



#8: Who does he think he is? | Pastor Joe Wittwer | August 2, 2009

A. Fellowship Time (10-15 minutes)

1. Chitchat. Perhaps offer coffee, tea, or a cold drink with some snacks.
2. Pray (or invite someone to pray) to open the discussion.

B. Review Time (Read the summary below to the group: 5-10 minutes)

When four men brought their paralyzed friend to Jesus to be healed, they got more than they bargained for! **Let's read the story together in Mark 2:1-12. (Read)** The four men brought their friend for healing, but they couldn't get close to Jesus because of the crowd. Instead of giving up and going home, these guys huddled together and they got creative. "Why don't we try the roof? We could dig a hole in the roof and lower "Bob" down right in front of Jesus." When he looked up, Jesus saw more than just four excited, expectant faces. He saw faith.

1. Jesus saw their faith. Mark 2:5 *When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, "Son, your sins are forgiven."* How did Jesus see the men's faith? How was it made visible? By action. Faith always produces action. These four men expressed their faith in Jesus first by bringing their buddy to Him for healing, and then by digging up the roof. They were so convinced that Jesus could help their friend that they wouldn't take no for an answer. Here are some ways we can learn from their faith:

- **Their faith was in Jesus.** Sometimes people mistakenly have faith in faith. They think, "If I just believe enough, it will happen." But for these guys, everything depended on Jesus. They had seen what Jesus could do and they knew Jesus could heal their friend.
- **Their faith was active.** Real faith always produces action. It affects your behavior. They believed that Jesus could heal their friend, so they got him to Jesus. **James 2:14-17 says** *"What good is it, my brothers, if a man claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save him? Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to him, 'Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed,' but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it? In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead."*
- **Their faith was persistent.** When the men got to the house and saw the crowd, they were undeterred. They had to get to Jesus! So when the way was blocked, they looked for another way, and when they couldn't find one, they made a new way. We see persistent faith in other Bible stories, like the story of blind Bartimaeus, the woman with a bleeding problem, and the Canaanite woman whose daughter was demonized. If you believe that Jesus is your answer, you won't let anything stop you from getting to Jesus.
- **Their faith was creative.** When the way to Jesus was blocked, they made a new way through the roof! They got creative. Has God asked you to do something? Are you stuck? Stopped by an obstacle? It may be time to exercise some creative faith.
- **Their faith was sacrificial.** Someone had to repair the roof. It doesn't say who did, but it's fair to assume that these four guys happily did the repairs. Sometimes our faith in Jesus leads us to do something risky, costly, and sacrificial.

2. Jesus forgave his sins. Mark 2:5-7 *"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?'"* Jesus knew the man's real need and dealt with that first: Jesus forgave the paralyzed man. By forgiving him, Jesus offended the religious leaders' theology and assumptions. "Who does He think He is? Only God can forgive sins." They understood Jesus was claiming to be God, and that was blasphemy. Jesus was crucified because of blasphemy.

He claimed to be God. He claimed to be able to do things that only God can do. So Jesus said, "Your sins are forgiven." Every one of us needs to hear that. Have you heard Jesus say that to you? "Your sins are forgiven". The paralyzed man and his friends got more than they bargained for when they came to Jesus. They came to Jesus for healing; the paralyzed man walked home not only healed physically, but spiritually. He walked home a new man, beginning a new life with God, forgiven, free, and whole. When you come to Jesus, you'll get more than you bargained for! Have you been forgiven...for everything? You can come to Jesus and He will forgive you.

3. Jesus healed the man. Mark 2:8-12 *"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? 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!" Jesus healed the man not only for the sick man's sake, but for everyone there, so they would know that He had authority to forgive sins. Anyone could say, "Your sins are forgiven", and never be able to prove it. But if you say, "Get up and walk," you can see right away whether it has happened, and if you had the authority to do that. So Jesus did the visible miracle to prove that He had the authority to do the invisible miracle. He healed to prove that He had authority to forgive. Who does Jesus think he is? God...and He proved it.

C. Life Group Questions (select, revise, and add as desired: 20-40 minutes)

1. In difficult situations, do you ever worry about having enough faith? How do you know if you have faith in faith, or faith in Jesus? What could you do to ensure that your faith is in Jesus and not in how much faith you have?
2. Remember, the four in Mark 2:5 had faith in Jesus...and it was for the good of their paralyzed friend. They acted on their faith. How do you creatively express faith in Jesus? Describe a time when your faith in Jesus demanded action, persistence, or sacrifice.
3. Do you have any friends that are desperately trying to get to Jesus? What are you doing to help them "get through the crowd" or overcome the obstacle that is preventing them from getting to Jesus?
4. How did Jesus respond to the men's faith? Who does Jesus think He is? Who do you think He is? Have you acted on your faith in Jesus and entrusted Him with your whole life?

D. Personal Application (1-3 Minutes)

- You will have done this in church on Sunday, but it's okay to do it again: take time to write down the names of people you know and love who need to get to Jesus.
- What about the rest of the lost world? Think of one other action you might take to help others get to Jesus, and write it down. Take some time to be creative and figure out how you will actively help others get to Jesus, write it down and create a plan of when and how you will do it.

E. Prayer Time (As a whole group or subgroups of 3-4: 10-15 Minutes)

- Thank God for showing us who His Son, Jesus was and is.
- Ask God to help you act on your faith...to help those whose names you wrote down, and to show you how to reach them and help them reach Jesus.
- Ask God to help you remember to put first things first, like Jesus did when He forgave the paralytic's sins.
- Offer any other praises or requests that arose during your discussion.