

The Watford Word

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What's on

Friday 29th August 7pm at the church building - farewell for Simone

Sunday 31 August: 10:30 AM.

Malcolm speaking

Monday 1st September:

Mentoring training

Sunday 07 September: 10:30 AM. Malcolm speaking

Saturday 13 September: *SCIENCE & FAITH: ENEMIES OR ALLIES?*

Sunday 14 September: 10:30 AM. Church service

Sunday 21 September: 10:30 AM. Church service

Sunday 28 September: 10:30 AM. Church service

3-5 October: Young Professionals' retreat

Sunday 21 December: 10:30 AM. Carol service



"Forgiveness First"

What Really Matters in the Family of Faith

In Mark 2:1-12, we see a dramatic and unforgettable moment in Jesus' ministry. A paralysed man is lowered through a roof—quite possibly Jesus' own roof—by friends desperate for healing. The house is packed, the tension is palpable, and Jesus' response is shocking:

"Son, your sins are forgiven."

Not, "You are healed," but, "You are forgiven."

At first glance, this is a letdown. The man is clearly in need of physical healing. But Jesus sees deeper. He knows the man's greater need—a restored relationship with God. This moment offers a miniature of Jesus' entire mission: not

merely to mend broken bodies, but to mend broken souls. As one commentator put it,

"The story became an expression of Jesus' ministry in miniature: a ministry to restore wholeness of body for the sick and broken relationships with God for the sinner." (Robert Guelich, *Word Biblical Commentary*).

Jesus does go on to heal the man physically, but only after making it clear that forgiveness is the higher priority. He even uses the healing as proof that he has authority on earth to forgive sins—a statement that scandalises the religious leaders and foreshadows the mounting opposition to come.

What does this mean for us, the church today? Especially as we continue our sermon series in Matthew 18—a chapter deeply concerned with forgiveness and reconciliation—it is a timely question.

If Jesus prioritised forgiveness above even miraculous healing, then perhaps we too should prioritise forgiveness in our life together as a community of faith. Our world is full of "holes": broken relationships, wounded hearts, divided families, and even fractured churches. Sometimes we try to patch these holes with busyness, programmes, or outward signs of success. But Jesus goes for the heart.

In this story, we see four friends going to extraordinary lengths for their paralysed companion. They tear through a roof, interrupt a sermon, and take a risk—all because they believe Jesus can help. And they are right. But what Jesus offers first is not what they expected. And yet, it is the most essential gift.

In the same way, when we gather as the church—Christ's spiritual family—our greatest offering to one another is not just encouragement, support, or even physical help (as important as those are), but forgiveness. We are called to be a community that heals relational fractures through reconciliation. A community that mends hearts through confession and grace. A family that chooses to say, "Your sins are forgiven," rather than let bitterness grow.

Forgiveness is not always easy. It often requires the faith of friends—those willing to carry us, challenge us, or even dig through a roof on our behalf. But when we prioritise forgiveness, we reflect the very heart of Jesus. We become the kind of community he envisioned—a place where healing goes deeper than the surface.

As we continue exploring Matthew 18 in this sermon series, let us be reminded by Mark 2 that the church Jesus imagined is not just a gathering of good people doing good things. It is a family where forgiveness flows freely—where the grace of God is not just preached, but practised.

May we be a church that prioritises forgiveness—not as an afterthought, but as our defining feature.

Your brother, Malcolm

Watford Contribution Details

Church bank account: Three Counties churches of Christ HSBC

Sort Code: 401915

Account Number: 04759613

Charity number : 1207942

Faith-Building Quiz

Which NT person is this stone connected to, and in what way does it build our faith? Answers next week. Clue: Check out Acts 13.



SCAN ME



Watford Media

SCIENCE AND FAITH

Enemies or Allies?

David Hutchings
Fellow, Institute of Physics
and Research Fellow,
University of Durham

Saturday 13th September
10am – 1pm
ALEXANDRA PARK SCHOOL
RHODES AVENUE
LONDON N22 7UT

Douglas Jacoby
MTS, DMin, Athens
Institute and International
Bible Teaching Ministry

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