

Main Point - Friends Carry Friends To Jesus - Mark 2:1-12 (Luke 5, Matthew 9)

Intro:

July of 2020 my wife, Alyssa, was a couple of months pregnant with our youngest child, Hudson, although at this point, we didn't know his name OR that we were having a boy. Things had seemed mostly normal about this pregnancy, but THEN she started feeling really sick and having some bad abdominal pain, and at first we chocked it up to typical pregnancy sickness. She called me home from work that day so she could stay in the bedroom and rest. I would check on her periodically throughout the day, and each time the sickness and pain was getting worse, but one thing to know about Alyssa is that she is not one to run off to the doctor willy-nilly, so I kept an eye on her. Eventually, I went back to our master bathroom to find her on the floor, very much out-of-it, weak, pale, clammy, and she could barely move. Now, maybe you have been in a situation similar to this where at this moment, something just kicked in. I knew this was an emergency. I didn't care if she wanted to go to the doctor or not, all I knew is she needed help and I had to get her there. I helped her up and helped to get her dressed, luckily she could walk, but I was ready to carry her to the car if I had to, we called John and Jill Schroeder because we trusted them and they lived on our way to the hospital, and asked if we could drop the girls off with them, and we got to the hospital as quickly as we could. We eventually found out that Alyssa had a large cyst that, if gone untreated, could have led to a very bad situation, as bad as her and Hudson not making it out alive. In those moments, it didn't matter if I had to care for my wife in a way I wouldn't normally have to, and the usual formalities of finding childcare for the kids went out the window, all that mattered was getting her the help she needed as quickly as possible. Today we will look at the story of a few friends in a similar situation, with a greater hope than a hospital, and my prayer is **that it ignites our hearts to see our friends, family and neighbors in just as crucial a situation, and we would do whatever it takes to get them to the feet of Jesus. MAIN POINT - FRIENDS CARRY FRIENDS TO JESUS!**

Message:

Mark 2:1 *And when he returned to Capernaum after some days, it was reported that he was at home.*

- At this point in Jesus's ministry, he had gone on two preaching and healing trips to Galilee, and this was his second time in Capernaum, which was essentially his home base.
- **Main Character:** Jesus
- **Mark 2:1 KJV** "And again he entered into Capernaum after some days; and it was noised that **he was in the house.**"

- Jesus' return to Capernaum was BIG news and everyone was desperate to see and hear him. Some just wanted to be entertained, some wanted healing, and some believed that this might be the Messiah, the Saviour, they had been waiting for, which he, in fact, was.

Mark 2:2 And many were gathered together, so that there was no more room, not even at the door. And he was preaching the word to them.

- The last night that Jesus had spent in Capernaum, in Mark 1, the whole city was gathered at Peter's house, and Jesus was healing and casting out demons, and I am sure that this situation was similar to that night. There were people crowding the house, crowding the windows, and even the door. There wasn't room to move.
- **"Preaching THE WORD to them"** - Jesus was teaching the crowd the good news, the gospel, that they should repent and believe, that the Kingdom of God was at hand, that rescue from their sins had come. THE FOLLOWING EVENTS WOULD SUPPORT THIS MESSAGE.
- What is about to happen is a story you may have heard before, but I don't want you to miss the application it has for YOU. This specific situation speaks in more ways than simply getting help for a man who can't walk.

Mark 2:3 And they came, bringing to him a paralytic carried by four men.

- We don't get a whole lot of backstory about the man that is being brought to Jesus. All we know is that at some point in his life he was injured to the point of paralysis, that he could not get himself there, and some people LOVED HIM ENOUGH TO CARRY HIM TO JESUS.
- **A Couple of Questions:**
 - **Do you have a few people in your life that help carry you to Jesus?** - that love you, are vulnerable with you, and you are vulnerable with them, that speak loving truths to you, that ask the hard questions because they care.
 - BUST IN UNANNOUNCED FRIENDS
 - **Are you that kind of friend for a few others?**
 - **Write them down.**
 - You need to be **CONNECTED** to other believers in a way that leads to spiritual health and growth.

Mark 2:4-5 And when they could not get near him because of the crowd, they removed the roof above him, and when they had made an opening, they let down the bed on which the paralytic lay. 5 And when Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, "Son, your sins are forgiven."

- This paralyzed man may have been in a tough position in society, but he had friends. Real friends. Friends that cared enough about him to go through a WHOLE lot to see him made whole.
- There are few things at play here that I think are super important for us to take time to dive into.
 - **A. These friends have FAITH in Jesus:**
 - These friends had obviously experienced Jesus in some way. Maybe they'd heard the good news from others, maybe they had seen and heard Jesus first hand, there is even a good chance they had been healed or believed in Jesus the last time he was in Capernaum. These friends were confident that Jesus had the power to heal this man. **THEY HAD GREAT FAITH. He was their HOPE.**
 - Do you have this kind of faith? Has Jesus shown himself capable to save you, not only from physical ailments but from the wages of your sin? Have you placed your faith in Him? Is this gospel real to you? Do you trust him? Do you believe his way is better than yours? Is he YOUR HOPE?
 - If your answer to these questions is "yes" then what is our response when it comes to our unbelieving friends?
 - **B. They do whatever it takes to get their friend to Jesus:**
 - These friends were on a mission: **"get our friend to Jesus, no matter what it takes"**
 - They had faith that Jesus was the answer for their paralyzed friend, so they picked him up by his bed and carried him to Jesus.
 - They approached the house, and saw the crowd in and around it. They saw that the doorway was crowded with people. They probably made several attempts to slide through the crowd, with no luck. Most of us would have given up and hoped to encounter Jesus on a day with easier conditions, but not these friends.
 - They made their way to the roof, either by outdoor stairs or figuring out a way to climb up, and they began to remove the roof above Jesus' head. You can imagine this was awkward as Jesus taught and the crowd was trying to listen. It was probably loud and clunky, debris would have been falling. Most likely the homeowner was struggling with the idea of their roof being torn open, but in a desperate situation like this, you stop at nothing to help the person in need. They knew if they could **just get him to Jesus** they could figure the rest out later, the BIGGEST problems would be solved.

- **Illustration:** It reminds me of a scene in the first Avengers movie, where Hulk just starts smashing bad guys, and along with them he causes all kinds of damage to several buildings on one New York street. This may seem excessive, except that these bad guys are trying to destroy the whole planet, So, tearing up some buildings in New York really doesn't seem all that bad in comparison. **Navigating inconvenience and adversity doesn't matter all that much when you realize that a person's soul is at stake.**
- **Do you know someone that needs to be carried to Jesus?**
We all do
- **Who's Your One?** - Who is the one person or family that the Lord has placed on your heart to help them get to Jesus?
 - Alyssa & My Neighbor
- **What does carrying someone to Jesus look like?** Here are a few practical actions:
 - 1. Pray for them daily.
 - 2. Invite them into your life
 - These people had enough of a relationship with the paralytic that it mattered tremendously to them to get him to Jesus.
 - **Illustration:** I've been around church all of my life, but it wasn't until I wasn't until my early 20s that I began to follow Jesus. Early into that time, John Schroeder, who we recently sent out to plant The Well Church in Americus, began to disciple me. I had heard of discipleship, but wasn't sure what I was walking into. I thought we might just grab coffee every couple of weeks and talk about spiritual things, but he invited me into his life. I would regularly have dinner at his house, talk with his family, walk his neighborhood with him, he was vulnerable with me about his faults and struggles which opened the door for me to also be vulnerable. He went above and beyond to be a friend who continued carrying me to Jesus for years. To this day, I would consider this man a very close friend that I can count on to carry me to Jesus.

- Jesus did this with his disciples
 - Be hospitable
 - Have them over for dinner
 - Spend time with them
 - Let them see your imperfections
 - In conversation, listen to know, not just to answer.
 - 3. **Share** the gospel, share your testimony, live in the ways of Jesus and let them see it.
 - 4. **Communicate (call, text, social media, etc)**
 - People want to know that they are cared for, thought about, and missed.
 - 5. **Be vulnerable** to them and be a trusted person they can do the same with.
 - 6. **Invite them to church.** A real invite. 10AM.
- **C. They run into some obstacles:**
 - 1. The house is too crowded to get in. 2. Their friend is heavy and hard to carry. 3. The only way in is through a roof.
 - The truth is, that if you're a believer in the room, you know that God has called you to be on mission to those around you. Scripture tells us to make disciples of Jesus. Scripture tells us to love our neighbor. Scripture tells us that church leaders are to equip you, the saints, to do the work of ministry. Jesus, Paul, Peter, Philip, James, Barnabas, Apollos, Aquila & Priscilla and so many more give us examples of lives poured out for others to be carried to the feet of Jesus, YET for so many of us, when it becomes hard or inconvenient we pump the brakes, we stop trying, we give up.
 - **"I'm just TOO BUSY to invite people into my life"**
 - Go back to the story I told at the beginning of the sermon. When I realized that Alyssa was in serious danger, my day changed. It didn't matter what I had to stop doing, or what I had to REORIENT about my life, I was going to get her to the hospital.
 - Consider the friends in this story, when they caught word that Jesus was in the town. It didn't matter if they had to rearrange their schedule, because the most important thing was getting their friend to the feet of Jesus.

- The problem with this excuse is that we just don't view people's lostness as an emergency situation. We may say that we do, but our actions generally say otherwise.
- What if we reassessed our priorities, and redesigned the things we fill our time with around inviting people in.
 - If you're watching the football game on Saturday, invite your one.
 - If you're running errands, see if your one wants to come.
 - If you're eating lunch, invite your one.
 - Ask God to show you how you can REORIENT your life to invite people in to show them Jesus
- **I'm UNCOMFORTABLE with inviting**
 - **"I'm an introvert, it would be too draining for me"**
 - I am not an expert on this, because I am very much an extrovert. I come home from hanging out with people and I'm full of energy. People leave my house and I wish they could stay longer. I've learned a lot from being married to a person that is more introverted. I know that being around people drains you.
 - The call remains the same no matter what our personality types, and making disciples always means laying down aspects of our lives and stepping outside our comfort zone to see others flourish. THIS IS ONE OF THE WAYS THAT WE GET TO IMITATE CHRIST.
 - Knowing that you are an introvert isn't an excuse out of carrying your friends to Jesus...IT HELPS YOU PLAN FOR IT.
 - If you want to invite your unbelieving friend over, plan an intentional night home the day before or after.
 - **"This person is just too difficult!"**
 - These guys were carrying their friend TOGETHER. It wasn't easy or light but they were not carrying alone.

- We not only can, but should invite our believing friends into our mission to our unbelieving neighbors.
 - **“That’s just not my gifting”**
 - Some are especially gifted in things like evangelism & hospitality, but that doesn’t mean that we aren’t all called to engage in them.
Invite help in your mission.
 - We all have different giftings and personalities that the Lord has equipped us with so that we can partner together to love people toward a relationship with JESUS.
 - Groups of friends carry friends to Jesus
 - **“Someone else will reach out to them”**
 - If your friend’s relationship with Jesus is an emergency, you can’t wait for someone else to move. If you were walking past Lake Loretta and saw someone drowning, you wouldn’t wait for someone else to come help them, you would spring into action, even if you aren’t the bravest, or most athletic, or most highly trained rescue person. YOU ACT. God, in his perfect wisdom, has put you in the position he has with this person, use your connection to carry them to Jesus.
 - **“I don’t know enough, what if they ask tough questions”**
 - None of us knows every answer. Seek to grow as much as you can, but ultimately, no one can refute what you have experienced with Jesus. Some of Paul’s most compelling evangelism was him sharing his testimony of how Christ changed his life and living out that change in front of them. Invite people in, love them, and talk about the hope that is in you.
- **D. Jesus meets his greatest need first, forgiving his sins**
 - Something to know about this paralyzed man: In his day and culture something like paralysis would have been considered a result of something sinful that this man or someone in his family had done.

Not only this, but he would have been considered a lesser person and a drain on society. People had probably heaped shame on his head time and time again, called him so many different names and written him off as worthless, BUT the very first thing that comes out of Jesus' mouth to him is a title...**"Son,"** a title of love, acceptance and adoption. In Christ we are not the things we have done or the things that have been done to us. We are not defined by what others think about us or what they have said about us. You're not defined by your performance in school or in the workplace, or whether your parents or spouse are proud of you, or your appearance, or your talents, or failures, or any of it. When your life is found in Christ, you are a son or daughter of the King of the universe. He has made you whole and given you real hope, joy, and peace. All that you have done or has been done to you, doesn't define you, Jesus' perfect righteousness is what defines you.

- **"Your sins are forgiven"** - This guy's friends came seeking healing for their friend's body, but Jesus knew the kind of healing he truly needed...the same healing we all need. He needed his sins to be forgiven. If I sin against my friend, say I said something about him that was unkind, I would need to go to my friend and ask for forgiveness because the sin was against him. Interestingly, all sin breaks our Creator's law, so all sin we commit is against God and breaks our relationship with him. We need him to forgive us, but the Bible is clear that the only way that our sins can be forgiven is through the death of a spotless lamb, a perfect sacrifice. A man had to live a perfect life and die a death he did not deserve to cover our sins. Jesus, the one who all things were made by, for, and through, left glory to be that man. He put on flesh and dwelt among us. He was faced with temptation just like us and never sinned, so that he could go to the cross a perfect sacrifice. He made a way for our sins to be forgiven, so that we could have an eternal relationship with him, and be made whole, just like this man. Jesus forgave this man's sins, because he was the only one who could, and today, if you are far from God, if you feel you've done too much to be loved by God, if you are without hope, and you feel incomplete, believe this gospel, that Jesus died to make you his, and to make you whole and to give you a bright future with him in eternity and a new life right now. He is THE WAY, THE TRUTH, and THE LIFE, and no one comes to Father except through Him.

Mark 2:6-8 Now some of the scribes were sitting there, questioning in their hearts, **7** “Why does this man speak like that? He is blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone?” **8** And immediately Jesus, perceiving in his spirit that they thus questioned within themselves, said to them, “Why do you question these things in your hearts?”

- They’re correct in saying only God can forgive sins, but their hearts were against Jesus.
 - **Jesus is God**
- They didn’t realize that they needed Jesus to forgive their sins as well.
- As the scribes are questioning his authority, he knows what they are thinking. It was likely jarring for the scribes to encounter this question from Jesus.

Mark 2:9-12 Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Rise, take up your bed and walk?’ **10** But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins”—he said to the paralytic— **11** “I say to you, rise, pick up your bed, and go home.” **12** And he rose and immediately picked up his bed and went out before them all, so that they were all amazed and glorified God, saying, “We never saw anything like this!”

- It’s easy to say anything, especially when it pertains to something that can’t be seen, like forgiveness of sins. This miracle would say to all of those watching that this is more than just words.
- **But that you may know...** - If his paralysis was a result of sin, like those who were watching would have believed, then his physical healing would have been a certificate of authenticity on Jesus’ forgiveness of his sins.
- THIS MAN WAS ALREADY MADE WHOLE BEFORE HE COULD WALK, Because he had been forgiven and adopted by Christ.

Within Greenbriar Church is not the only way to carry people to Jesus, but its a great way, and there are avenues you can get in on carrying people who are far from Jesus to his feet within this local body.

- PEOPLE NEED CONNECTION & COMMUNITY! It is often a pathway to belief in the gospel, salvation and growth. Community Groups Invite and/or start
- Children’s Ministry Volunteer/once a month
- Invite people where you are connected
- Greeters & Next Steps
- Any way that you can plug in, and step up to take obstacles out of the way for someone to hear the gospel, have faith in Christ and have their life changed for his glory and their good is a worthy endeavor.

Discussion Questions:

1. Do you have a few people that help carry you to Jesus? Who are you helping to carry to Jesus?
2. Previously, how has people's lostness impacted how you live your life? How does seeing lostness as an emergency situation change your perspective?
3. Who is far from Jesus that you could help to carry to him, and what are some of your first steps in that?