Summary

In this sermon, the pastor uses the story of the paralyzed man in Mark 2 to explore what it means to help others encounter Jesus. Using the four groups of people present in the story, he challenges the congregation to identify which group they belong to: those who need an encounter with Jesus, those who make a way for others to encounter him, those who are in the way of others encountering him, and those who have a testimony of encountering Him. The pastor emphasizes that the church's core mission is to help others encounter Jesus, whether through Dream Teams, life groups, or personal relationships. He calls on believers to be like the four friends who carried the paralyzed man to Jesus, willing to go to extraordinary lengths to bring others to Him. He also warns against religious attitudes and passive onlooking that can block others from experiencing Jesus, and He celebrates the many testimonies of lives transformed through genuine encounters with Christ.

Intro Prayer

Heavenly Father, we come before You today with open hearts and willing spirits. As we gather together, we ask that You would quiet our minds and remove any distractions that might keep us from hearing what You want to speak to us. Lord, just as the four friends carried their paralyzed companion to Jesus, we ask that You would carry us into Your presence today. Help each person in this group to honestly identify where they are in their walk with You, and give us the courage to make any changes You are calling us to make. May this time together draw us closer to You and to one another. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Ice Breaker

What is the most creative or unconventional thing you have ever done to help a friend in need?

Key Verses

- Mark 2:1-12
- Psalm 34:18
- Matthew 9:36
- Galatians 6:2
- Philippians 2:3-4

Questions

- The pastor identified four groups of people in the story from Mark 2. Which group do you most identify with right now in your life, and why?
- The four friends were so determined to get their paralyzed friend to Jesus that they dug a hole through a roof. What does that level of commitment to helping someone encounter Jesus look like in your everyday life?
- Jesus forgave the man's sins before healing His body, saying that forgiveness was the deeper need. How does this challenge the way you think about what people around you truly need?
- The religious teachers were in the way of the man's healing, not through outward actions but through their thoughts. How can our unspoken attitudes and assumptions hinder others from encountering Jesus?
- The pastor mentioned that some people are in the way simply by being passive onlookers, taking up space without actively helping others. In what areas of your life might you be an onlooker when you could be a participant?
- The pastor suggested a simple 15-minute daily quiet time: 5 minutes of silence, 5 minutes in prayer or the Word, and 5 minutes listening for God. What is your biggest obstacle to spending consistent time with Jesus, and how could you overcome it?
- The sermon highlighted that the mat that carried the man in was the same mat he carried out. What is something that has been carrying you down that you believe God wants to transform into a testimony?
- Several testimonies were shared of people finding healing, community, purpose, and restoration through life groups and the church. How has community played a role in your own encounter with Jesus, and how could you help create that for someone else?

Life Application

This week, identify one person in your life who needs to encounter Jesus. Commit to being one of the four friends for them. This could mean praying for them specifically each day, reaching out with a phone call or text, inviting them to church or a life group, or simply showing up for them in a practical way. Do not wait for the perfect moment. Be willing to tear off the roof if that is what it takes to get them to Jesus.

Key Takeaways

- Everyone falls into one of four groups in relation to Jesus: those who need an encounter, those who make a way for others, those who are in the way, and those who have a testimony of an encounter.
- True friendship means going to extraordinary lengths, like the four friends who cut a hole in a roof, to help others get to Jesus regardless of the obstacles.
- Religious attitudes and passive thinking can be just as much of a barrier to others encountering Jesus as outright opposition, because thoughts become things.
- Jesus addresses our deepest spiritual needs first. Forgiveness of sin is the most fundamental need every person has, even when physical or circumstantial needs feel more urgent.
- The church's mission is to help others encounter Jesus, and every believer has a role to play, whether through serving, inviting, praying, or sharing their testimony.

Ending Prayer

Lord, thank You for this time together and for the truth of Your Word. We are grateful that You are close to the brokenhearted and that You rescue those whose spirits are crushed. As we leave this discussion, we ask that You would make us people who make a way rather than stand in the way. Give us eyes to see the people around us who need to encounter You, and give us the courage and creativity to bring them to Your feet, whatever it takes. May the testimonies of Your faithfulness in our own lives fuel our passion to help others find what we have found. Seal what You have spoken to each heart today, and send us out ready to tear off the roof for someone who needs You. In Jesus' name, Amen.