

STUDY NOTES

UNPOPULAR THINGS A SERIES *at* NEW CITY CHURCH

www.newcityphx.com/sermons

The following content is based on the message “The Demands of Forgiveness” on 11/5/17 at New City Church in Phoenix, AZ. The following is not meant to be a full synopsis but rather a brief look at the main ideas. To use this Study Guide effectively you must listen to the message found at <http://newcityphx.com/sermons/>.

Leaders using these Study Notes for group study and reflection should read the Biblical text thoroughly before beginning, using this resource as assistance and not relying solely on this material for insight. We encourage all leaders to pray and ask the Spirit for revelation as they lead their respective community groups.

PRAYER

Pray and ask God to lead the discussion as everyone gets to share.

SCRIPTURE: MARK 2:1-12

RECOGNIZING OUR NEED FOR FORGIVENESS

We often don't see our sin or our need for forgiveness and Jesus chose this guy to display this deep human need that we all have. We would probably say that it would be better to have our physical lives fixed. But just like the scribes, we'd be missing was just how deep the healing that Jesus offers. Jesus is saying that sin—not his physical ailment—was the ultimate issue for this man. We have underestimated the depths Jesus wants to take us.

The main problem in our lives is not our suffering, but our sin.

- *How do you fill in the following blanks? “If I only had _____, then I'd feel whole.” Or “When I finally get _____, then I'll be content.”*

Most of us are surface-oriented looking for something from the physical world to save us. We are looking for something in this world to fix us and when we don't have it, we get mad, indignant or depressed. What we don't realize is that it is God, Himself, who will make us whole!

When we meet God, we want him to give us what will make us whole, but what we don't realize it is that it is He, Himself, that makes us whole.

- *In what ways, would you say that you've wanted to use God to provide you with physical things to make you whole?*

RECEIVING FORGIVENESS

In this passage, the Scribes believed that the man was paralyzed because of his sin. Sin does cause death and disease, but this man was not paralyzed because of HIS sins. Today, we are more sophisticated (we know that his paralysis was not because of his sin), but just like the scribes, legalism can creep in and we judge. Church people are some of the most judgmental people. Jesus sees the heart and forgiveness must be received from the heart. Jesus reads it and grants forgiveness. Faith allows us to enter into the forgiveness that we need.

If you find yourself judging everyone, what you may find is that you've found religion, not Jesus.

- *Why can it be difficult for you to accept the forgiveness that Jesus gives?*
- *How could it be difficult for you to see someone else receive Jesus's forgiveness?*

GIVING FORGIVENESS

Just like we've been set free by receiving forgiveness, we are also set free by granting forgiveness. Forgiveness always requires something to die, and that something is often a part of you. The most painful thing that we must do is to give up our right to whatever it is to which we think we have a right. The results of unforgiveness are bitterness, wrath, anger, and slander. **Read Ephesians 4:31-32.**

- *How have you experienced the effects of unforgiveness?*
- *Why is it so hard to forgive someone? How does offering forgiveness feel like you are letting yourself die?*
- *How have you experienced freedom by offering forgiveness to someone else?*
- *Pray with each other for strength to forgive who we might need to forgive in our lives.*