

2.1.15

Mark 2:1-12

*INTRO:

*Fritz Sauckel was Hitler's labor chief, which meant, slave labor...he was responsible for the largest slave roundup in history.

*While Hitler's Germany was squandering the lives of over 60,000 German men a month from 1941 to 1945 just on the Eastern front alone...the number of men available to fuel the war machine at home was being quickly depleted.

*To make up for the loss of manpower Sauckel's Labor department forced 4.5 million civilians from occupied territories into slave labor in Germany.

*These souls were chained together and jammed 50-80 at a time in freight cars, often going days without food or water.

*They were mistreated, underfed, and over worked...the situation was horrible.

*This was not the Jewish extermination camps...but this was another kind of Holocaust that is less well known.

*1.2 million or 1 in 4 of them died...exhaustion, disease, starvation.

*When the war ended...Sauckel was put on trial at Nuremberg for his war crimes.

*During the year of trials the chaplain assigned to the prisoners (Gerecke) visited Sauckel in his cells, prayed with him, did Bible studies and shared the gospel with him.

*The chaplain was criticized by many for helping these hated Nazis

*One day Sauckel asked Chaplain Gerecke to be give communion...it seems that Sauckel had given his life to Christ.

*When chaplain Gerecke entered Sauckel's cell the prisoner was already on his knees on the concrete floor...this formally powerful, influential human figure...was now fully humbled.

*As Gerecke prepared communion, Sauckel got off his knees, threw his hands in the air, and cried out so loudly that every guard on the floor came rushing to the cell...**"God, be merciful to me, a sinner."**

*This brutal slaver, who took 4.5 million people from their homes and families...1.2 million of them died hard deaths working to fuel an army and a nation that was ravishing the world...was asking for mercy.

*What do you think of that?

*What if your mom, dad, husband, wife, sister, brother...had been hauled away into another country and you had never seen them again...now what would you think of this man asking for mercy?

*He had not given mercy to anyone...what right to expect it now as he was heading towards the gallows to die for his crimes?

Mark 2:1 A few days later, when Jesus again entered Capernaum, the people heard that he had come home. **2** So many gathered that there was no room left, not even outside the door, and he preached the word to them. **3** Some men came, bringing to him a paralytic, carried by four of them. **4** Since they could not get him to Jesus because of the crowd, they made an opening in the roof above Jesus and, after digging through it, lowered the mat the paralyzed man was lying on. **5** When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, "Son, your sins are forgiven." **6** Now 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?" **8** Immediately Jesus knew in his spirit that this was what they were thinking in their hearts, and he said to them, "Why are you thinking these things? **9** Which is easier: to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up, take your mat and walk'? **10** But 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." **12** He 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!"

*I have heard various sermons on this passage over the years:

1. One application presented it as a story of human ingenuity...the men were proactive in finding a solution for their friend's need.

*The point made was mainly about being proactive and taking initiative.

*No question...we should be proactive in helping people...but we don't need the gospel for morality lessons like...be proactive.

*There are probably better stories out there, where people took more initiative to help someone than digging a hole in a roof.

*Surely initiative is not the point God wants to drive home here.

2. I've heard applications that make it primarily about evangelism...we should do whatever we can to "bring our friends to Christ."

*True as well, but these guys were bringing their friend to be healed not to be forgiven.

*This was more like "doing whatever you can to get your friend to a doctor" than about evangelism...at least that's what was in their minds.

*I'm not saying those are not legitimate applications...certainly the story demonstrates proactivity and a concern for a friend and a desire to get that friend to Jesus.

*But those applications are not the main point of the narrative.

*The main point of the narrative is the main problem of mankind...our need for forgiveness.

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

1. Word of the healing of the leper had spread, the house (Probably Peter's) was packed out.

*There's little question as to why they had come...they wanted to be healed or at least see a healing.

*The miraculous or claims of it can become a spectator sport...miracle tourism can be big business.

*Russ, Dave, and I went Toronto, Canada back in 1996.

*At that time there was an ongoing event at a church near the airport that was being called the "Toronto Blessing" or "Fire."

*We did not go to Canada for that purpose but we thought we would check it out.

*The church had services 6 nights a week for several years...many reports of healings, exorcisms and to be honest some very bizarre behavior.

*People from all over the world had traveled there just to check it out...there were signs on the road from the airport giving directions to the church...like a city would give directions to any popular tourist attraction.

*I admit I was skeptical and some of what I saw that night confirmed my skepticism...clearly some of it was God at work but people trying to make something happen.

*But for years people came to see...because People are drawn to and desperate for the miraculous...

*We hungry to "See" something visible that will prove the reality of the invisible...a physical demonstration that will validate my belief in spiritual reality.

*We want to "see" with our eyeballs not with our eyes of faith...in other words...something real!

*I wonder if the people who came to see Jesus were disappointed when he "preached" instead of performing?

*Preached...means..."announce"...the kingdom is here!

*It was an announcement of what God was doing in Christ Jesus to give opportunity for the forgiveness of sins, relationship with God was at hand.

*I can imagine some in the crowd saying to themselves...

-"When he is going to stop talking and actually get the show started...do some healings, cast out some demons...we came to see not to hear!"

3 Some men came, bringing to him a paralytic, carried by four of them. 4 Since they could not get him to Jesus because of the crowd, they made an opening in the roof above Jesus and, after digging through it, lowered the mat the paralyzed man was lying on.

*The houses were single rooms with flat roofs made of mud and thatch...with an outside stairway that would allow you to go on the roof and cool off at night.

*The men brought their crippled friend and realized they could not get through the crowd...maybe there were many crippled, injured, sick people in the way.

*But their love for the their friend or brother caused them to be proactive and creative in getting him in front of Jesus.

*They dug a hole in the roof, no doubt raining debris down on the crowd, and on Jesus.

*Then they lowered their friend down in front of Jesus.

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

*Okay, what are we to think happened in the minds of the people there...let's examine some possibilities.

Crowds: "Oh that's just great! Here's a great chance for him to actually "do" something exciting and he just makes another announcement..."Your sins are forgiven."
We are tired of talk, show us something real!"

Friends: "We do all that work, and he even compliments our faith and yet he doesn't heal him, he just says some words "your sins are forgiven"...we didn't come hear to hear a sermon...we came for a miracle."

*What if...just what if...

Paralytic: "I thought my greatest need was my paralysis...but I have just been forgiven, I know it is real and true...I would love to walk...but what Jesus just did for me was more significant than that..."

*Of course all that is conjecture, we don't know what they were thinking.

*But, fortunately there were some there that we know exactly what they were thinking...because Jesus told everyone what was on their minds.

6 Now 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?”

*It has become popular for some self-appointed representative of a group that had perpetrated a crime or crimes to ask for forgiveness from a representative of a victim group.

*Even though neither had been alive when the abuse had occurred.

*I understand the sentiment and can appreciate the effort...but the entire process is not real.

*If my ancestor hurt your ancestor...I can't ask for forgiveness for my ancestor...he, not me was guilty of the crime.

*Furthermore you can't give forgiveness to my ancestor because you were not the victim.

*Forgiveness is "owned" by the offended, the one who has been wronged is the only one who can offer true forgiveness.

*These guys understood that...they knew that all sin was ultimately sin against God.

*Therefore only God could forgive sin.

*They were furious because obviously they did not believe Jesus was God and therefore he had no authority to forgive sins.

*But they were wrong, because that is exactly the point of the narrative...Jesus indeed did have authority to forgive sins and forgiveness was this paralytic's greatest need.

8 Immediately Jesus knew in his spirit that this was what they were thinking in their hearts, and he said to them, “Why are you thinking these things? 9 Which is easier: to say to the paralytic, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Get up, take your mat and walk’? 10 But 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.” 12 He 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!”

*So we know what they were they thinking? Which is easier..."to say your sins are forgiven" or to say "get up, take your mat and walk?"

*Well, it is just as easy to "say" either one...and it is just as impossible for a man to "do" either one.

*No mere man can forgive sins in a way that leaves a person "forgiven, cleansed, not guilty."

*No mere man can tell a paralytic..."get up and walk"

*But of course it is impossible to demonstrate visually that a person has been cleansed of their sins...what would that "look like" to the human eye?

*It is, however, easy to demonstrate that a person has been healed of paralysis when they simply pick up their mat and go for a walk.

*Jesus said..."So you will know that the invisible is real (forgiveness of sins) I will demonstrate with the visible (heal your paralysis)."

*Here again we see that his purpose was not physical healing but pronouncement of good news..."so you will know I have authority to forgive sins, watch this man get up and walk."

*There may be some future day when a medical procedure makes it possible to duplicate what Jesus did here...allow all paralytics to walk.

*Of course that medical procedure would not equal what Jesus did in this man's physical body...because it will require medicine, a machine, or surgery...

*What Jesus did was exert his will in the physical world with a word...the man's physical body was repaired, restored by the spiritual power of Jesus manifest in the physical world.

*He has authority over the physical world...it is his...he is the king.

*He has authority over the spiritual world...they are one and the same to him.

*He has authority to heal with a word, and to forgive sins with a word.

*If the man was healed of his paralysis but not forgiven of his sins...he would have walked again but what else might have been true?

Possibilities:

1. Walked straight into ingratitude

*If he walked again but was not transformed inside, how many days, weeks, months before he was taking walking for granted?

*Boy from Cambodia, escaped Killing fields...he was a teenager and no longer grateful to be safe, fed, free...he had fully adjusted to the plenty of American life and now had lost his gratitude.

***What good would it do to change my way of living, if everything inside me stayed the same...Barry Mcquire**

*"If I was healed after being paralyzed, I would never lose my gratitude."

*Maybe...

*Have you ever been sick, felt horrible...then gotten well and felt so grateful just to not feel sick?

*How long were you consciously and actively grateful for "not being sick?"

*How long before you took being well for granted

2. Walked into sin and destruction

*I read of a doctor who took a crippled child growing up in a desperate situation to a hospital and performed some medical procedures that allowed the child to walk.

*Years later the doctor went back to see how the child was doing as a teenager...much to his dismay the child was in prison for murder.

*The doctor lamented "We gave him the chance to know how to walk but not the heart to know where to walk."

*Physical change without spiritual heart change is at best temporary and at worse, a step back because it removes the sense of need in regards to what matters most.

3. Lived and died in his sins

*This is the worse consequence... He would have remained guilty in life and into death.

Conclusion:

*The Nuremburg Trials at the end of WWII were really an attempt to bring closure to a horrible period in human history and to declare to the world that the crimes of the German government was unacceptable.

*Strange as it may sound (and is) a nation going to war against another is not "illegal" by international standards.

*However within the "rules of war" there are acceptable and unacceptable actions.

*The Nazis broke many of the "rules of war" and laws of nations...in brutal fashion.

*But rather than trying to prosecute every German who had committed a war crime...the trials were designed to set apart "scapegoats" or representatives of the Nazi's as a whole.

*So the highest ranking survivors of the SS, the Army, the Labor agency, and the like were tried and executed or imprisoned for life.

*If Hitler had lived...they likely could have just used him as the sole scapegoat...but since he had committed suicide they selected key officials to stand trial.

*In the years to come many more would be prosecuted... but at the end of the war a few were made to pay for the sins of the many.

*Many have questioned the wisdom or the legality of Nuremburg...I don't know about all that but I do know it is not possible for a mere human to bear the sins of another mere human.

*I can pay a price for my sins...loss of money, freedom or life...but I cannot undo what I have done...I cannot remove the actual guilt itself.

*I certainly can't do that for someone else.

*God alone can remove the actual guilt...he can declare a guilty person "not guilty"

*How is this possible? He is the King...all sins are ultimately against him.

*He can pardon sins, somewhat like a president can give a pardon to any criminal...but the difference is the presidential pardon does not actually remove the guilt it merely removes the punishment.

*Okay even though it is possible for King to pardon a guilty person...is it right, is it good, is it just?

*No, it would not be just or good for a King to declare a person guilty of real crimes... simply on a whim...without any consequence.

*That King would be violating his own standard, his own laws...he could be merciful but not just if he did so.

*He would be saying in effect "your crimes don't really matter...and my laws are arbitrary, able to be broken without any cost."

*This means that "goodness, justice, mercy, love" are in reality...no different than "evil, sin, abuse" because...

*God can say..."Ah, don't worry about...there is no price to pay for violating my will and ways."

*What is right then becomes arbitrary...not a violation of the reality of who God is...just a rules infraction that can be overlooked, pardoned without penalty.

*But because our crimes are real, the cost must be real.

*God's laws are not random or arbitrary they reflect his very nature...he can no more just forgive them without a cost than he can stop being God.

*The King could however reflect both mercy and justice if he were to pay the penalty for the crimes himself...the crimes were against him so he alone can decide to pay the price...this shows his mercy.

*The crimes require a price be paid and he is willing to pay it...this shows his justice.

All this is human analogy and description...the real thing is clearly much more powerful and precious than I can describe.

*Forgiveness is a real thing...but photons can't bounce off of it and create an image on your retina that your brain translates into a thought.

*But even the "thought" in your brain "Chair" is not really a chair is it?

*The chair is out there in the room...the thing in your brain is the result of chemical reactions that your brain translates into something your mind says is a "chair"

*What is my point?

*Forgiveness is a real thing outside of you.

*It is a choice of God...his will creates a reality called "Forgiven"... "not guilty"

*Just because your eyes can't capture photons bouncing off "forgiveness" doesn't mean it is not real.

*Forgiveness of God is not a mere concept, not a mental trick, or emotional state...

"I feel forgiven oh good" "I don't feel forgiven, oh no"

*Forgiveness is an objective reality...I am or I am not forgiven.

*Just as that chair is there, whether you feel like it is or not.

*This is of great importance for us to grasp...the crippled man had a visible physical need...all could see he was crippled.

*This man had an invisible spiritual need...they could not see it with their eyes...but the reality of his need for forgiveness had greater and longer lasting consequences in his life than did the fact that he was crippled.

*So Jesus did what he had come to do...in response to the man's and his friend's faith...he "forgave his sins."

*And to demonstrate to their eyes that he had the authority to do what could not be seen..."he healed the man."

APPLICATION:

*Condemnation is a knife that cuts into the core of our very beings.

*Willard: **"The decision to step aside from it, neither giving it nor receiving it is a major turning point in one's life."**

*This is where we should truly be set apart as followers of Christ as different...we should be people who neither condemn, nor do we receive or allow condemnation to be placed on us.

*Condemnation...whether from our own minds, Satan, or the lips and attitudes of others devolves into shame.

*Shame is sadly felt the deepest by people who take rightness and goodness most seriously.

*So those of you who feel deep shame, feel so because you have a sense of what God actually wants and that you are not there.

*When a person comes to live a shame-based life it is largely about them believing, feeling, and thinking...that they are worthy of condemnation and unworthy of love and respect.

*This is why the gospel is the announcement of good news and why this paralytic's greatest gift was not legs but grace...forgiveness.

*Forgiveness means we are now a different kind of people...doesn't matter what is in our past...

*We live beyond all shame, condemnation and blame and we know it...or need to learn to know it and live in it.

*I can forgive you if you hurt me...I cannot remove your guilt...God alone can forgive in a way that all guilt, condemnation, blame, shame itself is gone.

*So a Nazi slaver can indeed become blameless.

Rom. 8:1 Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, 2 because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death. 3 For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in sinful man, 4 in

order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit.

*This is the prime application of this passage...not friendship, not ingenuity...but about "**no condemnation...without blame.**"

*Jesus showed with a physical healing that he had authority, power...to remove guilt, to shut down condemnation.

*I am inclined to think that some of you live with shame...whether you believe you deserve it or not...I want to ask you to believe God when he says there is **NO** condemnation in your life.

*If you embrace this and move towards a life free of condemnation...you will also be less inclined to condemn others.

*If you have **not** been born again...you stand condemned...you have not yet been set free...you must receive the gift...Jesus is a gentlemen...he would not force a gift on you.

*Whether the voice of condemnation sounds like your own voice in your head...you beat yourself up because of your failure.

*Or an accusing voice that you have long become accustomed to and have failed to realize it is your enemy...the one the Bible calls the "accuser"

*Or some person in your life living or dead...parent, spouse, boss, whoever...whose words echo still in your mind and make you feel shame, condemned...

*You must, you must, you must...learn to listen to the voice of God himself...**There is now, NO condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.**

***There is...now(there once was but not now)...No (not some, but not any)...condemnation.**

*You are not just free from punishment...that would make you merely pardoned.

*You are free from condemnation...that makes you "free"

*That is all the application needed this morning...let's pray.

SMALL GROUP NOTES
Feb 1, 2015 Mark 2:1-12

Intro:

1. Read and discuss the following quotes...how have you seen them played out in your or someone else's life?

"Revenge is a dish best served up cold"

"Before you embark on a journey of revenge better dig two graves"

"Holding onto to anger is like drinking poison and expecting the other person to die."

2. Why is it often so hard to forgive others?
3. Why is it so hard to actually "feel" forgiven after we have been wrong?
4. Discuss the differences between being "pardoned" (not having to pay for our guilt) and "being completely forgiven" (no longer being guilty at all).

Read:

Mark 2:1 A few days later, when Jesus again entered Capernaum, the people heard that he had come home. **2** So many gathered that there was no room left, not even outside the door, and he preached the word to them. **3** Some men came, bringing to him a paralytic, carried by four of them. **4** Since they could not get him to Jesus because of the crowd, they made an opening in the roof above Jesus and, after digging through it, lowered the mat the paralyzed man was lying on. **5** When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, "Son, your sins are forgiven." **6** Now 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?" **8** Immediately Jesus knew in his spirit that this was what they were thinking in their hearts, and he said to them, "Why are you thinking these things? **9** Which is easier: to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up, take your mat and walk'? **10** But 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." **12** He 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!"

Discuss:

1. These friends of the paralytic took initiative to get their friend help how did their actions show "faith" and what do you believe was the nature of their faith at this point in the Gospel narrative?
2. Do you believe the crowds were there to hear the good news of relationship with God or primarily to receive physical blessing of some kind? Why do you believe this?
3. Do you believe the paralytic and his friends would have been puzzled by the Lord's announcement "Your sins are forgiven?" Why or why not?
4. Why is that God alone can forgive sins? What does this mean? We can forgive each other when we wrong one another but what is the difference between a human forgiven another human and God forgiving us?
5. Jesus asked them whether it was easy to say "your sins are forgiven" or "get up and walk." What do you believe he meant by this question?
6. Clearly it is impossible for a mere man to either forgive sins or heal a crippled person but one is easy to verify the other is not. How does this event indicate the prime purpose of Jesus? Why do you believe so many believe that his prime purpose was and is physical rather than spiritual in nature?

7. Why do you think it is so common for people to see the world in "two stories?" Upstairs is the spiritual world, the world of the "not real" and downstairs is the physical world, the world of the "really real."

8. Forgiveness is a spiritual transaction that shows up in many ways in the physical world. What are some ways being forgiven by God impacts a person's everyday life?

Apply:

One of the sons of a Nazi official sentenced to death for his war crimes refused to forgive his father. He fantasized about God torturing his father for his crimes. He felt compelled to give his own condemnation of his father.

Dallas Willard wrote:

When we enter the life of friendship with the Jesus who is now at work in our universe, we stand in a new reality where condemnation is simply irrelevant. There is before God, Paul says, "no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 8: 1). And as for the condemnation we may receive from others, I endeavor not to receive it, to just ignore or drop it. I have learned to look at it only while simultaneously holding in full view the fact that Jesus, so far from condemning me, died for me and is right now intervening on my behalf in the heavens. This helps me stay out of countercondemnation, with its pain and anger. "when set beside that One who does not condemn me?" I think I shall not be depressed about this condemnation of me, then, especially since I know that "nothing can separate me from the eternal love of Christ" (Rom. 8: 33– 35). And in this context it seems only intelligent just to have done with the whole condemning game. Willard, Dallas (2009-02-06). The Divine Conspiracy (p. 227). HarperCollins. Kindle Edition.

***How are you holding onto to condemnation? Either towards or from others?**

***What will it mean practically for you to let go of it?**

***How would it help you to look at Jesus saying to you "You are not condemned" when either facing the condemnation of others or being tempted to condemn someone in your own life?**

***Pray as a group or in pairs related to the fact that in Christ you are not condemned. Pray that God would empower you to give the same grace to others that he has extended to you.**

The Gospel of Mark



*"For even the
Son of Man
did not come
to be served,
but to serve,
and to give
his life as a
ransom for
many."*

Mark 10:45

Mark 2:1-4 A few days later, when Jesus again entered Capernaum, the people heard that he had come home. So many gathered that there was no room left, not even outside the door, and he preached the word to them. Some men came, bringing to him a paralytic, carried by four of them. Since they could not get him to Jesus because of the crowd, they made an opening in the roof above Jesus and, after digging through it, lowered the mat the paralyzed man was lying on.

Mark 2:5-8 When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, “Son, your sins are forgiven.” Now some teachers of the law were sitting there, thinking to themselves, “Why does this fellow talk like that? He’s blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone?” Immediately Jesus knew in his spirit that this was what they were thinking in their hearts, and he said to them, “Why are you thinking these things?”

Mark 2:9-12 Which is easier: to say to the paralytic, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Get up, take your mat and walk’? But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins. . . .” He said to the paralytic, “I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home.” He 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!”

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

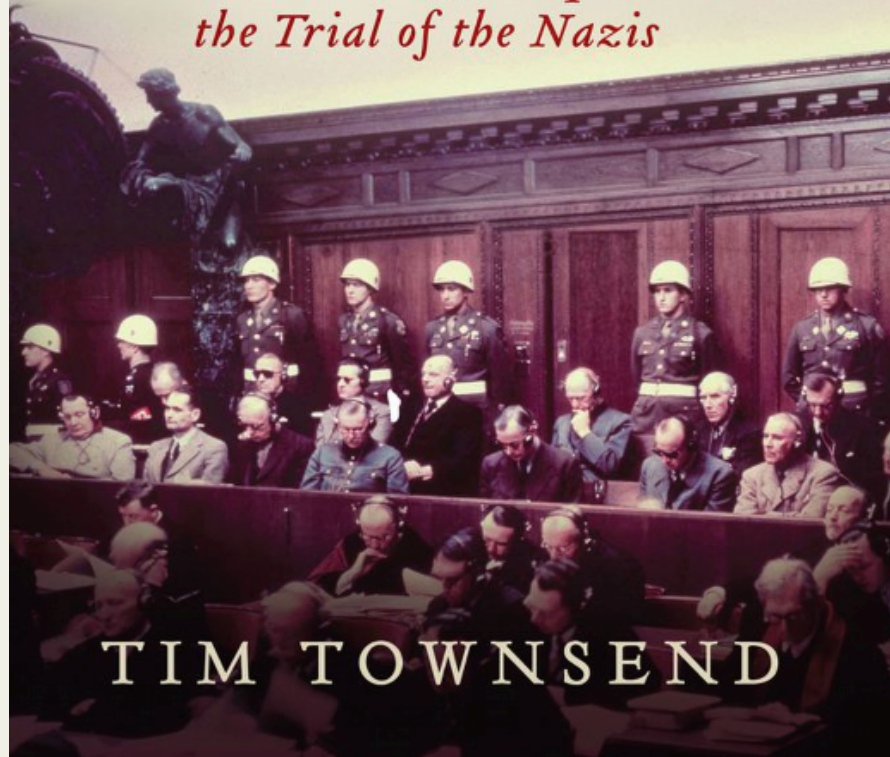
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"What good would it do to change my way of living, if everything inside me stayed the same?"



MISSION *at* NUREMBERG

*An American Army Chaplain and
the Trial of the Nazis*



TIM TOWNSEND

forgiven

***"The decision to step aside from
condemnation, neither giving it nor
receiving it is a major turning point
in one's life."***

Willard

**Therefore, there is now no
condemnation for those who are in
Christ Jesus...**

Romans 8:1