Barriers To Blessings
Mark 2:1-12 (NKJV)

Please turn with me in your Bibles to tonight’s scripture text in the Gospel of Mark chapter two.

Mark 2:1-12 (NKJV)

1 And again He entered Capernaum after some days, and it was heard that He was in the house.

2 Immediately many gathered together, so that there was no longer room to receive them, not even near the door. And He preached the word to them.

3 Then they came to Him, bringing a paralytic who was carried by four men.

4 And when they could not come near Him because of the crowd, they uncovered the roof where He was. So when they had broken through, they let down the bed on which the paralytic was lying.

5 When Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytic, “Son, your sins are forgiven you.”

6 And some of the scribes were sitting there and reasoning in their hearts,

7 “Why does this Man speak blasphemies like this? Who can forgive sins but God alone?”

8 But immediately, when Jesus perceived in His spirit that they reasoned thus within themselves, He said to them, “Why do you reason about these things in your hearts?

9 Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, ‘Your sins are forgiven you,’ or to say, ‘Arise, take up your bed and walk’?

10 But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins”—He said to the paralytic,

11 “I say to you, arise, take up your bed, and go to your house.”

12 Immediately he arose, took up the bed, and went out in the presence of them all, so that all were amazed and glorified God, saying, “We never saw anything like this!”
I want to talk to you for a few minutes tonight about “barriers,” more specifically “Barriers to Blessings.”

At some time or another we have all come upon a barrier or barricade on the highway where a road crew was doing road construction. That barrier was there for two reasons: One to prevent us from entering the area where the construction crew was working on the road; and two, to re-route us in a different direction.

Or let’s say you have been out shopping and it’s almost time for the stores to close. You have one last stop to make. You pull up in front of the store you need to go in. The lights are still on. You see people inside. But when you go to the entrance door you find it locked. The store has just closed. That locked door is the “barrier” that keeps you from getting in.

One of the favorite tourist attractions here in North Carolina is the “Outer Banks,” also known as “The Barrier Islands.” Those Barrier Islands are the only thing preventing the Atlantic Ocean from coming to our mainland.

Background to Mark 2:1-12

In our scripture text we encounter a man who encountered some “barriers” on his way to receiving the wonderful blessing of HEALING and FORGIVENESS.

This true story takes place in the city of Capernaum, which was located on the northern shores of the Sea of Galilee.

We learn in March chapter one that Jesus had begun His public ministry in this city. It was here Jesus taught in their synagogue, and healed a demon possessed man. It was in Capernaum Jesus healed Peter’s mother-in-law of a fever, and healed multitudes of people with various kinds of diseases.

From Capernaum, Jesus traveled all over the region of Galilee preaching and teaching the truths about the kingdom of heaven. And throughout that region Jesus performed many miracles.
As Mark chapter two opens, Jesus has returned to Capernaum after his Galilean preaching tour, and **VERSE 1** tells us, “And it was heard that He was in the house.” This is probably a reference to Peter’s house, where Jesus had healed his mother-in-law earlier.

Today we hear that phrase “in the house” a lot to describe the presence of some band or solo artist in an arena or stadium.

**VERSE 2** tells us when people found out “JESUS WAS IN THE HOUSE” a crowd soon gathered inside “the house.” And we are told the house was so packed they couldn’t get one more person inside. And Jesus began to preach.

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In the meantime another scene is beginning to unfold. Let’s pick up the record in **VERSES 3 and 4** ......

3 Then they came to Him, bringing a paralytic who was carried by four men.

4 And when they could not come near Him because of the crowd, they uncovered the roof where He was. So when they had broken through, they let down the bed on which the paralytic was lying.

Right in the middle of this preaching service, four men show up carrying a paralyzed friend on a cot or pallet. They believe that if they can get this man to Jesus that He can heal him.

But when they arrived at the house THEY ENCOUNTERED A BARRIER TO RECEIVING THE LORD’S BLESSING, and that “barrier” was the huge crowd.

CROWDS OF PEOPLE can be a real barrier. Take for example on BLACK FRIDAY after Thanksgiving, and you go to a store to get a “super deal” on some item you are wanting to buy for Christmas. But between you and that “super deal” is a crowd of people who are there for the same reason you are. That crowd is a barrier to getting your blessing.

The four men desperately wanted to get their paralyzed friend to JESUS to receive his blessing of healing. But the CROWD was a huge barrier!
But there was another BARRIER and that was THE ROOF.

Now to understand this scene you have to get a mental picture of the way houses were constructed in Jesus’ day.

Houses in those days were typically small, one room structures. Most homes were made with flat roof which were usually made by laying timbers across the top of the house. The timbers would then be covered by a layer of branches. Then the branches were covered by a layer of clay tiles, and finally a thick layer of clay mud was placed over the tiles. It was then rolled and pressed until it became hard and rain proof.

On the outside of the house was a stone or hardened clay stairway that went from the ground to the roof. Jewish families typically used their roof like we would use a deck today.

When the four men realized they couldn’t get their paralyzed friend to Jesus because of the crowd. They carried him up that outside stairway to the roof of the house. Now keep in mind what I just told you about the way that roof was constructed. Breaking through that ROOF BARRIER was no easy task. But layer by layer the four men began to make an opening.

Now put yourself inside that house for just a moment. Jesus is preaching and you are standing there shoulder to shoulder with a room full of people. And you hear this a bunch of racket going on up on the roof. Pretty soon you SEE A HOLE APPEAR RIGHT ABOVE WHERE JESUS IS STANDING. As Jesus continues to preach the hole gets bigger and bigger and pretty soon you see the faces of FOUR MEN peeking down on you from the roof top. And the next thing you know YOU ARE SEEING A PARALYZED MAN BEING LOWERED THROUGH THE OPENING RIGHT TO THE SPOT WHERE JESUS WAS STANDING.

The persistent FAITH of those four men had broken through THE BARRIERS, and then notice the sequence of THE BLESSINGS the paralyzed man received.
THE FIRST BLESSING was the blessing of FORGIVENESS. (v.5)

5 When Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytic, “Son, your sins are forgiven you.”

Look carefully at the wording of Jesus.

*First, Jesus addressed him as “SON.” When Jesus spoke to this man He tenderly addressed him as A FAMILY MEMBER.

*Secondly notice Jesus said, “YOUR SINS ARE FORGIVEN YOU.” Let’s not miss a valuable scriptural truth here. The greatest barrier that paralyzed man encountered that day was NOT THE CROWD and it wasn’t THE ROOF. The GREATEST BARRIER that stands between MAN and JESUS is SIN.

It is only when we come to JESUS and have the BARRIER OF OUR SINS removed that we can come into sweet fellowship with Christ and enjoy His richest blessings.

Well we learn in VERSES 6-10 there were a few “party poopers” in the crowd.

6 And some of the scribes were sitting there and reasoning in their hearts,

7 “Why does this Man speak blasphemies like this? Who can forgive sins but God alone?”

8 But immediately, when Jesus perceived in His spirit that they reasoned thus within themselves, He said to them, “Why do you reason about these things in your hearts?

9 Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, ‘Your sins are forgiven you,’ or to say, ‘Arise, take up your bed and walk’?

10 But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins”—He said to the paralytic,
If you recall from our study in **ACTS** the scribes were the ones who copied down the scriptures. They were bosom buddies with the legalistic, self-righteous Pharisees. In fact, the Pharisees had likely sent the scribes to Peter’s house that day to keep a close eye on Jesus.

You notice in **VERSE 6** the scribes didn’t realize Jesus could see what was going on inside their hearts. Like a bunch of cowards they kept their mouths closed, but inside their hearts they were accusing Jesus of blasphemy because He had forgiven the paralyzed man of his sins.

Knowing the scribes were judging him in their hearts, JESUS confronted them with a question:

9 Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, ‘Your sins are forgiven you,’ or to say, ‘Arise, take up your bed and walk’?

In essence what Jesus was saying was, “Anyone can say the words your sins are forgiven, but the real test is for the crippled man to rise up and walk.”

You see, if Jesus gave the command for the paralytic to “rise up and walk” and he just laid there, it would prove that Jesus had neither the power to forgive or to heal. But if Jesus told the paralytic to “rise up and walk” and he did so, it would prove that Jesus had **to FORGIVE SINS and HEAL.**

That brings us to **THE SECOND BLESSING** the paralytic received that day. Look at **VERSES 10-12.**

10 But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins”—He said to the paralytic,

11 “I say to you, arise, take up your bed, and go to your house.”

12 Immediately he arose, took up the bed, and went out in the presence of them all, so that all were amazed and glorified God, saying, “We never saw anything like this!”

I love this! Jesus heals the paralytic, and he simply stands up, picks up his mat, elbows his way through the crowd and goes home. **This time, the CROWD was no longer a BARRIER TO HIS BLESSING.**
APPLICATION

All of us would agree that the LORD has richly blessed our lives. But is it possible we are missing out on even greater blessings because there are barriers standing in our way?

(A) For one, there is the barrier of prayerlessness.

James 4:2 (NKJV) You lust and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war. Yet you do not have because you do not ask.

There are blessings the Lord longs to give us, but we choke off those blessings by our failure to ask for them.

Like the hymn says,

Oh what peace we often forfeit,  
Oh what needless pain we bear,  
All because we do not carry,  
Everything to God in prayer.

Perhaps you are going through a difficult time right now. Maybe you are faced with a major decision. Perhaps you are dealing with a serious health issue or going through a family crisis.

Maybe the only thing standing between you and the Lord’s blessing is the barrier of prayerlessness. You can break through that barrier by “asking” ...not once, not twice, but by persistently asking until the Lord gives you His blessing.

(B) Another barrier that often stands between us and the Lord’s blessings is the barrier of worldliness.

The apostle Paul mentions one such man in II Timothy chapter 4.

v. 9, 10a Paul said, “Be diligent to come to me quickly; for Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world.”
Demas was a young man who had heard the apostle preach and was inspired to leave everything and follow Paul everywhere he went to preach the gospel. And for a time, Demas had been very helpful to Paul. But once the “new” wore off, Demas forsook Paul and went back to the ways of the world.

One can only imagine the great blessings Demas robbed himself of had he not allowed worldliness to become a barrier between himself and the Lord.

Likewise, worldliness stands as a barrier between many Christians and the Lord’s blessings.

James 4:4, 5 says, “Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.”

Is there a barrier of worldliness between you and the Lord’s blessings this evening?

Another barrier that often stands between a Christian and the Lord’s blessings is the barrier of an unforgiving spirit.

Matthew 6:14, 15 (NKJV)

14 “For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.

15 But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

All of us get hurt by people from time to time. People say things or do things that hurt our feelings. People wrong us or take advantage of us, knowingly or unknowingly. Sometimes people don’t follow through on their promises.
Well when you have been wronged you have a choice to forgive or NOT to forgive. If you choose NOT to forgive. If you choose to “bear a grudge” and “wear a chip on your shoulder,” **YOU WILL HAVE BUILT A BARRIER BETWEEN YOU AND THE LORD THAT WILL NOT BE REMOVED UNTIL YOU FORGIVE THE ONE WHO HAS WRONGED YOU.**

Once you break down that barrier, God will open the “flood gates” of His blessings into your life!

**CONCLUSION**

There are many other **BARRIERS** that can stand between us and the LORD’S blessings.

There’s ........

**THE BARRIER OF SECRET SIN.**
**THE BARRIER OF A REBELLIOUS SPIRIT.**
**THE BARRIER OF A CRITICAL OR JUDGMENTAL SPIRIT.**
**THE BARRIER OF SELF-RIGHTEOUS PRIDE.**
**THE BARRIER OF A LUKEWARM SPIRIT.**

As we have seen from our study this evening, the only thing that can break through the barriers and open the door to the Lord’s blessings is to come to Christ with a **PERSISTENT, DETERMINED FAITH.**

If there is a barrier between you and the LORD tonight, BY FAITH, why don’t you tear that barrier down?