



GracePoint: A Weekly Sermon Discussion

20 – A Different Emphasis

Announcements:

3/7 @6:30 -

*Men's Discipleship
Group*

3/9 @7:00 -

*Corporate
Prayer*

3/10 @6:30 -

Grace Group

3/13 @7:00 -

Sunday School

ICE BREAKER: When relating what has happened, are you a story teller or do you like to keep it short and simple?

READ: Matthew 9:1-7

One fun thing to do is take a simple sentence and read it multiple times with an emphasis on a different word each time. Something like “I didn’t steal the pen” can mean something very different each time when a different word receives all the attention. “I didn’t steal the pen” leads me to think someone else did. “I didn’t *steal* the pen” leads me to think that possibly I lost it or just “borrowed” it. “I didn’t steal *the pen*” sounds like I probably stole something else. So too there is a great beauty when we understand that the different Gospel writers (specifically the

synoptic writers: Matthew, Mark, and Luke) often would relate the same story with a different emphasis. For Matthew, the healing of the paralytic is a chance to cap off the amazing authority of Jesus, he is the one who has ALL authority. Mark has a slightly different emphasis, and that is what I would like to look at today.

READ: Mark 2:1-12

The first difference we might notice is that Mark’s telling is much longer, and he uses many more details. This is actually important because in general Mark is a shorter book, with shorter sections. What is one of the details Mark includes? Well, it is what makes Mark’s telling of this miracle a favorite Sunday School lesson! The friends. Mark wants us to see and understand the great love that accompanies the faith of those who would rip a hole in someone’s roof and drop their paralyzed friend into a room full of people. This is not some chance meeting that brings the paralytic in front of Jesus, but rather the love, care and determination of some men on behalf of their friend. Some of the most powerful calls to evangelism and sharing one’s faith are told by those preaching Mark’s telling of this story, and for good reason. We should be inspired to do what it takes, make waves, go to even extremes for just the opportunity to put those we love and care of “in front” of Jesus, to have the opportunity to share with them the healing hope of the Gospel and show them our amazing savior. These friends are truly worthy of admiration and imitation.

DISCUSS: What might it look like for us to go to extremes to share the Gospel with the people around us?

But the difference that drives us to see the purpose behind why both men put this narrative where they did can be seen at the very end of both. In Matthew, God is given glory because he “gave such authority to men” (verse 8) In Mark they also glorify God, but the reason is a little different. “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!’” (verse 12). And here then is the beauty of a different emphasis. Matthew calls us to see the AUTHORITY of Christ that he is God. He is answering the question once again “what sort of man is this?” But Mark wants us to see the UNIQUENESS of Christ. That he, and he alone, can do any of these things.

DISCUSS: Why do you think it is important for both of these thoughts (the authority AND the uniqueness of Christ) to be shown?

However, it is important that we don’t overstate the differences to the detriment of what ties these together. By and large they are the same, it is a paralytic who is healed, Jesus forgives his sins, people wonder and then they glorify. But to close I would like to look at one thing that is identical in both: that Jesus understands what is in the hearts of those around him when they doubt his ability to forgive sins (Mark 2:8 Matthew 9:4). Both men want us to understand, in the midst of everything else going on, that Jesus is in the heart seeing, heart hearing, and heart *healing* business. What lies as the central tenet of both of these tellings is that Jesus knows our hearts (and therefore our sins) and yet he forgives us. It is an incredible telling of what is truly the greatest miracle of all, that our sins, wretched and awful as they may be, can be forgiven if we trust in the uniquely authoritative Jesus!

DISCUSS: How can we live with this thought being the emphasis of our lives?