

Having travelled to quite a few places with students over the years I've come to the conclusion that there are 3 basic needs every teenager has no matter what part of the world we live in. These are three things that are on the top wanted list

1. I need to charge my phone
2. I need to find somewhere with WiFi
3. I need McDonalds.

It doesn't matter where you travel. These are the top 3 needs of all time.

None of us like to be told what we need. If you think about it, from our childhood we are always being told by someone else that we need to do something or need to have something or need to be somewhere.

For example,

You need to clean your room, you need to do your homework, you need to eat all of your dinner, you need to wear warmer clothes or you need to be home before midnight. Most of the time when we are being told what we need by somebody responsible these needs will be for our benefit. For example, if I wasn't told that I will need to bring warm clothes and thick socks to Hungary I would be extremely cold.

As we grow older we learn to think about what we need for ourselves. And we soon start to dismiss what other people tell us We need, because We become old enough now to make decisions for ourselves....you. Have probably said it to your parents already.....I don't need you to tell me what I need. And sometimes this is right isn't it. It wouldn't be appropriate for your mum to tell you that you need to go to bed when you're still living at home at the age of 30

But sometimes our priorities are not right and what we think our needs are are not necessarily the best conclusion. You might decide to use the small amount of data left on your phone to download Ed Sheehan's latest album because it will make you happy to do so when really the greater need may have been to use the data you had left to prepare for an exam. That's an example of when we wrongly conclude what are actually our most important need.

In Mark 2 we read about a man who was unable to walk and faced a very sad future not having the ability to earn money or care for himself. He had great physical needs. No doubt he looked around him and felt that it was really unfair that other people could find work, make friends, travel and not have to beg for help. His greatest happiness would be if he could just have the ability to walk. In his mind his highest Priority and greatest need was obvious. I need my legs to walk. In his mind, his greatest happiness was for his physical needs to be met. He's thinking "if I can walk, life will be great." My one and only need is get walking again"

We know from what we read in the Bible that others took pity on him and carried him to meet Jesus who was visiting the town and was showing that he clearly had the ability to bring healing to even the sickest of people. This was an opportunity for all the sick and broken people to be renewed in their health. Jesus was doing great things and the rush was on to

get to Jesus before he leaves. People's physical needs were being met and there was great celebration and amazement at what Jesus was doing.

Now we read that the crowd was so large around Jesus that the chance of getting the paralysed man to Jesus was near impossible so one of the group suggested that they avoid the crowd, climb the stairs to the top of the house and dig a hole through the clay roof and lower their paralysed friend right in front of Jesus. What a great idea!,

And this is what they did. In vs 4 we read that after they made an opening in the roof above Jesus they lowered the man bypassing all of the crowd. Imagine the scene, Jesus is healing people, crowds stand amazed and suddenly dirt and clay start falling from the ceiling. Everyone including Jesus look up and see a man being lowered down through the hole. Not great if you were the owner of the house!,

Now we all expect that the story would continue with Jesus seeing the effort the 4 men and the desperation of the paralysed man and would assume that Jesus would heal the man so he can be made well again. I'm sure this was what the paralysed man and his friends would have thought would happen. The circumstances were obvious. Jesus was healing, a paralysed man is lowered right in front of him. The only thing left to complete the scene is the healing of the mans legs and then bring in the next person.

And yet isn't it often the case, that our expectations and what we think are our main needs are not always the same as those which God has in mind for us. And this should be of great comfort to us because we know our God is a God who only does what is right for his children and can see beyond our immediate circumstances and works all things for our good to those who love him. I get that from romans 8:28. It's so true. We have many th8ngs that we bring to God in prayer, needs that we perceive as being of the greatest importance and may in fact be a grea5 burden to us, but no matter how much we pray for relief or resolution to the problem nothing seems to change. And often this is because the greater good is not seen by us. The perspective God has on our lives is from before the foundation of the world to the very end of the ages so why are we surprised to learn that what we see as our immediate needs are not necessarily the greatest need. And it's a great comfort for those who trust God to know that he has all things in his hands and sees beyond our immediate circumstances and works in all things our greatest good. That's why we Christians can give thanks in all circumstances.

The paralysed man was in great need. And yet Jesus sees an even greater need.

Now this is the same with many of us isn't it. We know all about Jesus, we have grown up in families that attend church, or we attend a Christian school, or we might even regularly read our bibles. But if all we have is a knowing of Jesus we might just leave it at that and not see our greater need for Jesus. Knowing Jesus and needing Jesus are two different things.

And you might be sitting in class this morning happy enough to know about Jesus and yet perceive no actual needs that Jesus could possibly satisfy. Maybe you have everything you want, life is good, things are going well and Jesus really has nothing more that you can possibly need. You know about Jesus but you actually think you have no need for Jesus. And this is because our need for Jesus is clouded in a thick fog of our happy existence.

It reminds me of a time when I was travelling in a car early on a cold foggy morning. We could barely see where we were going and no matter how hard we put the wipers on we couldn't get a good view ahead of us. It wasn't until we stopped and got out of the car that we stepped into a clear blue sky. You see we had fogged up the inside of the car and that was our reality that we were living in. It wasn't until we stepped out of our circumstances that we were able to see the truth of what the day was actually like. And so our needs are often dictated by the circumstances we find ourselves in.

But the Bible tells us that which is seen is temporary and that which is unseen is eternal.

Well our paralysed man knew about Jesus and even thought that he needed Jesus, but what he missed was a greater need that he hadn't perceived. And that is the same need that you and I have even today. And it's a need that if it is not satisfied will have consequences beyond our physical existence. And it is this exact need that is the reason Jesus was sent from heaven to earth....to remove our sin by him taking our sin on himself and we being given his righteousness. A wonderful exchange and the only way to remove the separation between ourselves and God. Or to put it another way, Our greatest problem is that a holy and perfect God will not accept anyone with even the slightest blemish of sin. And if we are truly honest with ourselves we know that we don't have to scratch far below the surface of our lives to reveal thoughts and actions that hold us guilty of sin. And no matter how hard we might try, there is no way to completely rid ourselves of sin or to stand perfect before a Perfect and holy God. This is our greatest need, and this is the greatest need of all mankind whether you have paralysed legs, poverty, persecution or whatever. The greatest need is for our sins to be forgiven.

Jesus said to the man, Son, your sins are forgiven. Imagine the first thoughts of the paralysed man.

Just a minute Jesus, can't you see the issue here. I've been lowered through the roof because I can't walk....doesn't that suggest to you that my greatest need at the moment is my inability to walk!,

Now I have no doubt that Jesus obviously knew the man had great need for physical healing of his legs, but seeing past the physical needs, his greatest need was something the man hadn't yet recognised. A greater healing was needed that indeed was a far greater work than the relatively simple task of healing the man's legs. And this work was the cleansing of sin, something that has eternal benefit and no possibility of the man doing himself.

Now those watching on, some of the religious academics of the day heard what Jesus said to the man and were shocked that Jesus placed himself on the same level as God in pronouncing forgiveness for sins. I imagine they were struggling with trying to work out who Jesus was considering the miraculous healing they were seeing. Miracles were one thing but it's going a step too far to pronounce Forgiveness of sins. Only God can forgive sins. Surely Jesus, this man from Nazareth isn't claiming that he is God.

And then we have a little comment on the side written in as a commentary sayingand Jesus knowing what they were thinking.....

Jesus knew exactly what to expect from those in the crowd who heard him pronounce the forgiveness of sins. Perhaps he looked up from the man still lying on the ground into the

eyes of the men watching on and said to himself. Yep that's right you heard me.....I just forgave this mans sins and yes you're right to think that only God can forgive sins. Therefore I am in fact given authority as the Son of God to forgive sin.

I mean this was a statement beyond anything anyone who woke up that morning would never had thought they would hear and yet here we are, Jesus publically stating the solution to the greatest need all mankind hasthe forgiveness of sins. God was visiting this small village in a small house declaring that by no other way except through Jesus can sin once and for all be finally dealt with.

And the point that I,m drawing out for us this morning is that all of us need the forgiveness of our sins that Jesus freely gives and yet there are many among us who are like those in the crowd staying at a distance taking in the knowledge about Jesus but not seeing any need for Jesus. Satisfied to just continue looking on. If this is you, well you're like the man who built his house on sand. There will come a day when your self confidence will wash away under your feet and you will wish you did receive the forgiveness offered by Jesus. But then it will be too late. You see at the moment you're interest is only in today, your needs are physical and momentary like the man with broken legs, but Jesus is saying I've come to give you healing from your great3st need.

And to those today who have experienced the complete forgiveness of their sins and had their greatest need satisfied in Jesus,lets be like the friends who lowered the man on the mat.be active in bringing others to meet Jesus. Tell of how He healed you of your greatest need and pray for our friends and family that see no need for Jesus that their eyes might be opened to look beyond the temporary circumstances of today to see the need for a complete cleansing of themselves by the forgiveness that Jesus offers.

You see today's distractions are the tool that the devil has been using since Adam. The Devil says to us that What is unseen is not real. You have no other needs other than look8ng after yourself and searching for whatever it is that makes you the happiest, but don't bother with looking beyond what is seen. Here and now is all that matters.

Jesus on the other hand looks from eternity and knows that an eternal lifetime without God faces all of us if we leave this temporary world and with all our sins still strapped like a burden on our back. Removal of this sin burden this morning is the greatest need we all have. And Jesus has done what it takes to relieve us from the guilt of sin that we carry until the moment we come to him in repentance and in humility thanking him for his mercy in dieing in our place and removing the guilt of sin forever from our names.