

## YOU'VE GOT THE POWER

July 22, 2007

Rev. Dr. Carolyn Ann Knight

Luke 5:17-26

This text describes one of few instances in the New Testament where Jesus healed a person because of the faith of others. There are many passages of Scripture where Jesus told a person that their own faith had made them well. He told the lady with the issue of blood that her faith had made her well. However, in this text he healed the paralyzed man because of the faith of his friends. When Jesus saw their faith he told the man that his sins were forgiven. If you will be honest, you will have to admit that you are in church now not because of your own faith and prayers but because of the faith and prayers of someone else. Praise God for those saints that prayed for you and brought you to Jesus. This man was given a new outlook on life because his friends had faith in Jesus. That is what radical discipleship is about. That is what 'winning the lost at any cost' means. There are some people who will not get to Jesus except by the fastidious faith of others.

The Pharisees and the teachers of the Law were in attendance at this teaching of Jesus. The power of God was there to heal. The paralytic man wanted to be in attendance as well. However, his paralysis prevented him from being in the presence of Jesus. There are persons all around us who are in a state of paralysis. Though they may not be paralyzed in their limbs, they could be paralyzed by some social situation, circumstance, or incident in their lives. They could be paralyzed by some unresolved conflict, unconfessed sin, or unpaid debt. They could be paralyzed by their fears or their past. It is not that they don't want to make a contribution. It is that their circumstances have conspired to keep them out of the game of life and they need a lift. They are in the same condition as this man and unless they get a lift they will remain paralyzed. Before we judge them, we should remember what we went through. When we went through, someone had to lift us because we could not lift ourselves. Now as never before we are challenged in many ways to move persons that we know and love beyond the state of paralysis so that we can get them to Jesus. That is what serving God, living for Jesus, and loving people is all about.

We must make it our number one priority to help someone get to Jesus. We all know at least one person that we can talk to about the message of salvation, the power of God, the love of the Savior, and the joy of the Holy Ghost. There are persons who are not going to receive the message of salvation unless you lift the corner of their mat and bring them to the place where they can hear the Word of God. This nation is in a state of paralysis, which is somewhat of a paradox. We are technically powerful but morally paralyzed, economically potent but ethically paralyzed, and politically perceptive but spiritually paralyzed. There are some people who are not going to get to Jesus unless you pick them up. There are plenty of churches around here but for some people in this city you are the answer to their prayers; the solution to their problems. If not you, then why are you here? Don't wait for another person to do what God has called you to do.

In the text, here is this man wanting to get to Jesus but unable to move. The power of the Lord was upon Jesus to heal, which means that there was a solution to this man's problem if only he could reach it. This paralyzed man was about to miss the greatest opportunity of his life because he could not get a lift. Today, there are many people that we know in similar conditions. Not only do women need to be loosed but they need to be empowered.

Men need to be affirmed and appreciated. Children need to be mentored. Persons need to be evangelized. They need more than 'Chicken Soup for the Soul.' They need the meat of the Word of God. They need a lift.

While this paralyzed man was caught in the middle of his dilemma, some men showed up to lift him. They saw brokenness, lameness, paralysis, and impotence in their community. They picked it up and carried it on their shoulders and went to the one person that could do something about it. It was not easy for them to carry him on a mat across town to where Jesus was teaching the scribes and the Pharisees. Getting people to Jesus is not easy. Serving people is not always delightful. There is resistance. These men had to work together, walk together, pray together, and balance this man on his mat. Church has to be the same way. We have to work together, walk together, and pray together. We can't rely on just the people in the front because we need the people in the back to do their part too.

**The men were tenacious.** The men didn't give up. The reason these men were so determined to get their friend to Jesus was because they knew what Jesus could do. Maybe, they had personal encounters with Jesus in the past. Maybe Jesus had changed their lives. Why do so many of us come to church by ourselves and never invite anybody? It is because we have not had an encounter with Jesus ourselves. If you really knew what Jesus could do, you would be calling family, friends, enemies, and even strangers to invite them to Jesus.

**The men were tardy.** If they had decided to go to the meeting without the paralyzed man, they would have been on time. They may have gotten a good seat where they could see everything. It matters not where you sit in the church but rather who sits in the church because of you. The need to get people to Jesus, to turn this world around, to get this nation back on track, to get our children off drugs, to keep our children from killing themselves and each other, to get the family restored, to get the church revived, requires a great deal of sacrifice and service on our part. These men were willing to inconvenience themselves in order to get their friend to Jesus. When you get a blessing, you want someone else to get a blessing. When you truly know what God can do, you want others to know what God can do.

When they arrived at the meeting, the room was filled beyond capacity. Imagine the disappointment these men must have felt when they saw the crowd because they wanted to get their friend to Jesus. Faith and service does not quit. Faith says all things are possible if you believe. They unsuccessfully tried all doors and windows but when they were about to give up they looked up. There is always a way if you look up. When things start going bad for you, look up. When you cannot see your way through, look up. When it seems like you can't take it, you need to look up.

When Jesus heard the sound of the roof being broken apart over his head and saw these men struggling to lower the paralyzed man down, it tugged at the core of his being. He saw their love, compassion, and service. He knew that they had gone out of their way, overcome obstacles, seized an opportunity, and checked their egos at the door in order to get their friend to him. When Jesus sees faith like this his heart is touched, his spirit is moved, and he will act.

Faith and forgiveness go together. He saw their faith and forgave the sins of the paralyzed man. You have the power. **2 Chronicles 7:14** There is enough faith in this church to save this world. **Matthew 17:20** It was the faith of these men that got their friend to Jesus; and it would be our faith to get others to Jesus. You need not look around to see whom God is going to use to lift people in this community. God is going to use you. Somebody in your home or on your job needs a lift. All you have to do is bring them in the presence of Jesus. When you get them to Jesus, he will do the rest.

Peace.

The full transcript of this message and others is available on cassette, CD and DVD

at

[www.RayofHope.org](http://www.RayofHope.org)

---

TRANSFORMING YOUR WORLD

[www.rayofhope.org](http://www.rayofhope.org)

Rev. Dr. Cynthia L. Hale, Senior Pastor