

**What Is Heard**      First Week in Ordinary Time      Friday, January 18, 2019      Heb  
4:1-5, 11;      **Mk 2:1-12**      (Let go of the habits of your mind that have kept you all wrapped up.)

**“Who but God alone can forgive sins?”**

This is a story that is very much about **what is said and what is meant as opposed to what is heard**. When this man was lowered into Jesus’ sight, he said to him, **“Your sins are forgiven.”** That is a statement of fact. **That is a declaration that Jesus made because he knows the heart of the Father, and he can express the will of the Father and does so in his humanity, not only in his words, but in his actions.**

Now that’s not what the scribes heard; they heard a man take upon himself the authority to forgive sins, but that isn’t really what Jesus said anyway. He simply declared, “Your sins are forgiven.” He didn’t say I forgive you. So **we have to be very careful of what we hear**. In this case Jesus’ opponents, if you want to call them that, were not listening. They were projecting onto him something he was not actually saying, although in an odd way what they were projecting was getting to the truth, but not directly and not sincerely. **So sometimes when people misunderstand, what they do understand is getting to the point.** So the scribes understood that Jesus was actually speaking with authority, which they didn’t believe he had.

And that’s where the “Pick up your mat” comes in, because the words, “Your sins are forgiven,” could be very hollow. After all, anyone could say them. What is **the demonstration that that is really true?** That is a whole idea of healing. **Healing demonstrates the truthfulness of God’s mercy.** It makes it concrete. It presents an experience that cannot be denied. And that’s why it says, “They were all astounded.”

That’s what Jesus wanted to do; **he wanted to astound them** so that they would realize that the way they think, their categories, and this is a problem everyone has, not just these scribes, their **categories just had to go**. His whole message is all based on the idea of *metanoia*, **that means find a new way of thinking**, often translated, as I’ve said, “repentance.” That word doesn’t really hold the meaning of *metanoia*. Find a new way of thinking. Find new categories. Let go of the habits of your mind that have kept you all wrapped up. They keep you in negative thinking. They keep you disbelieving. They keep you from seeing.