

**Mark 2:1-12**  
**Life Saving Community**

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COVID 19 has given us a new perspective about the world we are living in.

Firstly, this pandemic has showed us that the world is connected. Developed countries are connected to developing countries. The wealthy are connected to the poor. White people, Asian people, black people are connected. Women and men are connected. Old people and young people are connected. So, the pandemic has taught us that if I want to be safe, the people around me must also be safe and healthy.

Secondly, this pandemic has showed us that despite people being deeply connected to each other, they can still live without physical contact. In Melbourne, food delivery services were not very popular until the pandemic occurred. It is the same with online shopping. People are trying to avoid physical contact with each other. People are even trying to live their faithful life in this way. The community is at risk of disappearing.

In this way, there is something else that has played a similar role to COVID 19. Unfortunately, it is Christianity.

Christianity has taught us the truth that even without blood relationship, or lawful connections, we can still be a family. Christianity has introduced to us that despite our different colours, different cultural backgrounds, different parents, in Christ we can be one family. Christianity has gave us an insight that through Jesus Christ, we can call God our Father and become one body, one family. Through the Babel Tower incident, people had the instinct that we must gather with our own kind. However, through the coming of the Holy Spirit on the Pentecost, we saw that we can be one

despite our differences. Christianity created a great turning point in human history, that we can live together with our differences.

However, in contrast to these positive outcomes, Christianity has also had some negative impacts. Although it is not what Christianity wanted, there were also side effects. It was an excessive individualistic tendency. The strongest point that Christianity focuses on is “only faith”. We are saved only through faith. Humans cannot meet God’s standard no matter what we do. The only way that humans can meet such standards are to accept the things God has done for us. However, at this point, there was one problem. The doctrine, “only faith” has resulted in excessive emphasis on the relationship between God and one individual. This relationship has become something that no one else can intervene with, it is only about one person’s faith. I believe the reason why the word “individual” appeared in Europe before anywhere else in the world is because of Christianity. Christianity has weakened the unity of our community. I think Australia is a key example of this tendency.

I believe that in relation to these problems, the story of Jesus healing a paralysed man reveals a new way that we must follow.

Let’s look at the things that Jesus did in this passage.

### **Jesus recovered the value of community.**

Verse 5 says “when Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralysed man “Son, your sins are forgiven””. In the passage, there is nothing that the paralysed man did. He did not come to Jesus on his own feet. He did not show any faith to Jesus. There is no clue whether this man is faithful or

not. Rather, Jesus claims that He forgave the paralysed man not because of his own faith, but because of the faith of the people who brought him.

There are people who argue that God has predestined the people who will be saved. You might also think so. These people don't evangelise. They don't pray for others to be saved. It is because they think that there is no need to. They believe that God has already decided, and only God can save. I think that this is the negative aspect of Christianity

However, the passage shows that Jesus says something different to our thoughts. He says that through someone else's faith, we can be forgiven. Our life and our faith is safe when we overcome individualism. If your toes hurt, your entire body hurts. If your toes heal, your entire body heals. In the same way, community is connected.

Even in Jesus' time, people were busy with their own lives. They were focused on their own salvation, and their own success. However, when Jesus came, a new atmosphere was created. People started to feel not only their own pain, but also the pain of others in their community.

When Jesus comes into a community, a new community full of love, forgiveness, dedication and sacrifice is created. I hope that Jesus comes to our congregation like this too. This is the community that the passage shows us. In the end, Christianity has never pushed us to excessive individualism. Rather, Jesus called us to live as a faithful community.

Then what can we do from seeing the things that Jesus did?

**We must become a life-saving community.**

We must invite Jesus into our community, we must help the community members to come to Jesus.

Through the passage, we discovered that through someone's effort and dedication, people can come to Jesus. We confirmed that through one community's faith, a dying person can be born again. We experienced that people's needs can be filled. We must pray with the heart and faith of the people who brought the paralysed man. People can return to God through our faith. Community members who have no faith can be raised through our faith. A faithless family member can return to God through faithful families. Our congregation can play that role.

Loving brothers and sisters, I bless that through your efforts and dedication, we can see the glory of God. Let's go ☺

Rev Paul Ryu