

Faith It and Jesus Sees It

Luke 5:17-25

This is story of the paralytic who had four friends who lowered him through the roof to the feet of Jesus. Luke writes about it and says of Jesus, "Seeing THEIR faith, He said, 'Friend, your sins are forgiven you.'" Try to get a picture in your mind of the scene before us. It is a very remarkable story with lessons for us. These four men knew Christ and the power of his grace. They also had a friend who needed Christ. Through thoughtful labor and perseverance these four men succeeded in getting their friend to Christ.

Principle: **Your faith, your prayers, and your perseverance bring people deliverance through Christ.**

I. God uses *me* as the means through which His grace is imparted to spiritual cripples.

"In the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know God, God was well-pleased through the foolishness of the message proclaimed to save those who believe" (1 Cor. 1:21). The Hebrew maid told Naaman. Andrew found Peter. Philip told Nathaniel and later the Eunuch. Whom do you know that is in need of Christ's grace? Whom has the Lord placed upon your heart? Paul prayed that the Ephesians might 'be strengthened in your inner person ...that you will be rooted and grounded in His love...and that you will be able to comprehend Christ's love... so that you will be **filled up** with all the fullness of God" (Eph. 3:17-19). *When filled up with love, love spills out.*

II. Instead of condemning cripples, maybe we ought to persevere in bringing cripples to Christ.

The obstacles these four nameless men are similar to those we face when leading others to Christ

(A). We have to push through the barriers caused by religion ... *"There were some Pharisees and teachers of the law sitting there, who had come from every village of Galilee and Judea"* (v. 17).

These four men had to push through the religious who had come and surrounded Jesus. It's a little bit like churches who make their institution and programs more important than people.

(B). We have to be creative in finding ways to bring people to Jesus ... *"Not finding any way to bring him in because of the crowd, they went up on the roof"* (v. 19). Can you imagine the spectacle? People might be thinking, "The roof was never designed for that purpose!" "Those four men are disturbing our meeting!" "We've never seen that done before!" You can imagine what was said.

(C). We have to lead people to Jesus and trust He will do the rest because of our faith.

Listen to the Scripture: *"Seeing THEIR faith, He said, 'Friend, your sins are forgiven you"* (v. 20).

Moms, don't gloss over this truth. Your faith on behalf of your children is seen. God responds.

For those of you who sometimes wonder about God's sovereignty in salvation, push any despair out of your mind. This text speaks of Jesus seeing your faith and healing a cripple because of it.

III. The story of these four men is designed to bring you hope in terms of those you love, not guilt.

If you have heard this message and thought, "Oh my, the salvation of *other people* depends on me?" and then you start getting this panicky feeling, you have missed the point of the message altogether. These four friends did not carry every cripple in the surrounding villages to Jesus. They carried the one cripple whom they loved. This message is not a guilt message about being an evangelist; it is a message of hope about the glory of taking the cripple you love to Jesus in prayer and perseverance and finding healing for the one you love. Think about that person you love who is broken right now. Will you, for the sake of the one you love, become like those four men who believed in Jesus' power? Or maybe you are that cripple. Maybe you have a praying grandmother, a persevering father, or a loving mother. Today may be the day Jesus reaches out to you and convinces you of His love for you.

"Never be afraid to trust an unknown future to a known God." - Corrie Ten Boom