

KEY TEXT

Luke 5:17-26 (ESV)

“On one of those days, as he was teaching, Pharisees and teachers of the law were sitting there, who had come from every village of Galilee and Judea and from Jerusalem. And the power of the Lord was with him to heal. And behold, some men were bringing on a bed a man who was paralyzed, and they were seeking to bring him in and lay him before Jesus, but finding no way to bring him in, because of the crowd, they went up on the roof and let him down with his bed through the tiles into the midst before Jesus.

And when he saw their faith, he said, “Man, your sins are forgiven you.” And the scribes and the Pharisees began to question, saying, “Who is this who speaks blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God alone?” When Jesus perceived their thoughts, he answered them, “Why do you question in your hearts? Which is easier, to say, ‘Your sins are forgiven you,’ or to say, ‘Rise and walk’? But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins”—he said to the man who was paralyzed—“I say to you, rise, pick up your bed and go home.”

And immediately he rose up before them and picked up what he had been lying on and went home, glorifying God. And amazement seized them all, and they glorified God and were filled with awe, saying, "We have seen extraordinary things today.""

INTRODUCTION

1. Nothing pleases God like faith

2. Background of our Key Text

The background of the slide is an abstract composition. It features a central area of soft, light blue that resembles a clear sky. This central area is framed by various geometric shapes and patterns. On the left side, there are overlapping squares and rectangles in shades of yellow, green, and light blue. On the right side, there are similar shapes in shades of blue, purple, and orange. The overall effect is a vibrant, multi-colored abstract design that serves as a backdrop for the text.

TITLE:

‘FAITH THAT GRABS THE ATTENTION OF GOD’

Outline:

- **The four types of faith that grab the attention of God**
- **The ONE who poked a hole through Heaven**

MAIN POINTS

(I) THE FOUR TYPES OF FAITH THAT GRAB THE ATTENTION OF GOD

What are the four qualities of faith that can grab the attention of God?

1. FAITH THAT INITIATES

Jesus visited this house in Capernaum at a time when news about Jesus' teachings and miracles had reached every person in the kingdom.

His audience was formed of two basic groups of Jewish people.

- ordinary folks who enjoyed Jesus' teachings.**
- Pharisees and teachers of the law, who had gone there to find fault with Jesus' teachings.**

“And the power of the Lord was present for him (Jesus) to heal the sick” (Luke 5:17).

He could have healed many, yet there’s no evidence to assume that Jesus performed any miracles at this moment of the day.

What was the problem?

A safe assumption would be there were no sick, blind deaf, crippled, or demon-possessed people in that meeting.

There must have been plenty of crippled and sick in the neighborhood.

Yet He wouldn't go from house to house looking for these.

Why?

Because that's none of Jesus' business!

Rather it was their business to bring these before their God.

Miracles are events in which God and man work together.

"Without man, God shall not, and without God man cannot."

The audience had their faith in Jesus, they were interested in His teachings.

Sadly, none of them cared to take an initiative to bring the sick, blind, deaf, crippled, or demon-possessed people into that meeting.

Then there was a third group.

A much smaller group of men who had taken great interest in Jesus' teachings.

They heard that a great physician was in their town.

They also had faith in Him.

These men's faith was different, however.

Unlike others who professed to have faith but did not do anything about it, these men decided to take a course of the **initiative.**

What does this mean for Christian believers?

A. The Bible says faith without actions is dead, (James 2:14-26). Anyone can believe in the power of God. Anyone can claim to have faith. However, it remains dead as long as we fail to take an initiative.

E.g. Abraham

E.g. Two Christian taxi drivers

B. Another option would be to offer to pray for the needy people in your community. Now is a good time to take an initiative. Are you afraid God will fail you? The Bible says, "And these signs will accompany those who believe: In my name, they will drive out demons; they will speak in new tongues; they will pick up snakes with their hands; and when they drink deadly poison, it will not hurt them at all; they will place their hands on sick people, and they will get well." (Mark 16:17-18)

C. The paralytic in this story received not only physical healing but spiritual healing also. He became a born-again Christian! Simply because few men wanted to help him. Helps is a very strong channel that manifests God's power. It provides opportunities for personal evangelism.

D. Besides God expects that we will help people in need. The Bible says "Pure and undefiled religion before God the Father is this: to care for orphans and widows in their misfortune and to keep oneself unstained by the world." James 1:27 (NET)

It wasn't the paralytic's faith that impressed Jesus, but the faith of his four friends.

Jesus responded to their faith and healed the man.

For better or worse, a person's faith affects others.

No man can make another person a Christian, but a person's words, actions and love will give people a chance to respond.

2. FAITH THAT PERSISTS

The house in which Jesus was teaching was full.

Carrying a paralytic and pushing through the thick wall of humans was virtually impossible.

The faith of the four friends was so **persistent.**

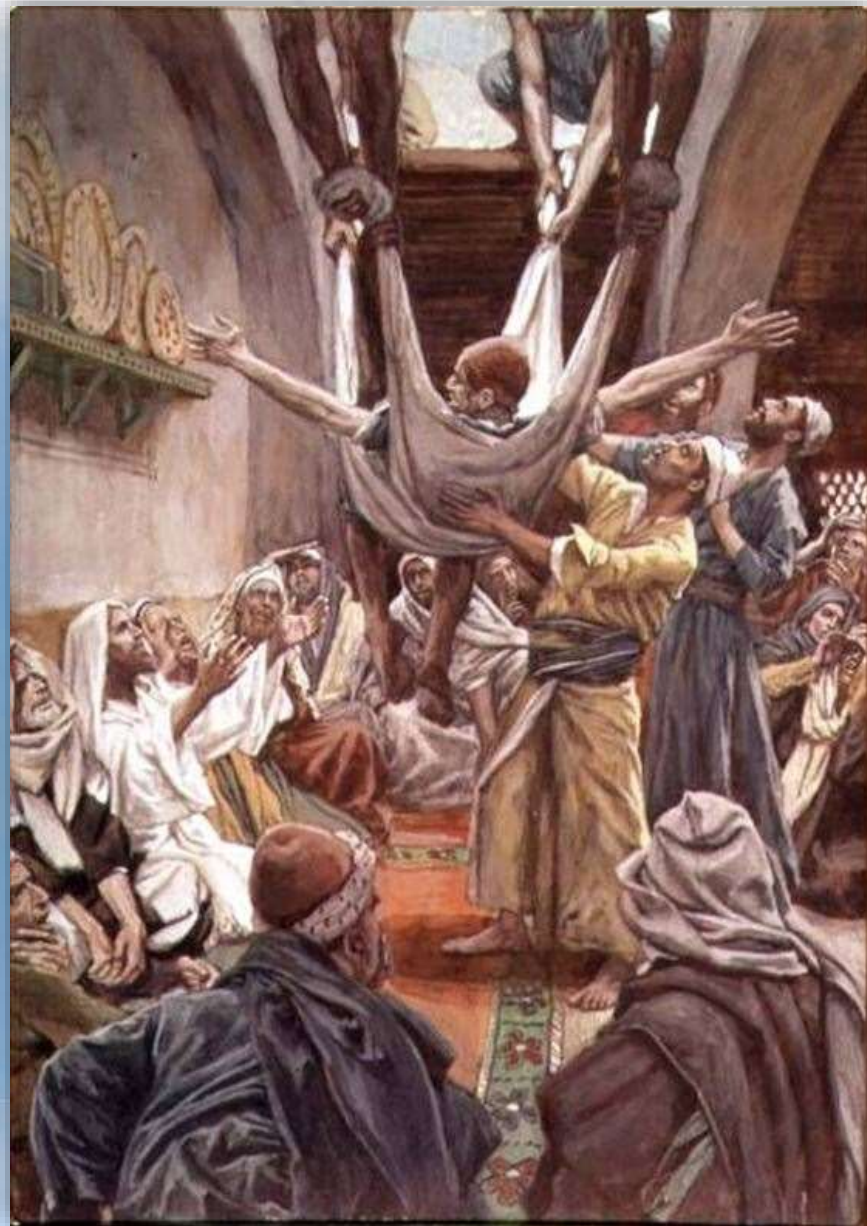
Description of a typical Palestinian peasant's house.



House during Jesus' time

These men, as they couldn't push through the crowd, carried the paralytic up the outside stairway to the roof, dug up the compacted thatch and earth, removed the tiles, and lowered the man through now-exposed beams to the floor below.

Their faith was a faith of initiatives, their faith was a **faith of persistency hence God performed the miracle.**



Four Friends Letting Down the Paralytic

What does this mean for the Christian Believers?

A. When faced with situations many times we give up very soon, only to find out much later we were inches away from the solution at the time we decided to give up.

In Christian ministry, many people have faith to initiate but only a few have faith to continue through hardships.

The Lord provides a way for those who keep pushing.

B. Persistency is like pushing against a large rock God ordered us to push but doesn't move by half a millimeter.

After years of pushing we conclude, that we have failed because the rock never moved.

Such thoughts are grave mistakes because we are called only to push the rock not to move it.

God is the one who will move the rock and He will do it in His own time.

**C. When you pray do not cease to P.U.S.H
(Pray Until Something Happens).**

A faith that was let down does not mean that God does not care.

It means you have to persist in your faith.....hope against hope; faith against faith.

Genesis 22:1 – After these things God tested Abraham.....”

“Testing must be clearly distinguished from tempting. God does not tempt anyone to do evil (James 1:13); He does, however TEST THE COMMITMENT OF PEOPLE.”

3. FAITH THAT JUSTIFIES

Jesus noticed the paralytic's need for spiritual healing as well as physical healing, something no one else knew.

This is why Jesus pardoned the paralytic's sin, (Luke 5:20).

The teachers of the law and the Pharisees began to say to themselves "Who is this man who speaks blasphemy? Who can forgive sins but God alone?" (Luke 5:21).

The Pharisees and the teachers were right in their opinion that God alone can forgive sins.

But they were wrong when they said Jesus spoke blasphemy.

Jesus is the Son of God and is of the same essence as God the Father.

He has the authority to forgive sin.

The Pharisees and teachers of the law did not believe that Jesus is God.

God offers the same forgiveness given to the paralytic to all who believe.

The Greek word *aphiemi*, translated "forgiven," means TO LEAVE OR LET GO, TO GIVE UP A DEBT, TO SEND AWAY FROM ONESELF.

Forgiveness means that A RELATIONSHIP HAS BEEN RENEWED DESPITE A WRONG THAT HAS BEEN DONE.

But the act cannot be erased or changed.

The notion of *aphiemi*, however, goes far beyond human forgiveness, for it includes the “**PUTTING AWAY**” of sin in two ways:

- The law and justice are satisfied because Jesus paid the penalty that sin deserved; thus sins can no longer be held against a believer.
- The guilt caused by sin is removed and replaced with Christ's righteousness. Believers are so forgiven that in God's eyes, it is as if they had never sinned. That is called **JUSTIFICATION**.

What does this mean for the Christian Believer?

Do you carry a heavy burden for sins you have committed?

Confess all to Christ and receive his forgiveness.

He can cleanse your conscience from guilt. He puts away those sins and remembers them no more. Neither should you.

What does this mean for the unbelievers?

A. Like the paralytic in this incident, we too have two kinds of needs. First, we have **physical needs** like healing, financial issues, problems in marriage, etc. Second, we have a **spiritual need**. We are spiritual beings created to have a relationship with God. Unfortunately, our sinful nature separates us from God, **(Romans 3:23)**.

B. All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God, (Romans 3:23). It also says that the penalty for sin is death, (Romans 6:23). Religions teach that salvation can be earned through work. The Bible says we cannot, (Ephesians 2:8). What must we do then?

C. Romans 10:9 says "If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved."

D. Now does the Bible means to say that if I just say the words and believe Jesus came back from the dead I'll be saved? Even if I live a horrible life? Absolutely not! It means I must follow Jesus' teachings and believe God raised Jesus from the dead. In the Bible, to confess means to agree with the will and word of God, to agree that God is correct in what He says. "Lord" means that He is the leader and you are a follower.

4. FAITH THAT OBEYS

In reply to Pharisees and teachers of the law, Jesus asked them, “Why do you question these things in your hearts? Which is easier to say to the paralytic, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, “Rise, take up your bed and walk’? (Mark 2:9).

**“Your sins are forgiven” is easier because no one can tell if it happened or not.
You can’t **validate** it.**

Therefore, He then told the man “Rise, pick up your bed and go home” (Mark 2:11).

Then the paralytic got up and walked out in full view of the gathering, (Mark 2:12).

Jesus forgave the man for his sins and validated them with a miracle.

Jesus actually commanded the paralytic to get up from his bed and go home to which he obeyed in faith.

What does this mean for the Christian Believer?

There are two implications here.

- **It is nothing but foolishness to wait until God does everything.**
- **God helps us but He also demands that we obey Him in faith.**

(II) THE ONE WHO POKED A HOLE IN HEAVEN

But this morning, I want all of you to look at another worse paralytic and that is **ALL OF US.**

Like that paralytic, we are all immobilized by our sins.

Heaven to us is like that roof in that house – it blocks us from God and heaven.

God and Heaven is like a zinc roof to us.

We can't penetrate God and God cannot come to us.

Then there was this **ULTIMATE FRIEND who is **THE GREATER FOUR FRIENDS – JESUS.****

He took the **initiative to come to us first by becoming a man born in the same likeness as us.**

He lived a life of righteousness, going around healing and preaching the good news.

Yet nobody appreciated him. He was ridiculed, mocked, denied, rejected and betrayed and falsely accused, resulting in the crucifixion.

He voiced His fears, weaknesses and agony at the Garden of Gethsemane.

Yet, He never backed down even though his three disciples backed down from him.

He set his face towards Jerusalem, **persistent in his faith to go to the cross.**

On the road to Golgotha, He fell beneath the weight of the heavy cross, yet He **persisted in walking up to Calvary Hill.**

On the cross, the ridicule of men, the cruelty and the pain of the nails; the public humiliation of His nakedness; His thirst and bleeding, did not stop Him from coming down from the cross.

He **persisted in his suffering till the end for us.**

For what?

So that by dying in our place, He became the **PARALYTIC MAN, paralyzed on the cross for our sins.**

By persisting in this atoning death, His one-time offering of His own life became the very **propitiation of God's wrath so that God and heaven are open to us again.**

Yes, through the atoning death of Jesus, He poked a hole in Heaven so that God today can **justify any one who comes to Him in any paralytic state – be it a spiritual or physical paralysis.**

And because of Jesus - **OUR ULTIMATE FRIEND, we can be lowered by His grace right to the feet of God to hear these words from God – **Your sins are forgiven you. Rise and walk.****

And our job is to have this faith to obey – to cooperate with God's command.

We can obey Christ after we have graphically seen His faith to initiate, to persist and to justify us.

CONCLUSION

Jesus is our Greater Four Friends by becoming the **PARALYTIC MAN ON THE CROSS so that today nothing can paralyze us.**

“I say to you, rise, pick up your bed and go home.”

Like the four friends, Jesus went all the way to get us saved and healed.

He poked through heaven by allowing Himself to be poked by the nails on the cross so that God's peace can be lowered from heaven to us.

Today, God has commanded us through this story to be the four friends who exercise a faith that grabs the attention of God.

And if you are in any way paralyzed by a sickness or sin or this fallen life, then know that Jesus has taken your paralytic state so that you can rise and walk again.

Nothing pleases God more than faith.

Jesus has exercised the faith that grabs the attention of God.

All He asks from you is to go and do likewise because He is in you and you can have His faith that initiates, a faith that persists, a faith that justifies and a faith that obeys.

Grab the attention of God by such faith.

Salvation and healing are here today.

