

WHAT HAS CHRISTIANITY TO OFFER TO THE WORLD?—HOPE

Mark 2:1-12

July has been a good month for Me.
I have been on vacation. helping my children
Painting and fixing up the inside of their houses.
But also getting to see my grandchildren.

But July has been a sad month.
Every day I watch the escalating war in the Middle East
The bombardment of Israel and Lebanon.
Escalating number of refugees.
The casualties of children and others.

But that is just the beginning of our sadness.
As **Iraq and Afghanistan** continue to be battlegrounds.
Iran and North Korea continue their buildup of hatred and Nuclear war.
Almost every corner of the world there is a war.
Add to that the **bird flue plague**
Also the **11 million people** starving people who need Food emergencies in Africa
The **Aids** epidemic in Botswana where the infection rates
is now 39% of the adult population

What does Christianity have to offer to this world?

Our crises is not somewhere else
As we pick up the paper and read of drought stalking most of SD.
Farmers in financial distress,
Divorce is rampant.
Sickness and disease escalating.
In July we buried a young father.
And also placed a 60 year old woman in an Alheizers unites
Add to that the confusion of family member who hurt themselves
In alcohol, drugs, gambling and even shopping binges and
You know as well as I do, that LIFE hurts.
And if you are not hurting now,
it is just time before something comes your way.
It is not IF, but WHEN.

WHAT DOES CHRISTIANITY HAVE TO OFFER TO THIS WORLD?

The good news today is that Christianity offers the world-

I. HOPE IN CHRIST.

Jesus had been traveling with the disciples.

In Mark 2 ¹A few days later, when Jesus again entered Capernaum, the people heard that he had come home. ²So many gathered that there was no room left, not even outside the door, and he preached the word to them. Mark 2:1-2

The people came to see Jesus because they were hurting.
 These people were suffering because they
 Lived in a world before cataract surgery, heart transplants,
 Aspirin, penicillin, and antibiotic were heard of.
 So they died of fevers and flues, of break and blood clots
 Many without hope.

Just a few days before they had heard and seen Jesus
 Heal a leper,
 Cast out demons and evil spirits.
 And healed Peter's mother in law with a fever.

Well Jesus is back in Capernaum
 And he is at Peter's home,

Mark 1:32 says:

That evening after sunset the people brought to Jesus all the sick and demon possess. The whole town gathered at the door. And Jesus healed many who had various diseases...and drove out many demons. Mark 1:32-34

The whole town gathered at the door to see Jesus
 Because he offered HOPE to them.
 If I would have lived at the that time.
 I would have been at that door.
 Because when you live in a hopeless world.
 Were desperate for help.

The hope for the world is that

1. If we feel lost: Turn to Jesus.

For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost. Luke 19:10

2. If we feel defeated – Christ is our victory.

I Corinthians 15:57 Thanks be to God. He gives us the victory though our Lord Jesus Christ.

3. If we feel overwhelmed:

Christ is our encourager.

I John 4:4 Greater is he that is in you then he that is in the world.

4. If we feel anxious Christ takes our hand

Isaiah 41:13 For I am the Lord, your God who takes hold of your right hand and says to you Do not fear; I will help you.

5. If we feel separated from God: Christ is our mediator.

Heb. 9:15 for this reason Christ is the mediator of a new covenant, that those who are called may receive the promise eternal inheritance.....

6. If we are lost in our sins: Christ is our sacrificial lamb.

“Behold, the lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. John 1:29

7. IF we are facing death: Christ is our resurrection and the life.

John 11:25 I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live even though he dies, and whoever lives and believes in me will never die.

I listened to a young Palestinian being interviewed
in the midst of the war in the middle east.
In the middle of the bombing and terrorist attacks.
He said: The real hope of the world
is not in negotiations.
It is not in the United Nations,
It is not in bombs
It is in Jesus Christ. He is the true prince of peace.
This young Palestinian had it right.
Jesus is the hope of Peace.

Contrast that with Bob Brown's Divinci Code claim that
"The deity of Jesus was invented at the Council of Nicea (325 A.D.)."

What Christianity offers is hope.

I. HOPE IN CHRIST.

Paul writes to the **Colossians 1:27 Christ in you the hope of glory.**
That is the hope of Christianity.

CHRISTIANITY OFFERS HOPE IN

II. PEOPLE WHO HELP

Christians are called to love their neighbor.
That means to help.
So it was that four men came to Jesus.

³Some men came, bringing to him a paralytic, carried by four of them. Mark 2:3

the Good news we have- is not only hope.
But a helping hand.
People should be coming to the church when life hurts.
To be surrounded by people who help.

That's what is to make Christianity a blessing.
We are to love our neighbor as God loved them.
That means to help not hinder them.

Pat McMahon, a talk-show host in Phoenix, once interviewed Mother Teresa for his program. He was so impressed with her that afterward he told her that he wanted to do something for her. "I'd just like to help you in some way," he said. She said to him, "Tomorrow morning get up at 4:00 a.m. and go out onto the streets of Phoenix. Find someone who lives there and believes that he's alone, and convince him he's not."

Friend even today there are people here who believe they are all alone in this world.
God has sent you to help.

The world has enough people out there who will stand in your way
from seeing God or good.
Some what to play with you some even want to pray with you.
Others are just mean spirited.

A tourist in New England stopped at a small service station and asked directions to a certain town. Given the directions, the tourist drove on. An hour later, he found himself at the same service station. "What the heck's going on?" the tourist roared. The service station owner answered, "Just wanted to see if you could follow directions."

The four men couldn't get to Jesus because of the people
The house was already full of them.
Some of them weren't friendly.
They were there to find any way to discredit Jesus.

I am ashamed of the group that calls itself Christian
And protests with words of hatred and signs of prejudice
at the graveside of our soldiers who have died in the war.
There are some people who love nothing better then
Use their power to distract you from Jesus.
from the very power and resources
That can bring you life.

But we are Children of HOPE.
We are called to love and help our neighbor

This past week. Some of the people who came to the Rummage
Sale parked in the lot to the north. And when they came out their
Car was towed. One little lady was frantic she couldn't find her car.
She didn't have anyone to call.
She felt all alone. In despair.
One of our Godly ladies.
Drove her to get her car.
And then when she didn't have enough money to pay her tow.
She paid. Friends,
The good Samaritan is still alive today in Aberdeen at FIRST UMC

Four men brought the Paralytic to Jesus.
Let him down on the rope through the roof of the house
The man was healed that day, and his sins were forgiven,
because his friends cared enough to show him that he is not alone.
It was their faith, and their faithfulness,
that brought a miracle into this man's life.

Christian offers **HOPE IN CHRIST**
HELP IN CHRISTIANS

III. HEALING IN FORGIVENESS.

they made an opening in the roof above Jesus and, after digging through it, lowered the mat the paralyzed man was lying on. ⁵When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, "Son, your sins are forgiven."

The last things the four men expected Jesus to do was to forgive the sins of the paralytic.
 They expected him to heal his paralysis.

It is the same mistake that we make today when we pray.
 So many of our prayers are for health and healing.
 for rescue and restoration of physical and worldly things.
 But God is more concerned about our souls.
 About our eternal salvation.

Psalmsist `14:3 tells us: All have turned aside, they have together become corrupt; there is no one who does good, not even one.

I John3: 4 Everyone who sins breaks the law; in fact, sin is lawlessness. But you know that he appeared so that he might take away our sins. And in him is no sin.

THE HOPE THAT Jesus offer is the hope of forgiveness.

God is not the subject of hope.

He is the author of it.

Forgiveness is Christ gift to the world.

In no other religion doe we have an advocate with the father

But Jesus is the high priest who takes away the sin of the whole world.

No wonder Apostle John wirtes:

I John 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness

He said to the paralytic YOUR SIN ARE FORGIVEN.

Now not every one was happy about this.

⁶Now some teachers of the law were sitting there, thinking to themselves, ⁷"Why does this fellow talk like that? He's blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone?" Mark 2:4-6

Some people have left our church

Because they believe our church is not tolerant or inclusive enough.

And they believe that the teachers and people have become more conservative.

They want a more open experience.

I have struggling with this.

It wounds me whenever anyone leaves.

And I do a soul search,
Have I become more harsh and narrow,
More mean spirited and bitter.

God gave me an insight.
If you take a 100 watt light bulb turn it on
When does the bulb seem the brightest?
In the daytime or at night.
At night right.

The light hasn't changed its brightness.
Its still 100 watts.
What makes it seem brighter is the deepening darkness.

If people are slowly slipping and sliding into a world of darkness,
Accepting its lifestyles, ideals and ways.
Believing that every religion has equal truth.
Friend, their living in an ever increasing darkness..

We must stay true to our light.
Jesus is that light

Psalms 104:2 says God wraps himself in light as with a garment.

The hope Christianity offer the world is:
Jesus -- the light of the world
Jesus said"

"I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life. John 8:12

**When you confess your sin and receive him as your savior.
You become a whole person.
Jesus had to demonstrate it physically what had happened**
to the paralytic spiritual.
He said

¹⁰But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins" He said to the paralytic, ¹¹"I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home." ¹²He got up, took his mat and walked out in full view of them all. This amazed everyone and they praised God, saying, "We have never seen anything like this!"

Every mother here today wants to keep her baby a clean as she can.
All her life is put into keeping her children clean.
Washing their clothes.
Washing the dishes.
Cleaning the house.
Scrubbing the floors
Picking up toys
Then its washing their hair

Cleaning their faces
 Clipping their nails,
 Brushing their teeth
**I remember my mother wanted us clean,
 And she would still be working on us boys**
 On the way to church in the car.
 Have you heard of spit shining shoes.
 Well she was spit shining us
 Behind our ear under our chins,
 To finish the job we boys didn't get done.

The good news is that God wants to do the same for us.
 If any 'unclean thing comes upon us.
 He gets busy.
 The water of the spirit
 The soap of the word
 The cleansing of the Lord.
 Ministry of the guardian angels.

Psalms 51:7 Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow.

Maybe today you feel like that paralytic,
 You feel all alone
 Circumstances have closed you off from life.
 Sin has encumbered you.
 Despair has been your food morning, noon, and night.
 Well friends the good news is

**That the hope Jesus offers
 Is always complete.
 When he cried "it is finished" on the cross.
 It was also finished for us.
 Completed for us.
 In that act of sacrificial death Christ ransomed you.**

**When you accept him as your savior.
 Confess him as your lord.
 And trust him as your friend,
 YOU WILL HAVE FOUND
 WHAT CHRISTIANITY OFFER TO THIS WORLD.
 Hope. HOPE ETERNAL**