



FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH AT THE VILLAGES

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First Baptist Church At The Villages

The Gospel/Who's Your One?

Forgiven and healed

Luke 5:17-26

For use by small groups Jan. 26, 2019 - Feb. 1, 2020

MAIN POINT

Following Jesus' example for ministry means we meet people's spiritual and physical needs.

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

During what event in your life have you felt the most helpless? In what ways were you dependent on other people? How did you handle being dependent?

Every day, we encounter people who are feeling helpless, people with needs to be met. What are some of the most common needs people in our community have? As Christians, what is our responsibility to help meet the needs of others?

What are some needs your "One" has that Christ has revealed to you?

In the miracle from Luke 5 that we examine this week, we read about a group of friends who took matters into their own hands to help someone they loved.

UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

| Have a volunteer read Luke 5:17-20.

What evidence do you see in this passage that the friends of the paralytic man were concerned for him?

What might Jesus have thought about the friends' efforts to get the paralytic to Him? What can we learn about faith from these men?

How would you feel if you were the paralytic when your friends decided to help you "drop in on Jesus"?

How do the obstacles confronting the friends compare and contrast with obstacles that hinder believers today from bringing others to Jesus?

What are some ways your "One" needs your assistance reaching Christ?

The paralytic's friends offer us a simple but profound insight about faith that we do well to take seriously. They underscore for us the vital necessity of putting our faith to work in concrete ways. The intersection of our faith in the power of Christ and our concern for people must prompt us to do something tangible that helps them. We should express our faith by taking action that will bring people in our lives to Him. In that way, our faith can be expressed in real-time action. Most importantly is our intercession on behalf of people who cannot help themselves.

| Have another volunteer read Luke 5:21-26.

Why were the scribes upset when Jesus offered the paralytic man forgiveness?

What part of the scribes' musings was correct? What part was wrong?

In this story, do you identify more with the paralytic, his friends, or the teachers? Why?

How might we, like the Pharisees, paralyze ourselves by determining what Jesus can and cannot do? What's the cure for that paralysis?

The scribes and Pharisees understood that Jesus was acting as if He were God when He claimed to forgive the sins of the paralyzed man. Not only did they not believe He was God, they viewed His claims as blasphemies. Jesus was perceiving their thoughts because He knew what is in man (John 2:25). In verse 23, Jesus expressed the heart of their doubt. It was much easier to just say "your sins are forgiven" than to heal a paralytic since there could be no visible proof of whether sins had been forgiven.

Why did Jesus heal the man's paralysis, even though He had already treated the more important problem of his spiritual health?

What do we learn about Jesus from this miracle?

To demonstrate that He had power to do the invisible miracle of forgiving sins, Jesus performed the visible miracle of healing the paralytic. The man got up immediately and went home glorifying God. Without his friends' help, the paralyzed man wouldn't have

experienced Jesus' physical healing, but even more tragically, he would've missed out on Jesus' forgiveness of sins and eternity with Him.

| Have a final volunteer read Matthew 25:35-40.

Later on in His ministry, when talking about His second coming and the time when we're all held accountable for our actions while on earth, Jesus described what faithfulness to Him looks like.

Why is meeting the physical needs of the hurting and helpless so important for the Christ-follower?

What are the six ministry actions Jesus' followers performed in this passage? What do all of these actions have in common?

What did Jesus mean when He said, "Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of Mine, you did for Me"?

How is it that by serving people, we love them and show them Jesus?

Who are "the least of these" in our community? What message do you think these groups of people are getting from Christians and area churches? What message should they be getting from us?

The man in this passage was paralyzed and needed the assistance of his friends to reach Jesus. Have you recognized obstacles preventing the "One" Christ has brought into your life from coming to Him?

APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

With the healing of the paralytic, two certainties emerge for us to embrace. First, we can be certain that Jesus alone can forgive sins. Only Christ has the power and authority to remove our sin from us. Second, we can be certain about our responsibility to help people in Jesus' name. We have been called to meet the needs of others. Jesus was never satisfied with just the "know" part of faith. He pushed His followers toward the "go" stage.

Why is it such a struggle for us to look beyond ourselves to the hurting and helpless? How does a better understanding of Jesus' forgiveness in your life move you to action on behalf of the hurting and helpless?

The four carried their friend and placed him before Jesus. How can people today bring their spiritually needy friends to Jesus?

How can we as a small group help hurting people see Jesus in their everyday lives?

PRAYER

Close your group gathering in a time of prayer. Take time to hear prayer requests, specifically those related to today's topic and convictions group members are feeling as a result of the Scripture. Then close in prayer, asking God to open your eyes to the people around you who need to know Him and feel His love.

Take time to pray for your "One."

COMMENTARY

| Luke 5:17-26

5:17 When Jesus began His public ministry, news about Him spread quickly throughout the region. People came from Galilee and Judea to hear Him preach and teach. As they listened, the growing crowd of people got a chance to witness for themselves His power to heal. Religious leaders came to hear Him, but they didn't come to learn from His instruction. Rather, they showed up so they could investigate Him and His ministry. They saw themselves as the official experts on Judaism. For generations Pharisees and teachers of the law had devoted themselves to the study of the Old Testament and the proper way for the people of Israel to apply it.

5:18-19 The incident recorded in this section of Luke's Gospel revealed that Jesus had the power to heal, but He also let everyone see for themselves that He had the authority to forgive sins. A paralyzed man had been brought to Jesus by his friends. They had tried to take him through the sea of people to Jesus, but apparently they couldn't get the stretcher through the press of the crowd that surrounded Him. The paralytic and his companions portrayed more than deep friendship. They also demonstrated the depth of their faith in Jesus, which of course He noticed immediately. The stubborn resolve of the paralytic's friends provided vivid proof that they trusted Jesus to do something about their friend's disabled body. They believed without any doubt that He had the power to cure their friend's paralysis, and they put their faith to work by not allowing anything to discourage them from bringing him to Jesus. Likewise, the paralytic himself showed that he trusted Jesus just as much as his friends. Otherwise, he wouldn't have allowed them to take such extreme measures for his sake. Obviously, he was confident that Jesus could help him to get up from his stretcher and walk.

5:20 Along with observing with satisfaction their faith in action, Jesus expressed His sincere interest in the paralyzed man. He called the nameless man in the stretcher as His friend. In so doing, Jesus registered His compassion for the disabled man who had been laid before him. What He did next has to be interpreted in light of the faith registered by the paralytic and his friends. Jesus looked at His disabled friend and forgave him of his sins. Notice that Jesus didn't call attention to His sins in order to shame or condemn him. Instead, He addressed the man's sins in order to help him. In forgiving the paralytic's sins, Jesus already had in mind the healing of his body.

5:21 By forgiving the paralyzed man's sins, Jesus demonstrated His power to do much more than heal a person's body. However, He also set Himself up for criticism by the religious leaders. They had come to judge the validity of His ministry, and His statement about forgiving sins shocked them and led them to be suspicious of Him. In their hearts they resented the way that Jesus claimed to be more than a self-appointed preacher or teacher. For them, Jesus' statement was much worse than just the brash pronouncement of a self-proclaimed teacher. They considered it to be sheer blasphemy, nothing less than arrogant profanity that defiled God's good name. Indeed, the way Jesus healed the disabled man was quite unique. By His actions, Jesus connected the disabled man's need to be healed with his need to be forgiven. Up to this point, Jesus had healed people without bringing up forgiveness at all (Luke 4:38-40, 5:12-14). Obviously, He knew that the greatest problem in the paralytic's life had to do with his sins. Therefore, thoroughly healing him involved forgiving him. The religious leaders felt compelled to respond to Jesus' statement because of what they perceived their role to be in protecting Judaism from heresy. They considered themselves to be responsible for exposing blasphemy wherever they found it. Likewise, they took seriously the responsibility for holding the blasphemers accountable for their heinous statements.

5:22 Jesus knew that the religious leaders had glued their gaze on Him. Taking advantage of the attention that they had placed on Him, Jesus confronted them. He could see the suspicion toward Him in their hearts, so He set out to validate His power to forgive sins. In so doing, He placed them in a corner from which they could not escape.

5:23-24 Jesus placed them in a corner by making a simple but irrefutable point. It was based on the forgiveness He had extended and the healing the crippled man and his friends had anticipated. If Jesus had the authority to forgive sins, then healing would be the evidence of His forgiveness. Accordingly, Jesus' power to forgive sins would be proven if the disabled man lying on the stretcher before Him got up and walked away. By healing the paralytic, Jesus demonstrated His power to forgive sin. Also, He proclaimed something else. Since only God could forgive sin, Jesus signaled that He was more than a self-styled religious leader. He was God, despite the religious leaders' efforts to deny it.

5:25-26 Notice how Luke described the paralyzed man's reaction to being able to walk. In fact, Luke also told us about the reaction of the people in the crowd who witnessed the miracle. All of them praised God for what they saw! They registered complete awe and gave glory to God at the miracle. It provided an unquestionable demonstration of Jesus' power to heal and forgive. By giving glory to God, they rejoiced over the reality that He had been at work in the miracle that Jesus performed.

Matthew 25:31-46

This passage uses figurative language (shepherd... sheep... goats) drawn from Ezekiel 34:17-19 in Matthew 25:32-33, but the rest is too literal to be classified as a parable. The passage is therefore best taken as a literal description of the final judgment. Verses 31 and 34 define the title Son of Man as King. The King, Jesus, will judge people based on their reception and treatment of the least of His brothers. In light of 12:50, the words

refer to Jesus' followers who seek to do God's will. Humble and compassionate treatment of Jesus' followers necessarily accompanies acceptance of the gospel that they proclaim (10:40-42). Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of Mine, you did for Me means that a person's treatment of Jesus' representatives expresses their love for and commitment to Jesus Himself. Those who show no compassion to Jesus' followers betray their lack of devotion to Him. As in 7:21-23, Jesus identifies Himself as the final Judge, a role that Jews expected Yahweh to fulfill.