead one to Christ?

[15:57] When have you done too much to encourage somebody to come to Christ? When is it too much to do, to do our part, to keep somebody out of an eternal hell?

When do you give up trying on that? These guys show us, you don't stop. It's never too late. God chooses to work in the extreme efforts.

He chooses to use us in that process. And don't misunderstand me. God can save folks without us, but why should he have to? Why can't he involve us in that process after he's changed our life, we've committed our life to him, and he's commissioned us, empowered us, and promised us he'd be right there with us the whole time we go?

Why not get in on what God wants to do? And it is in those times that he often makes his greatest moves.

Notice the reason Jesus did what he did. I didn't put this in here. Verse 5 says he did it because of their faith.

[17:11] That's what it says. It does not say simply that man's faith. It says their faith. Don't look at me like that. I didn't put that in there.

It's in there. I didn't write it. Our faith, get this, our faith, our active faith, plays a role in changing the world for the Lord Jesus Christ.

I promise you. Could it be that we have given up too easily? Could it be that we've said there's no need to go to an extreme effort to reach somebody?

They did. And it worked. I want you to notice something else too. Jesus knew the man's greatest needs. He knew his greatest needs.

After they did all that, Jesus didn't even do what they wanted him to do. At least he didn't do it in an obvious way. He handled something else.

[18:10] Man had a physical condition. He couldn't move. He was paralyzed. Had to be carried on a cot by four friends. Torn through a roof and dropped down in the middle of that teaching spot.

And Jesus looked past his physical condition and saw his spiritual condition. And he first dealt with the spiritual condition. He ends up dealing with the physical condition, but just as an evidence of what he can do spiritually.

Because he was more concerned about the spiritual condition. By the way, he always is more concerned about the spiritual condition. We can make a prayer list all we want to.

We can pray for physical needs and God chooses to heal when he wants to heal. And he chooses to do it in a way, I ask him to do it in a way where we know it's been by his hand and we give him all the credit.

Not the medicine, not the doctor, not the hospital, that we get him the credit. Lord, make it obvious to us so we don't miss it that it's been by your hand.

[19:17] And thank God, we've seen him heal and we've seen him do wonderful things. But I promise you, he's always more concerned about the spiritual condition.

He's always more concerned about that. Yes, he healed this man as proof of what he could do in somebody's heart, but I bet nobody thought that was how it was going to go.

I want you to understand something. It is not our job to determine someone's greatest need. That is not our job.

It is not our job to qualify somebody. It is not our job to disqualify somebody. It is our job commissioned by Christ to get them to Jesus.

He'll work out the details. Just get them to Christ. If you'll get them to Christ, he'll work it out. We often think somebody needs to change their lifestyle first. They need to change the places that they go first.

[20:24] They need to act differently first. They need to show a concern for such things as that first. I want you to understand something and I want you to remember it.

Never forget that people without Jesus are without Jesus. Lost people are going to be lost and they're going to act lost. Don't expect any different.

The only hope they have is in Christ Jesus. If we could fix the things in our life that's broke, we would need a Savior. And so listen, if you're here today and you're waiting to fix some things in your life before you come to Christ, stop waiting.

It's not going to happen. And by the way, once you give your heart and life to Christ, you'll still find out that you're imperfect. You'll still find out that you can't get it all right.

And that is why, two weeks ago I said, let's spend daily time with the Lord, asking Him to empower us and strengthen us to rise above the frailties that so condemn our lives and that the devil kicks our teeth in about and that we are discouraged along the way about.

[21 : 39] Let's continue to bring those matters before God daily because then there's a relationship. We've established something real with the Lord that forever will change our lives.

But do not expect the world to act Christian when they're not Christian. It's not going to happen, folks. Don't worry about what God needs to do in somebody's life.

Get them to Jesus. Let them take care of it. Let Him take care of it. Listen. And when it comes to the decisions that people make today, when it comes to the persuasions that they follow, when it comes to how they mark their life in so many ways that make us sick to even think about, instead of condemning folks, let's get a burden for folks and realize the only hope they have is in the Lord Jesus.

Just bring them to Jesus. One more thing to notice. This is as much why I share this this morning as anything.

Many lives were changed by what they witnessed. Verse 12 says that He went out before them all.

[23 : 00] That paralytic that was now walking. Went out before them all so that they were all amazed and glorified God, saying, we never saw anything like this.

This transformation was not done in secret. People saw what took place and they couldn't help but share it. Do you know what is so powerful about when somebody comes to the Lord?

A life is changed for eternity. However, it does not only affect that person. It affects so many others.

Now, I will tell you just clearly honest, I'm a pastor at heart. Greatest concern I have about the kingdom of God is Pickens First Baptist Church.

that's where my heart is. That's my concern. Any strategic moves that I make besides personally with my walk with God, any strategic moves that I make spiritually in doing what I do for the Lord Jesus is in an effort to strengthen the body of believers and an effort to help the church become stronger.

[24 : 32] How does that happen? It becomes a reaching church. It becomes a church that's not afraid to walk across the street and invite a neighbor to come to church so that they'll hear the gospel when they come. It's not afraid to even initiate a conversation and ask somebody, let me ask you something.

Has there ever been a point in your life where you've come to the point in your life where you know for certain that you have eternal life and you'll go to heaven when you die? And if they say yes, then say, I love to hear people's testimony.

Can you tell me when and how that happened? Let them share with you how Jesus changed their life and if that's not the message they share, then share with them how Jesus can change their life. church, not only can you get involved in being a part of somebody coming to the Lord Jesus by that, but it changes your life and when your life is changed the overflow of that affects your household and the overflow of that affects your church and there begins to be a momentum built among God's people that we are looking out for our neighbors.

We are stepping up and taking the opportunity to do whatever we can to bring folks to Jesus.

There's an atmosphere that takes place with that.

[26 : 19] Full revival can start in a people when somebody walks down an aisle and gives his or her heart to the Lord Jesus Christ. Salvation is not to be done in secret.

It's to be done publicly. I just shared with somebody during Sunday school who had questions about their salvation and I said in Romans 10 9 when it says if you confess with your mouth Jesus is Lord. He's not talking about a private confession in the preacher's office. It's not what he's talking about. No, what the Apostle Paul is looking at is what was happening in the Roman Empire and in the Roman Empire at that time they were burning incense before some icon of Caesar and saying Caesar is Lord.

And then they could go on about and be a Roman citizen and have the right to shop and a right to live and the right to have the freedom within that empire. But when Christians were put in that spot, standing before some representative of Caesar and they burned that incense, instead they said in their own language, Kyrios Christo, which is Christ is Lord.

And because of that, they were thrown in jail. Because of that, they were put into exile. Ask John, the writer of Big John, Three Little Johns in Revelation.

[28 : 01] Or they lost their life. They lost their life. Or Nero, impaled their bodies and dipped them in tar and lit his garden with them.

Because they said Christ is Lord. Publicly. There's never a time when Christianity ought to be done in private.

is to be done publicly. Yes, you live it out privately, but oh, you let it shine publicly. And when we do that, and when we confess our faith before others, people get fired up.

Lost people get saved. Private Christians make their decisions public. Churches experience revival. The kingdom of God will grow. Heaven celebrates.

I believe the Lord shouts. Why? Because some friends went to the extreme to bring a man to Jesus. Because Jesus heals their deepest hurts.

[29 : 08] Because he cures the deepest wounds. Because he changed that man inside and out. And because there were a flock of folk watching it happen. That scripture tells us left there saying, dude, I ain't ever seen nothing like that.

I mean, I've heard some stuff. But I ain't ever seen nothing like that. Did you hear what happened? Tell you, I ain't never seen nothing like that.

It changed our lives. Let me remind you of the last thing Jesus said before he ascended. You know it well. It's Matthew 28, 19, 20. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to deserve all that I've commanded you.

Behold, I am with you always to the end of the age. The last thing he said. He closed out his earthly ministry and ascended into heaven to prepare a place for those who would surrender their lives to follow him because he thought it was the most important thing for us to do was to bring folks to Jesus.

Now the good news is this. You don't have to do it all. You don't have to do it all. God's the one that does the work.

[30 : 28] He's the one that changes lives. But God chooses to use us in that process. Andrew got changed by Christ.

He looked at Simon who later became Peter and said, hey, come and see this. Philip just did what God told him to do.

Listen to me. He just was sensitive to the Holy Spirit of God. He just listened to his leading. He went where God told him to go. And when he got to the crossroads, the man was searching the scriptures, trying to find an answer for a prophecy that proclaimed that Christ was coming and didn't understand it.

And when Philip shared with him what it meant, don't you all see God all over that? I mean, the man is struggling and searching on his own.

And God brings a man who's led by him to speak to him exactly where he is. And his life is changed. That's the divine appointment, folks. God loves making divine appointments.

[31 : 40] And he wants us a part of that. And some folks are going to scatter seed. And some folks are going to come behind that and water it.

And some folks are going to see the harvest come. I don't care if you're scattering or you're watering or you're harvesting.

Listen, let's just let it grow. Let it grow. You don't have to tote the whole man on your back. You just got to grab a corner. Just do something to share your faith with somebody else. And let God use us.

Don't misunderstand me. He can save the world without us. But man, I sure don't want him to. I want to be a part of it.

[32 : 46] I want us to be a part of it. Let's grab a corner and make a difference for the kingdom of God. With every head bowed and every eye closed, I think you know my burden is that if you're here this morning and you don't know the Lord Jesus, today's the day of salvation.

You come, we'd love to share with you what it means to give your heart and life to the Lord Jesus. He will forever change you, I promise. He is better than we are. Don't look at us as examples.

He's stronger and better and more real than we are, I promise you. And he'll change your life. You come to Christ with boldness. Don't wait. We'll stand and sing.

You don't sing a note. You just come. Maybe you're here and you do know you're a Christian, but you've done that privately. You've never made that public through baptism. You've never told anybody what God has done in your life.

Maybe just a handful of people know. You've never made that public through baptism. I want you to know the first step of obedience to follow Christ is through baptism. And the devil would love to keep you ashamed of the decision you made and afraid of the decision you made.

[33 : 56] I encourage you to come. Be bold. You will never know this side of eternity, the difference that it makes when you obey God and walk forward and are baptized. I always, 100% of the time, see lives changed because somebody else got baptized.

You don't need to do it if you've done it as a Christian, but if you've never done it as a Christian, you need to do it if you're saved today. Maybe God's leading you to be a part of this fellowship. How we'd love to allow you to join us in the journey.

Let us grow in the Lord together. Let us sharpen each other as iron sharpens iron. Let's be faithful to do that. I don't have a clue what God's telling you this morning.

I know what he told me to say and I trust him with the results. I just want you to be obedient. Just do what he tells you to do. Never do more than what he tells you to do. Never be satisfied with less.

Lord Jesus, I love you and I thank you for your word and I ask your God that you'll help us to live in response to it. Oh God, lay somebody on our heart right now, Father.

[35 : 02] Give us the boldness for it, Father, to follow through. Have your will and your way right now in our midst, Lord. In Jesus' precious name, amen.

Amen.