

A PARALYTIC: Show Me Your Friends

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Luke 5:17-26

Loving Jesus sermon series

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INTRODUCTION: We again meet the incomparable Jesus. Several cast members participate in this remarkable story. The hero, Jesus, is pestered by His persistent critics, the Pharisees. They always tried to trap Him. They showed up in force—even from Jerusalem. How could they not love what Jesus was doing? They loved rules, not people. They reacted to Jesus with anger, bitterness, contempt, envy, hardness of heart, and judgment. When the paralytic's companions couldn't bring him through the front door of a house because of a large crowd, they improvised. *"Necessity is the mother of all invention."* Their friend had a need. This was their opportunity to help. They seized the moment. They were proactive. It seems doubtful His critics were convinced even when they saw the miracle. Healing comes in many ways. Healing usually comes through the phenomenal gifts of doctors, medicine, science, and technology. Sometimes, the Lord heals us through a supernatural event. We pray for healing; however, it happens. Yet, we are more than physical beings—we have souls and spirits. Body, mind, and spirit share a strong relationship.

APPLICATION: The "sinners" Jesus met broke the rules and caused havoc. The Pharisees, on the other hand, loved their rules more than they loved people. While we all need to judge behaviors and determine what is right from what is wrong, that is different than condemning others. Are you more of a rule-breaker or a rule-enforcer? Why? How can you be more like Jesus? One of my axioms is: *"Show me your friends and I'll show you your future."* Friends are a major influence on us. How are they influencing you and vice versa? As we celebrate graduation, we pray for our grads to make good friends in life. Look for "friends" in our readings this week.

Luke 5:17-26 ("Show me your friends...I'll show you your future")

On one of those days, 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. ¹⁸ 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, ¹⁹ 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. ²⁰ And when he saw their faith, he said, "Man, your sins are forgiven you." ²¹ And the scribes and the Pharisees began to question, saying, "Who is this who speaks blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God alone?" ²² When Jesus perceived their thoughts, he answered them, "Why do you question in your hearts? ²³ Which is easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven you,' or to say, 'Rise and walk'? ²⁴ 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." ²⁵ And immediately he rose up before them and picked up what he had been lying on and went home, glorifying God. ²⁶ And amazement seized

them all, and they glorified God and were filled with awe, saying, "We have seen extraordinary things today."

*as he was teaching, **Pharisees** and teachers of the law were sitting there* There were only about 6,000 Pharisees, but they were influential. They not only kept the law, but they put a fence around it, too. When the Commandment said don't take God's name in vain, they wouldn't even say God's name. They tended to obey the Commandments, but not love God and/or others. Not all of them were like this, but generally they tended to be proud, not humble. They were Jesus' chief opponents.

from every village of Galilee and Judea and from Jerusalem. Luke 5 is early in His ministry. Jesus' reputation is spreading.

And the power of the Lord was with him to heal. He preached to the crowds, taught His disciples, and healed the sick.

¹⁸ *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,* ¹⁹ *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.* While Jesus was teaching, there was a disturbance. 4 men tore a hole in the roof and lowered a man on a mat into the crowd. Who were these men? How did they become friends with the paralytic? They certainly went the extra mile. There's no story w/o them. This man had caring friends who were creative, courageous, and determined. They went the extra mile to help. **"Show me your friends – I'll show you your future."**

We think of a roof on a house having shingles. A house in at then/there had a flat roof with a slight pitch so the water could run off. It had a few beams with sticks and twigs along with some about a foot of compressed earth to keep the rain out. between the spaces. It would be easy to dig out a section.

My ORU dilemma. Sit next to Jim and have fun but flunk out or pay attention to the teacher, be bored and graduate. **"Show me your friends – I'll show you your future."**

*And when he saw **their faith*** not the man's. They did all the work, including the work of faith. Eventually life knocks us down. We need people who can help us get back up on our feet. *he said, "Man, your sins are forgiven you."* In that day, suffering was associated with sin. Jesus doesn't say this to everyone, but does to him. Jesus' first words to the man were not about sickness but about sin.

²¹*And the scribes and the Pharisees began to question, saying, "Who is this who speaks blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God alone?"* Only God can forgive sins. Jesus makes a claim to be God. They are doing their job – testing the spirits. After witnessing this healing, you'd think they would follow Jesus, too. Some did. But most had their minds made up. It makes you wonder who the REAL paralytics were – the man or the Pharisees?

²⁴ *But that you may know that the Son of Man has **authority** on earth to forgive sins"* The physical healing served as proof or a sign of His authority.

—he said to the man who was paralyzed—"I say to you, rise, pick up your bed and go home."

²⁵*And immediately he rose up before them* The paralytic had a choice. His friends could work and believe, but he had to respond. He acted.

and picked up what he had been lying on and went home, glorifying God. His mat was his home (he lived in his bed; it went with him everywhere – if he could go anywhere). For the healed man to “go home,” means Jesus restored him to his family and synagogue – all those who would have rejected him because of the stigma associated with his infirmity.

²⁶ *And amazement seized them all, and they glorified God and were filled with awe, saying, “We have seen extraordinary things today.”* There is a community response. Who wouldn’t love Jesus? The Pharisees.

Application: It’s a nice story, but it was a long time ago and I’m not paralyzed. How does this apply to me?

1.) The **body** is very important in scripture. Jesus not only preached/taught, which was about the mind and the spirit, but He also healed. *“And the power of the Lord was with him to heal.”* (17b) We should be good stewards of our bodies. A great book by Tim Tennent is *“For The Body.”* We will have a study on human sexuality on Sunday nights in August.

But we are more than our bodies. Oral Roberts had a “Body, Mind, Spirit” worldview. **(Picture)** He wanted his students to be physically in shape, so students took aerobic classes. This was cutting edge in the 60’s. Oral wanted to educate the mind with reason and education. He also knew we are more than just animals – we have bodies and minds – God created humans “In His Image.” Our spirits are eternal.

2.) The **mind**, so we can think through things and make decisions that matter.

3.) The **spirit**. In communion we say these wonderful words: “In the Name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven.” We need to trust in Jesus and repent, of course, but we need to hear these words.

4.) I’d add a fourth component – The **Social**. Relational. To a large extent, the New Testament is about friends. **Peter** made friends. Cornelius was a Gentile. Friendships broke down barriers. **Paul** made friends all over the world. We need good friends. To a large extent, life is about making good friends.

Luke 23:12 *And Herod and Pilate became friends with each other that very day, for before this they had been at enmity with each other.* **1 Corinthians 15:33** *“Do not be deceived: “Bad company ruins good morals.” “Show me your friends – I’ll show you your future.”*

I went to the OKC Firefighters Hall of Fame years ago and was shocked to see an old **trampoline (Picture)** or safety net that were used to catch people when they jumped out of burning buildings. I do not remember the exact figures but it was something like 14 people holding the net for a 150 pound man jumping out of a 3rd story building. Eventually, life knocks us down. We need others to catch us when we have to jump; and we need to be there for others to catch them. To a large extent, life is about making good friends.

How do I make friends?

7 Pillars of Parenting (visual) works for all of us: ***Come. Pray. Play. Eat. Give. Read. Serve.***

Come and get involved. One of the best ways we make friends = to serve. Service moves us off our preoccupation with self. Service is one of the best ways to get to know others. There are many places to serve. Including Kids Ministry.

Some say, *“That’s just not my personality. I’m not ___ (extroverted) or whatever.”* Maybe so. But we change. Just because 5 years ago we were stingy doesn’t mean we have to always be a Scrooge. Past performance does not have to paralyze our future. We can grow and develop in many ways. We don’t have to be stuck.

The most important factor for our development is our social/cultural context: ***“Show me your friends – I’ll show you your future,”*** and our emotional development. Personality is not permanent. It is not fixed. It can be flexible. Who we become is a choice only we can make. We will become someone – who do we want to be?

Community doesn’t “just happen.” We must be intentional about making it happen, too.

My mom taught me to take initiative. Be proactive.

My dad always said, *“The church = the best place to meet your spouse”* (you’re headed in the same direction). My dad was a charter member of Oak Forest Methodist Church in Little Rock. They were the first couple married in that church. I’m here because my parents set the course of my life. The church is where I met my friends. David Burris, Dennis Sprouse, Guy Ames. Why should you be part of a church? ***“Show me your friends – I’ll show you your future.”*** **Come and Get Involved.**

John 15:13-16 *Greater love has no one than this, that someone lays down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you.*

In closing, I modify my axiom by eliminating one letter: ***“Show me your FRIEND – I’ll show you your future.”*** What a Friend We Have in Jesus, all our sins and griefs to share – what a privilege to carry, everything to God in prayer. Oh, what peace we often forfeit, oh what needless pain to bear. All because we do not carry everything to God in prayer.