

## Jesus heals a paralysed man

**2** A few days later, when Jesus again entered Capernaum, the people heard that he had come home. <sup>2</sup>They gathered in such large numbers that there was no room left, not even outside the door, and he preached the word to them. <sup>3</sup>Some men came, bringing to him a paralyzed man, carried by four of them. <sup>4</sup>Since they could not get him to Jesus because of the crowd, they made an opening in the roof above Jesus by digging through it and then lowered the mat the man was lying on. <sup>5</sup>When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralyzed man, "Son, your sins are forgiven." <sup>6</sup>Now some teachers of the law were sitting there, thinking to themselves, <sup>7</sup>"Why does this fellow talk like that? He's blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone?" <sup>8</sup>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? <sup>9</sup>Which is easier: to say to this paralyzed man, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up, take your mat and walk'? <sup>10</sup>But I want you to know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins." So he said to the man, <sup>11</sup>"I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home." <sup>12</sup>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!" (Mark 2 v1-12)

## Faithful Friends

What value can you place on a faithful friend? Conversely, how important is it to be a faithful friend? When we have one or more of them, they seem priceless. Perhaps there is an old school friend who has stuck with you through thick and thin. You might not see them much nowadays, but you they are always there for you, and when you meet up again, you can pick up your friendship as if you had never been apart. I have the privilege of having a group of friends like that, that I have known since school It's a wonderful thing.

Today we are looking at an important miracle that is recorded in three gospel. The two central characters are Jesus, and a man that is paralysed. Yet, I want to bring into focus a group of faithful friends. These are the friends of the paralytic, without which there would have been no miracle.

## Capernaum

Jesus grew up in Nazareth, but was rejected there, so moved. A 10 hour walk from Nazareth was Capernaum, a small village with a fishing port but was on an important road which linked Israel to the capital of Syria, Damascus, so a good place for meeting and influencing people. At the time of story, he had picked up two pairs of brothers, all fishermen, to be his first disciples from this village, Andrew, Peter, James and John, and was soon to recruit a fifth local, their tax collector Matthew. He had not yet appointed the 12 but no doubt had many followers even in this early part of his ministry. Capernaum is mentioned more than 50 times in the New Testament, making it the place that is mentioned the most after Jerusalem.

Jesus has been on a preaching tour of Galilee, perhaps for a few weeks or even a few months. Jesus was often on the move, and does not seem to own any property, but if there was one place that he might regard as home, or at least a base for him, then it is most likely to be Peter's home in Capernaum. The movements of Jesus were unpredictable, as are anybody's movements who rely on the Holy Spirit for daily guidance. But word had got about that Jesus was going 'home' to Capernaum.

There was a lot of interest in seeing and hearing Jesus. The knowledge that he was going back to Capernaum for a while, meant that people could travel even as far as Jerusalem to Capernaum, and have a good chance of catching him.

## The House

We pick up the story from Mark's Gospel chapter 2

*A few days later, when Jesus again entered Capernaum, the people heard that he had come home. <sup>2</sup>They gathered in such large numbers that there was no room left, not even outside the door.. and he preached the word to them. (Mk 2 v1-2)*

We don't know the size of Peter's house, if it was average size then you could fit few more than 50 inside. If he had one of the nicer houses of the middle classes, with Peter's wife and mother-in-law, then it may have had a central courtyard with roofed galleries around it, and these then led into a series of apartments. Either way the scribes, religious dignitaries, some of who had travelled a very long way to be there, had

managed to be in the crowd but separate from the others, perhaps sat together behind Jesus, or in one of the adjoining apartments. Either way, the house is not only full, but so is the space surrounding the house. If you got there late, there were no visible doors. A day at home, but not a day off for Jesus.

## **The Message**

He had been going out to find people to preach too, but his rising popularity, now meant that if he stayed still for any time at all, then the crowds would come to him. He may have been looking for some down-time, but with his heart of compassion for the lost Jesus was apt to change his plans when a crowd sought him out, and stop and teach them, about what? About the kingdom of God. A slice of heaven was now amongst them. What did it mean for the presence of God to be on Earth. How should they respond? How could they be saved from their sins, how could they be set free from those things that weighed them down and held them back? They needed to believe in his good news, the Gospel message, and turn to him. This was his teaching out of his heart of compassion for each one of them then, and it is the same message today.

## **The Faithful Friends**

*Some men came, bringing to him a paralyzed man, carried by four of them. (Mk 2 v3)*

What do we know about the faithful friends. Who were they ? What do we know of them? They were local. They couldn't have carried a man on a stretcher very far. We know there was at least 6 in the group. Why? Well, one of them was paralyzed and 4 **of** his friends (implying there were more than 4) were carrying him. In my imagination they were a group of builder buddies, and one of them had become paralysed perhaps because of a viral sickness, or a tragic accident.

**They had loyalty:** The victim was probably a good guy, who had become very popular amongst his friends. Such had been his influence, that he had built up a circle of loyal friends. They had not abandoned him, because of his predicament, but their love and loyalty for the man was driving them to do something about it. They had heard that Jesus could heal, and they hatched this plan to get their friend to Jesus.

**They had determination;** a never-say-die attitude. For most people the seemingly impenetrable crowds around the house would have put them off. Perhaps they should try and find Jesus another day, when there are less people around. No, not these guys. Partnering their determination was their creativity. They could think outside the box. These guys were going to find a way in, whatever it took.

**They had faith** in Jesus to heal. When you live in a small village, everyone knows everyone else's business. The miraculous catch of fish that Peter and company pulled in would not have gone un-noticed. Then there was that day in this very house, when Jesus had healed Peter's mother-in-law which kicked off a procession of sick people coming to the house and one by one being healed. This may have included one of their own friends and families. Whatever they had heard or experienced, their faith level was high. No one had ever seen Jesus heal a paralysed man before, but if he could these other things, including the Leper that he had only just healed, then surely anything was possible for this man. They believed in Jesus and his powers to heal.

## **The Roof**

*Since they could not get him to Jesus because of the crowd, they made an opening in the roof above Jesus by digging through it and then lowered the mat the man was lying on ... (Mark 2v4)*

The 'early bird gets the worm' and those who had arrived early may now be feeling the crush in the crowd, but they could see and hear Jesus. Any late arrivals, would not even be able to get close to the door let alone get into the house or any courtyard. If you were on your own you might be able to force your way to the front, as you often find happens in crowded concert halls, where those with great determination and no respect for the those arrived earlier. Yet if you were in a group and you were carrying some-one then you can forget it.

Word got to the friends that Jesus was in town, but they arrived late. It took time to get everyone together, and then sort their friend out, and carry him carefully to Peters house. They could get nowhere near the doors. They probably tried sympathy first. "Let us through guys, our friend is really sick" only to get responses like "Hey, some of us are sick too, we need to get close to Jesus; sorry you should have got here earlier".

But they were undaunted. There was no talk of postponement. Where there is a will there is a way. They were earnestly seeking out Jesus for their friend and were not going to miss this opportunity. Their need was too big. "Lets get him up on the roof"

There are two options here, if they could get to the open external stairs, then they could negotiate carrying their friends up the stair case, though this can not have been an easy task. We don't know, but it could have been adjoined to other houses, in which case it would be possible to take the 'road of the roofs' as it was known, going up the steps outside one house which was easier to get to (perhaps even one of their own) and move across the rooftops to Peters house. Either way, there must have been some scary moments for the paralysed man as he was man handled into position.

The houses were made of stone, except for the roof which had wooden trusses supporting a firm lattice of straw mats which were then covered over and smoothed with hard clay. The flat roof top were a popular place to go. Years later, it is where Peter was praying up on the roof in Joppa when the soldiers of Centurion Cornelius came looking for him. The roofs were protected by a balustrade which by Jewish law had to be at least 3 foot high to prevent falls.

Once on the roof they had to establish where Jesus was. If the house had a courtyard, it would have been full and they would be able to see the direction that the crowd were looking in and then estimate where Jesus was. If not, they could at least make an initial hole in the roof, put a head through and see if they were somewhere close, then if so, keep knocking away the roof until the hole was big enough for a stretcher to go through.

What a commotion they must have caused, as they bashed away the roof, and roofing material fell on to the people below. The noise, the dirt, the commotion. Peter and his mother-in-law would have not been best pleased with the intentional vandalism to their property, and you can imagine Peter bellowing 'cut that out' or something more explicit to the men on the roof. There would have been some complaining at the commotion, some bemused, and some laughing at the spectacle.

But these were determined friends. These were faithful friends. I suspect they were prepared to pay for any damage caused and seeing their opportunity weren't giving in now. One of them had gone back for some ropes and these were attached to the mans stretcher bed. Looking through the hole, they could see the small space directly in front of Jesus, and knew exactly where to lower their friend. Now the tricky bit – if they are not careful they could drop their mate off the stretcher and crash on the floor below.. Some reassuring words. "Trust us buddy, we got you, you'll be right in front of Jesus. No crowds going to hold you back".

What a spectacle. No-one in the house knew what was happening, and the reason behind the vandalism, until they see this flying stretcher slowly descending on ropes, swinging a little from side to side. A few gasps, a few holding their breath! I think whilst Peter may have been having a fit, Jesus would have stopped preaching, and be sat there, smiling and enjoying the moment.

## **A burial.**

The words used in Mark was that they 'dug out' the roof and lowered the man down on a mat. These are the same words used then to describe a burial. But what a great symbol this is, because this paralysed man is about to say goodbye to his old life and embrace a new life from Jesus.

## **Your sins are forgiven**

*When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralyzed man, "Son, your sins are forgiven." (Mk 2 v5)*

Many in those days would see a sick or disabled person, and assume that it was their own wrong deeds that had brought about this illness, or perhaps if they were born that way then it must have been something that one of the parents had done wrong. Sometimes our bad ways do lead us into sickness, but more generally it is the joint sin of humanity that has brought sickness upon the world, not individual wrongs. Jesus emphasises on other occasions that in this life anyway, we are not punished directly for our sins via suffering, we have to wait for life after death, for that punishment, and then only if we don't except Jesus as our Saviour.

The paralysed man, may well have been connecting in his own mind the sickness he had with the things he had done wrong. Then lying there in the presence of Jesus, surely sensing the teachers holiness, the man must have felt repentant in his heart, for the things he had done wrong in his life, and be wishing inside for forgiveness, for release from the guilt that he felt. Jesus can see into the man, and into his thoughts. He knew the paralysed man needed to accept forgiveness into his heart before he could accept healing into his body. There is no forgiveness without repentance. Jesus can see into a heart that is sorry for the wrongs in his life. He sees a man whose most important and urgent problem is not his need for mobility but his need for salvation.

Of course Jesus was aware of the scrutiny of the religious leaders who had come to see if they could find fault in him, but I think this moment was one genuinely for the sake of the paralysed man, not for anyone else. Jesus saw him, he saw he needs. What is the crowd thinking as this amazing event unfolded. I expect there was silence and an air of expectancy. Even Peter had stopped cursing.

Looking through the hole in the roof are all the faces of the friends, nervous, excited, and slightly pleased with themselves. They stare wide-eyed at Jesus. Their buddy lies there in his paralysis, his muscles wasted with time, just a shadow of what he had been, Eyes are all on him. The crowd is hushed and looks on eagerly. At this moment the unfathomable love of Jesus is focussed on one man. He embraces him in that love, takes away guilt and regret and releases him from his bondage of sin. *'Son, your sins are forgiven'*.

## The Scribes

<sup>6</sup> Now some teachers of the law were sitting there, thinking to themselves, <sup>7</sup> "Why does this fellow talk like that? He's blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone?" <sup>8</sup> 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 this paralyzed man, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up, take your mat and walk'?" (Mk 2 v6-9)

The religious leaders had travelled wide and far to be there, and had separated themselves from the rest of the crowd. They thought themselves too holy or special to be mixing with the riff-raff ! When they heard the words of Jesus, it strengthened their prejudices against him. Not even the Jews promised messiah had been credited with the authority to forgive sins. The scribes were thinking this was blasphemy which brings with it the death penalty, but first of all, by their own laws of blasphemy you had to say out loud the divine name or invite people to follow other Gods, neither of which Jesus was doing. Yet popular opinion amongst religious types was that even to dishonour Gods name in any way was blasphemy, and this claim was taken to be dishonouring. They were thinking that only God can forgive sins, and of course they were right. So if Jesus is claiming he can forgive sins, then he must also claim to be God. Yes, so far so good. But but they thought Jesus can **not** be God so he must be dishonouring the name of God. Wrong !

Just as the Spirit had revealed the thoughts of the paralysed man to him, he now also knew what the Scribes were thinking, and challenged them on this. Jesus is clearly telling them that he **is** the Son of God, and they should believe in him.

Why do you think like that. Which is easier to say to this paralysed man. Your sins are forgiven, or take up your mat and walk? It is a great question, because they know and everyone knows that both are **impossible** for man, but both are **possible** for God.

This is Gods greatest concern and always has been. Your sins forgiven. All the miracles that Jesus performed was to point the people to one fact, that Jesus was God, and being God, Jesus is then able to

give his **life** to save us from our sins. Spill **his** blood to pay for what we have done wrong. Come to earth and give up being in the presence of his Father, so that through his salvation, and his gift of the Holy Spirit, we ourselves can be in the presence of God. He has to show them, that he **is** God and has the power to forgive.

## The Healing

*<sup>11</sup> "I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home." <sup>12</sup> 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!" (Mark 2 v11-12)*

The atmosphere was buzzing with anticipation. Having chastised the teachers of the law, without breaking his sentence he turns to the paralysed man, and gives him 3 commands – Get Up, Take your Mat, Go home. Can you imagine the friends holding on to each other as they leant into the hole, perhaps shouting encouragement 'Yes, Yes. Go on'. When Jesus speaks, things happen, lives are changed.

His friends had faith for this moment and perhaps were the least surprised when their friend did just that and got up, took his mat, and as the crowds parted for him to go out (they had not parted for him to go in !) he danced his way through the enraptured and cheering crowd. Luke describes the atmosphere with the word 'ecstatic' They are thinking this is insane, we have never seen anything like this !

Jesus can forgive sins because he is God. Jesus can make the paralysed man walk and dance, because he is God. Yet we can also see from this event, the difference that faithful friends can make.

## Faithful friends

One day at my church a visiting pastor asked me if I had heard what had happened at his church. I hadn't, but when he told me it changed my life.

It was April 10<sup>th</sup> 2013, Paul Haynes who suffered from spinal injuries was taken to a prayer meeting by his wife held at their church at Cwmbran Wales. I am told he didn't really want to go that night as he was feeling tired, but his wife took him anyway! Faithful wife ! But that night as the lead pastor prayed, a power like electricity shot through Paul's body and he jumped out of his wheelchair. Then with incredible hulk like strength he lifted the heavy wheel chair above him and ran around the 50 people in the room. It was an astonishing miracle, and it kicked off celebration services at the Cwmbran church where hundreds met most nights to experience this power and see people from all over the world come and be healed or blessed.

This continued for several months. After my first meeting, I then made regular trips to Cwmbran which was quite a drive for me after a days work. I regularly took my friends with me. I wanted whatever anointing they had in Cwmbran and I was determined to get it if at all possible. I don't like seeing people ill and wanted to have a prayer ministry where I too could see God move in power and heal people. The pastors prayed for me to receive an anointing for this type of prayer ministry, and I started praying for people, although at first my faith in seeing any results was close to zero. Of course many I prayed for were not healed, but I trusted Jesus, persisted and began to see more and more people healed, particularly at first from painful knees, shoulders and backs, migraines and anxiety. I knew I had no healing power, it was all about Jesus, his spirit, his power, and I had to learn how to have faith in Him working through me. Then I started see more physical healings with those partially deaf or deaf in one ear having their hearing restored.

But I had always wanted to see a person completely blind be healed. What a marvellous thing that must be to be healed of blindness.

Jesus said to his disciples **I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these** (John 14v12). I love it in Luke's gospel when Jesus linking himself to Isaiah's words says **"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has chosen me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind..."** (Luke 4v18). I want to see that too. I want the Holy Spirit on me too. I want to bring the good news of Jesus to the poor too, in what I say and in what I do, and I want to see them saved. I want to see

people who are captive to addictions and depression etc set free. And I **want** to see recovery of sight to the blind. For me its part of the package.

If I was at a Cwmbran healing service I would get my way to near the front where the action was, and if I saw a blind person, I would stand behind them, and see if anyone healed them, because I wanted to see it, so my faith for this would rise in me. It was a bit like stalking them, but of course they could not see me because they were blind. I saw many incredible healings at Cwmbran but I never saw a blind person have their sight restored. I wanted too, because when God stretches your mind with his miracles, it never goes back to its original dimensions.

One of my role models is a lady missionary in Mozambique called Heidi Baker. For many years she too had wanted to witness healing miracles especially for the blind then one day felt a promise from God that the blind would see. She started praying for every blind person she saw, even stopping a Landrover if she saw one when travelling through a village. Many of these people were saved but none got their sight back. But she persisted in faith. After one year, it started to happen, she was in a poor village, in a mud hut praying for an old lady who was blind, when her eyes change colour from a milky white to brown and she could suddenly see. Her name was Heidi. Later that night she went to another village where friends brought an old lady to her that was totally blind. She prayed for the lady, who then points at her and says you are wearing a black skirt. She could see. Her name was Heidi. The following day she went to another village, and was approached by a boy in rags who was leading an old lady to her. The lady was totally blind, but when Heidi prayed for her, her sight was restored. She too was called Heidi. What faithful friends they were that brought the blind ladies to Heidi. From then on Heidi Baker was able to pray for the blind and see them healed through the power of the Spirit. I loved the story, and it helped me to carry on praying even when I felt they wouldn't be healed through my prayers. Although I had read about it, I had still wanted to witness some-one else pray for a blind person, and that person have their site restored

Last month I was in the most Eastern town of North Macedonia called Delcevo. I had wanted to a special service in their tiny church people, where it was packed with their non-believing friends and families, see people saved and healed, and the church grow as a result. I had done this the previous week, at a more Northern church in the country and it had gone wonderfully the church doubling in size from 30 to 60+, and many saved and miraculously healed. But the organisation of the Delcevo church had not gone well, and it seemed to be just the church folk there. I had failed to get an experienced worship leader as I had been given the previous week. I had bought food for 30+ and there were less than 20. I changed my talk from an evangelistic one to talking about the need to love each other. My initial feeling was frustration and that I had failed, and yet there was a strong sense of Gods presence in the room that day, and I knew were experiencing the blessing of God on them even before I had prayed for anyone.

Then I did what I do after every service in Macedonia, I invited people forward for prayer. There are so many desperate for a touch of God, that this can sometimes feel like a stampede with people pushing and shoving to get to the front. At the front of the queue today, were two ladies, one was middle aged, and she had somehow got her friend up quickly and to the front of the queue. What a faithful friend she was.

The older lady introduced herself as Betty, 93 years old. She was slim, serene and held herself way. I asked her what she would like Jesus to do for her today. She said she was totally blind and she would like to see a little. I had never prayed for anyone totally blind, and still not seen anyone like this healed. I would have excused myself for thinking 'well this isn't going to happen'. In my own mind, I wanted to see some-one healed of blindness through some-one elses prayers, so it gave me the faith myself to pray for the blind. And yet today, something was lifting my level of faith, and looking back, I think it was the faith of Betty and her friend that Jesus through his Spirit could still bring recovery of sight to the blind.

I wanted to be sure exactly what I would be praying for, so I asked Betty to tell me what she could and couldn't see. She said that saw she only saw black, just total darkness. So I took authority in the name Jesus, prayed against the blindness, and prayed the healing of the Holy Spirit into her eyes. Then she exclaimed "I can see light". Okay, I said lets go again, and then it happened. She pointed at the logo on my

grey top and said in a delighted voice “That is Red”. It was. I prayed again, and then she smiled, and said “I can see your face” and then she pointed at my translator and said “I can see his face too”.

.As I reflected on my failures, and the Lords successes that day, what struck me was the power of a friends faithfulness. What loyalty and determination from the friend get Betty to the church and to get her to the front of the queue. What a day for Betty. What a day for her friend. What a day for me. Thankyou Jesus

### **Does healing need faith**

The faith of friends and family seem to be key to healing, but is this necessarily true. What do our scriptures say about this?

Capernaum’s centurion came to Jesus. His servant was paralysed with sickness and about to die. Jesus went to go with him, but he said, I don’t deserve to have you under my roof, just say the word and he will be healed. Jesus exclaimed he had never found anyone in Israel with such great faith. Then Jesus said to the centurion, “Go! Let it be done just as you believed it would.” And his servant was healed at that moment. The faith of a friend was the catalyst for the servants healing.

On another occasion a lady that had been issuing blood for 12 years, approached Jesus in a crowd, and thought if I can just touch his cloak I can be healed. She did and she was. Jesus called her out, and said “My daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace.” In this case the woman’s own faith was what had made her well.

But what of Lazarus. He had been dead for more than 3 days when Jesus told him to come out of his tomb, and he was raised from the dead. It was not the faith of his sister Martha, who had said don’t open the tomb because he’ll be rotting away at it will smell. Perhaps it was the faith of Jesus alone in this case.

What we see from our scriptures is that God is above all. He does not have to have our faith in order to save or heal, but often he chooses to use us, in what we have faith for, and he absolutely delights in our faith.

### **Having loyalty and determination**

Healing does not always happen. The first priority of Jesus for all of us, is to save us from our sins, to break off any chains that entrap us to the world. He loves us, and does want the best for us, but our physical healing is not his number one priority. His first priority is to address our most urgent problem, our sin, our separation from God. It is pointless us taking a healthy body into an infinite eternity of suffering without God. Even though our spiritual well-being and that of our friends and family is His first priority, it should not stop asking for our minds and bodies to be restored, and keep asking. It is what he tells us to do.

**“Keep on asking, and you will receive what you ask for. Keep on seeking, and you will find. Keep on knocking, and the door will be opened to you (Mt 7v7)**

The friends never gave up trying to reach Jesus, despite the difficulty of the task. They were loyal and they were determined. If you are earnestly seeking after God, then nothing will keep you from him. If you are half-hearted about it, there are **tons** of things that will stop you getting close to God.

It is a great thing to have a faithful friend who will do the best for you, and who will encourage you in you faith, and pray for you, and be there for you. But what an even greater things for you to be that faithful friend, to be praying for, and encouraging you friends, to see them saved, to see them set free from what prevents them being how God intended them to be.

### **Having Faith**

Our salvation is invisible, it is the unseen, and requires our trust and faith in our supernatural saviour.

When the paralysed man was lowered in front of Jesus, Mark's Gospel says that 'Jesus saw their faith'. It doesn't say he saw the hole in the roof, or that he saw the mess, debris and commotion they had caused, but that he saw their faith

Some of you follow Jesus today because you had faithful friends, those that shared the gospel with you both by words and by their life-styles. Those that prayed for you and never gave up on you. Like the friends in this miracle, their determination to keep going may have been driven by 'love' for their friend, but their motivation was triggered by 'faith' in Jesus. It was faith that that Jesus could heal, which set them going on the path to success.

We are born separated from God, and subject to the sin and sickness in the world. But it is faith, that opens up the bridge to reconnecting with God. It is our own wilful decision and action, to put our hope and our trust in Jesus that opens up the way back to God.

This is our own will power. We can choose to have hope and faith in Jesus. Many that day in Peters house chose to have faith in Jesus, but not the Scribes. They had their questions answered, they saw with their own eyes the proof that Jesus could heal and forgive people, that he was indeed the son of God. But that day **they** chose not to have faith, and they carried on persecuting Jesus. What a contrast to the paralysed man and his friends.

"When Jesus saw **their faith** (including that of the sick man), he said to the paralyzed man, "**Son, your sins are forgiven.**"

It is placing our Faith in Jesus, and what he did for us on the cross, and the power in his blood to forgive us sins, that sets us free, from the greatest sickness of all, the hold that death had on our lives. We come in humility, knowing that only God and God alone can forgive our sins. Without him we have nothing, we have no hope, we are lost now and lost forever. But with him, we have everything, we have hope, and we have a present in his presence, we have a future in his glory.

His priority is to heal our spiritual sickness, to save our souls, to take us into the presence of God. This is not just true for **some** people, but he wants to be able to forgive **all** people. But then it does not stop there, he loves us, and everything about us, and it may be that it is the right time for you to have that physical healing, or that mental healing that you have carried for so long

Jesus continued "**Which is easier: to say to this paralyzed man, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up, take your mat and walk'?**" (v9), or blind eyes see, or deaf ears open, or cancer go, or depression go, all in the name of Jesus.

As this miracles shows us today, we have a God who saves **and** we have a God who heals. His name is Jesus. Lets be faithful to our friends whatever their situation. Bring them the Word of God, in the Love of God, by the Power of God, then faithfully and lovingly persist until you have helped taken them into the presence of Jesus.

**Amen.**