

"If Jesus FACEBOOKED ~ Debate over Forgiveness" [6.21.09]

Celebrate Father's Day ☺

Today we make a subtle transition in the life of Jesus. For this next series we will listen in on His debates with religious leaders of His day.

As He debates theologically-charged topics w/ the scholars of Judaism, we will learn much more about His purpose-mission than how to win an argument.

Turn with me to...

- I. The Debate over Forgiveness
  - A. Mark 2: 1 – 2a or p. 762 in pew Bible
  - B. Capernaum served as home base for Jesus' ministry in Galilee.
    - Capernaum is 20 miles northeast of Nazareth
    - For the majority of His ministry Jesus lived & ministered in about a 35 mile radius
      - Upon returning to Capernaum; news of His arrival spread quickly; Life in Palestine was very public ☺
      - In the morning the door of a family's home was opened & anyone who wished might come in & out; the only reason the door was ever shut was if the man of the house wished for privacy.
      - An open door was an open invitation for all to come in ☺
  - C. Mark indicates that the house Jesus was staying quickly filled up. In these humble homes, the capacity was no more than (50) people @ a time. By all probability this was Peter's home = (R) Mark 1: 29
    - As was the Jewish custom so many uninvited guests had crowded into the house & around the door, that no access into the house was available.
    - [Question] so what was Jesus doing in the house to draw such a crowd? Giving out money (or maybe) one miracle after another? NO...
  - D. Mark 2: 2b = "...He was preaching God's word to them."
    - Jesus was literally making scripture come alive before their very eyes; He was the 'Good News' in real time - living color!
    - His basic message remained the SAME as TODAY
    - He taught from the Hebrew Scriptures (OT prophets) that the long-awaited Messiah had come to break the power of sin & begin God's personal reign on Earth!
  - E. Mark 2: 2b – 5

4 men were carrying a paralytic man on a mat = poor man's bed. They couldn't reach Jesus because of the crowd and had to be creative.

    1. Like many Palestinian homes - - the house most likely had an outside stairwell leading to the flat roof.
      - a. After digging through it - a composite of grass & clay tiles - they made an opening above Jesus lowering the man w/fishing ropes that lay near.
      - b. [Don't miss this scene] Jesus is bringing it = 'the Good News,' & dirt starts falling from the roof hitting Jesus in the head;

- c. Everybody notices and the room gets dead silent; how will Jesus respond to this uninvited stranger interrupting His sermon ☺
2. Notice Jesus' reaction
- a. Can you imagine the look of fear on the poor man's face that was being lowered - - he had to be frightened @ how Jesus would respond.
  - b. & Jesus speaks = "My child, your sins are forgiven."
    - i. Interesting word choice = "My child..." is a term of affection.
    - ii. Little things that make me adore Jesus ☺
  - c. Matthew 9: 2 inserts the phrase, "Be encouraged, My child..."
    - i. Literally Jesus says, 'Don't be afraid, something good is going to happen.'
    - ii. Then, without a pause; Jesus says something very odd, "My child, your sins are forgiven."
    - iii. This had to be confusing to the paralytic man & his (4) friends; they had literally carried their friend in hopes that Jesus could heal him = make him walk; forgiveness of sins was the very last thing on their minds.
3. WHY would Jesus make such an audacious claim?
- a. Religious leaders were elated = they finally caught Him because every Orthodox Jew knew that only God can forgive sins!
  - b. (R) Mark 2: 6 - 7
    - i. According to their tradition, Jesus had committed blasphemy, which was punishable by death.
    - ii. (R) Numbers 15: 30 – 31= 4<sup>th</sup> book in the O.T.
    - iii. In their eyes Jesus had trapped Himself.
4. [Brief pause] there's lots of background info that's important for us to grasp:
- a. In the O.T. disease & death were viewed as the consequences of human beings sinful condition.
  - b. Healing was solely dependent upon God's forgiveness of their individual sins that they were being punished for.
  - c. (R) Isaiah 38: 16 – 17 or p. 546 in pew Bible
5. For me this idea of 'Divine Retribution' raises some difficult questions:
- a. 1<sup>st</sup> = Does this mean the paralyzed man was a sinner in some special sense & that his sin was the reason for his paralysis?
    - i. Have you ever wondered why the 4 friends took such pain-staking work to get their paralyzed friend to Jesus?
    - ii. Were they somehow responsible for him being crippled = i.e. got drunk one night & wrecked the family chariot?
    - iii. [High school graduation] one of my classmates; Jerry & I went to grade school together; he got drunk the night of graduation; went to the lake & dove in; snapped his neck = has laid in his hospital to this day not able to roll over by himself = so sad? His poor decision did lead to his condition ☹
  - b. 2<sup>nd</sup> = Does it mean instead that all sickness is somehow linked to sin so that dealing with the one always has some bearing on the other?

- i. Neither the Gospels of Mark nor Matthew address this issue.
- ii. However the Gospel of John dispels any mystery surrounding this question = (R) John 9: 1 – 3

F. (R) Mark 2: 8 – 12

Notice how gently Jesus sets the hook & then jerks the line = reeling them in ☺

Any impostor could say, “Your sins are forgiven.” because the words of this person are completely unverifiable = no way of validating them.

But to say “Get up and walk” was to say something that was easily validated: If someone couples the forgiveness of sins (which is invisible & unseen), to physical healing (which is visible & verifiable).

v. 10 “...I will prove that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins.”  
 FORGIVENESS - being right with God - is common ground that most of us share  
 @ a deep intimate level.

II. Biblical Forgiveness

A. The N.T. has (2) distinct words translated “forgive.”

1<sup>st</sup> word = has to do with mending broken relationships.

When we say that we have forgiven a person, we mean that we have renewed our relationship despite the wrong that the person did, but we can’t erase or change the act itself ☺

2<sup>nd</sup> word = goes far beyond human forgiveness; it includes the ‘putting away’ of sin.

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B. ‘Being right with God’ is a UNIVERSAL NEED!

If Jesus had only healed the man’s crippled body & not dealt with his sinful condition, the man would have been ultimately worse. There’s a great deal of false teaching out there on how to be ‘right with God’ ☺

C. Cults & World Religions = works based Theology

All cults & world religions offer a works based salvation (I personally know of no exceptions). Salvation is like a carrot on a string; never truly obtainable. No one outside of Christianity has any assurance of salvation except Jihadist martyr

The idea of God’s grace & forgiveness being earnable is totally unbiblical!

III. Biblical Salvation

A. [Question] who would look @ the cross of Christ & say, ‘Great work, Jesus. Sorry you couldn’t finish it, but I’ll take up the slack.’?

Dare we question the crowning work of God or believe for 1 minute that Heaven needs our help saving us?

B. (R) Romans 3: 22 – 27a or p. 859 in pew Bible = Paul’s answer

That's GRACE = that's the major difference between Christianity & every other world religion + cult.

Cults and religions are = human beings attempting to reach out & touch God;  
Christianity is = God's reaching down to touch our hearts!

Concluding thoughts;

I love how Jesus spoke to the paralytic man, "Child, God is not angry with you. Come home and don't be afraid!"

Your salvation proves God's mercy & love for YOU:

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