



## RISE UP

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### OPENING

We are celebrating our mothers today and remembering their devotion, direction and dedication to us over the years. Every day should be a day of gratitude for God, too, as His devotion, direction and dedication have taught us that we need each other, we need our stories, and we need His miracles. Our speakers are bringing us three Biblical stories that demonstrate these needs and cause us to rise up, putting our strongholds behind us and trusting Jesus!

**QUESTION: What do you value most about your mother?**

### SCRIPTURE<sup>1</sup>

**Luke 5:18-26** Some men came carrying a paralyzed man on a mat and tried to take him into the house to lay him before Jesus. When they could not find a way to do this because of the crowd, they went up on the roof and lowered him on his mat through the tiles into the middle of the crowd, right in front of Jesus. So he said to the paralyzed man, "I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home." Immediately he stood up in front of them, took what he had been lying on and went home praising God. Everyone was amazed and gave praise to God. They were filled with awe and said, "We have seen remarkable things today."

**John 5:5-9** A man was there who had been sick for thirty-eight years. Jesus saw him lying there, and he knew that the man had been sick for such a long time; so he asked him, "Do you want to get well?" The sick man answered, "Sir, I don't have anyone here to put me in the pool when the water is stirred up; while I am trying to get in, somebody else gets there first." Jesus said to him, "Get up, pick up your mat, and walk." Immediately the man got well; he picked up his mat and started walking.

**Mark 5:38-42** They arrived at Jairus' house, where Jesus saw the confusion and heard all the loud crying and wailing. He went in and said to them, "Why all this confusion? Why are you crying? The child is not dead – she is only sleeping!" They started making fun of him, so he put them all out, took the child's father and mother and his three disciples, and went into the room where the child was lying. He took her by the hand and said to her, "Talitha, Koum," which means "Little girl, I tell you to get up!" She got up at once and started walking around. (She was twelve years old.) When this happened, they were completely amazed.

### OBSERVATION

This last year was a time of lost purpose, isolation, loneliness, loss of family and feeling overwhelmed. Teachers, moms and dads who have become home-schoolers, police, people of color, students on Zoom, difficult marriages, addicts who have relapsed, disunity, disloyalty and friendships that have broken apart. We have been laid out like the mat on the floor. That was the year of the fetal position.

**QUESTION: What are you still needing in order to rise above the past year's struggles?**

### APPLICATION

But today is an invitation to **RISE UP**. We're tired of being tired. We're ready to get up off the mat and on with our lives. It's time to wake up, stand up, get up, lift up our heads and look to the One who can raise us up. Time, not to

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<sup>1</sup> Unless otherwise indicated, all scripture referenced here is NIV

go back to what once was, but to move on to the One who was, who is and is to come - and start trusting Him again. Here's the thing. When we ask for help for all the things we are not, He shows up as the great **I Am**. When we stand at the base of an insurmountable mountain, He is the one who makes it move. When we get to the breaking point, He is the mighty healer and the brilliant Creator. When we fall down, He picks us up. When we are weak, He is strong. He is the way-maker, the miracle worker, the promise keeper - He is our hero, our champion, our victor, our Savior. He is not dead. He is still working and His power is still great. He is not asleep and He has not forgotten us. He is alive and active, and his power is mighty to save us. It is time to rise up!

**QUESTION: What are you grateful for today?**

Let's talk about how we do that by looking at three stories from the life of Jesus. They remind us that, in order to rise up, **1) we need each other, 2) we need to tell our stories, and 3) we need His miracles**. Let's begin with needing each other. The paralyzed man could have never made it to Jesus by himself. He needed his friends to get him there. For those of us who never ask for help let's give ourselves permission to ask. There are a lot of us in here who are super strong and we like to be the one who is needed - the one lowering everybody through the roof. It's okay for us to not be okay, too. Our vulnerability actually gives other people the courage to be vulnerable. For those of us who are always the helper, give us permission to stop being a savior. The people we love whose burdens we are carrying - they need a Savior - it's not us - give them to Jesus.

**QUESTION: Whom are you helping today?**

**QUESTION: Whom are you asking for help today?**

2) Second story we are looking at is about someone else down on the mat. It's about a sick man who couldn't get to the pool to be healed. Jesus tells him to take up his mat. Why does he need his mat? Because the mat is his story. We need our stories. We may think our lives are too broken - that we're too far gone - have made too many mistakes, but God wants to use our stories to witness the goodness of God to others.

**QUESTION: What is your story? How are you using it to witness to others?**

3) The last story we are looking at is about someone else down on the mat and their rise up encounter with Jesus. A man named Jairus had a sick daughter and he went to ask Jesus to heal her. On the way, Jesus was interrupted by an ill woman and he healed her. This act of mercy made him late and Jairus' daughter died. Instead of a miracle of healing in Jairus' life, he witnessed his daughter's rise from the dead.

**QUESTION: How is this story like Lazarus' story?**

**QUESTION: When have you been in a place where you asked Jesus for a miracle only to feel like He showed up too late?**

What we want to see in this story is that, when we ask God for a miracle, sometimes what we find is the miracle we are asking for is not always the miracle we get. That doesn't mean God isn't working. It doesn't mean He doesn't have a plan or doesn't know what He's doing. It doesn't mean He's not real, or that He is not going to be faithful. It just means He's not finished yet - that He is working out something else and the miracle might look a little different than the one we asked for.

**QUESTION: Describe a miracle you have experienced.**

**QUESTION: What miracle are you asking for today?**

We need a Savior - we have places in us that are dead, that need to be brought back to life. We want to ask for miracles - we want to expect miracles. But the miracle we get might not look like the miracle we asked for. We may ask God to heal us or someone we love and, instead He gives us His sustaining peace. We may ask Him to provide for us financially and He gets us on a budget. We may ask Him to remove anxiety or depression or mental illness, but the miracle might be we get to experience Him. Remember, Jesus asked, "Take this cup from me" and the miracle He got was to die and be raised again.

**QUESTION: When have you asked for a specific answer and God gave you a different and better outcome?**

When we ask of God, He either does something miraculous in us or He does something that will last beyond us. We have seen that during the Covid pandemic. So, when the miracle doesn't come through the way we expected, we need to look for a different one. If we will trust Him, we will find it, we will see it, and it will be better, bigger, last longer and will connect us to something internal and eternal.

## **PRAYER**

Heavenly Father, we want to rise up after a year of uncertainty, sadness, anxiety and fear. Help us to be friends who lift up others, who have stories to tell that glorify You, and to ask and expect miracles in whatever ways You want to provide them. In Jesus' name. Amen.

## QUESTIONS

**QUESTION: What do you value most about your mother?**

**QUESTION: What are you still needing in order to rise above the past year's struggles?**

**QUESTION: What are you grateful for today?**

**QUESTION: Whom are you helping today?**

**QUESTION: Whom are you asking for help today?**

**QUESTION: What is your story? How are you using it to witness to others?**

**QUESTION: How is this story like Lazarus' story?**

**QUESTION: When have you been in a place where you asked Jesus for a miracle only to feel like He showed up too late?**

**QUESTION: Describe a miracle you have experienced.**

**QUESTION: What miracle are you asking for today?**

**QUESTION: When have you asked for a specific answer and God gave you a different and better outcome?**