

## GOT FRIENDS?

There are friends and then there are friends. What would your true friends do for you? In Luke 5:17-26 some people took extraordinary measures to bring their friend to Jesus. What would you do for your friend? Would you bring them to Jesus? No matter what it took?

Luke's gospel has continually affirmed the authority of Jesus to heal, physically and spiritually. Jesus forgives sin and delivers from spiritual death and darkness. As DL Moody said, "God doesn't expect the impossible from us. He wants us to expect the impossible from Him."

**1- JESUS DISPLAYS POWER.** Jesus had previously withdrawn to a desolate place to pray, as God prepared Him for ministry. JC Ryle notes, "Jesus didn't allow public demands to interfere with private time with God." This was directly related to His fruitful ministry, unleashing His power.

Luke records, *"on one of those days, as Jesus was teaching, Pharisees and teachers of the Law were sitting there, who had come from every village of Galilee and Judea and from Jerusalem. And the power of the Lord was with Him to heal."*

This power is two-pronged, involving both ability and authority. Jesus Christ had both, as the Son of God come in the flesh to deliver His people. The word heal refers to instantaneous healing, making whole, some 26 times in the New Testament by Jesus or His disciples.

**2- JESUS ATTRACTS ATTENTION.** When God is at work, there is great interest by people, but also great opposition by God's enemies. People came from all over the land to be healed and to hear Jesus teach from Scripture. Remember, the Pharisees were most careful in their religious understanding. They didn't keep it private, they lived a very outwardly religious life.

Teachers of the Law were well-trained scribes who taught others to understand Scripture. So the leading theological minds gathered to hear, and critique, the now famous young rabbi Jesus. The air was electric, and Mark's gospel notes that so many were gathered there was no more room.

*"And behold, some men were bringing on a bed a man who was paralyzed, and they were seeking to bring him in and lay him before Jesus."* How would you face the obstacles?

**3- FRIENDS RAZED THE ROOF.** Verse 19 continues, *"But finding no way to bring him in, because of the crowd, they went up on the roof, and let him down with his bed through the tiles into the midst of Jesus."* That's friendship! Up on the rooftop, quick quick quick!

In front of a packed house, they go through the roof. Some houses, like this one, had tiled roofs. Rooftops tended to be flat, with large wood beams 2-3 feet apart, laid over with branches, thatch, and 2 feet of dirt. Like a yard on top of the house, it was used as an outdoor room.

"These men undertook an excavation to bring their paralyzed friend to the only One who could heal him," notes RC Sproul. "Their earnestness shows that coming to Christ is no casual thing." For those who understand their need, they will stop at nothing to come to His presence.

**4- FRIENDS BRING OTHERS TO JESUS.** Who would go to such effort? For yourself probably you would do whatever you could. It takes extraordinary work to get ahead in this world, and many people diligently apply themselves for worldly advantages. No pain no gain.

"If the children of this world take such pains about a corruptible crown, we ought to take far more pains about one that is incorruptible," says JC Ryle. "Let the crowd of difficulties be what it may, we must go through it. The health of our souls is at stake."

**5- WHAT WILL YOU DO?** What's your attitude about effort? What would you do for a friend in need? James 1:22 says *"do not be hearers only but doers of God's Word."* James 2:14 says *"what good is it if someone says he has faith, but does not have works? If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking daily food, and one of you says 'go in peace, be warmed and filled' without giving them the things needed, what good is that?"* And, will you bring them to Jesus?

If you claim to be Christian, a follower of Jesus, you must do as He says. You must love others as yourself, as Jesus commands. And you must bring them to Christ. Faith is proved in action. As CH Spurgeon notes, "you have not truly found Jesus, if you do not tell others about Him." □