

THE
WAY
OF
JESUS

AS FOUND IN THE
GOSPEL OF **MARK**

SPIRITUAL GUIDE
FOR JUNE 6-12

READ**MARK 2:1-12**

A few days later, when Jesus again entered Capernaum, the people heard that he had come home. They gathered in such large numbers that there was no room left, not even outside the door, and he preached the word to them. Some men came, bringing to him a paralyzed man, carried by four of them. Since they could not get him to Jesus because of the crowd, they made an opening in the roof above Jesus by digging through it and then lowered the mat the man was lying on. When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralyzed man, "**Son, your sins are forgiven.**"

Now some teachers of the law were sitting there, thinking to themselves, "Why does this fellow talk like that? He's blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone?"

Immediately Jesus knew in his spirit that this was what they were thinking in their hearts, and he said to them, "**Why are you thinking these things? Which is easier: to say to this paralyzed man, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up, take your mat and walk'? But I want you to know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins.**" So he said to the man, "**I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home.**" He got up, took his mat and walked out in full view of them all. This amazed everyone and they praised God, saying, "We have never seen anything like this!"

REFLECT

What is the length you're willing to go to pursue your dream or discover your calling? There's an old adage about open and closed doors Christians like to use about discovering God's will. "If God wants it to happen, he'll open a door for you", we say. Or "God closed that door so it obviously wasn't the right thing at the right time."

But what if, sometimes, we need to kick the door down? What if the door we see in front of us isn't God's divine "yes" or "no" but rather an invitation into resilient, determined faith? The story of the paralyzed man reminds us that God honours this kind've faith. Sometimes the obstacle in front of us becomes the doorway into the next best thing God has for us, as we take up in his invitation to become active participants. Is there a situation where God might be calling you to determination and resilience, or is it time to let go of that dream? And how do you know the difference?

READ

The story of Joseph is another reminder how life is not a straight, linear line towards our calling and destiny. Joseph has years of his life that some would see as being "wasted", but served to shape his character and form him into a man of integrity. Read through Genesis 37-50 this week.

Moses also didn't have a start to finish trajectory to his life. He spent 40 years in the wilderness with the Israelites and never got to enter the promised land.

Similarly, the friends in Mark 2 go so far as to "unroof the roof", interrupting the gathering and revealing the depth of their faith. Many people live with a deep disappointment because God hasn't answered a prayer, or life didn't go according to plan. But the obstacles in life are character shaping moments. They refine, shape and form us into people who reflect Jesus into the world. It sounds cliché but it's true all throughout Scripture and in life...God takes hardship and turns it into something good. Joseph says in Genesis 50, "**You meant evil against me, but God used it for good.**"

The author James writes "Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything." Reflect on these words this week, allowing God to reframe your perspective on trials and obstacles.

INVITATION

What situation do you need to have resilient faith for someone else? Is there someone in your life you need to metaphorically pick up and contend for in the presence of God? In the text, Jesus honours the friends faith. We don't know anything about the paralyzed man and whether he was on board with the whole thing. He might've been frustrated, screaming "stop!" or even just embarrassed as his friends lowered him down.

Yet Jesus honours the friends faith. He heals the paralyzed man because of them! This text doesn't provide a formula for healing. We don't know why God heals sometimes and why other times he doesn't. However, we can trust that God hears us and honours our commitment to hold our friends, family, city, or neighbour before him and contend for their healing, salvation, provision, and much more. Take time this week to commit yourself to praying for someone in need. Contend for them in prayer.

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COMMUNITY GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE
FOR JUNE 6-12



C H E C K I N

Begin as always by checking in on your group on a personal, and emotional level:

- How are you doing this week? How's the last week been?

R E V I S I T

Check in with the group to see who caught the last message from Sunday. Encourage your group to revisit them this week if they haven't watched it.

This series is about recentering our faith around the person of Jesus as found in the Gospel of Mark, rather than the religion of Christianity, or some other competing ideology about what it means to follow Jesus.

- Any initial thoughts about the message? What stood out?
- What do you like about the story of the paralyzed man and his friends?
- Is it an inspiring story or one that creates more questions about healing, faith, and when to persist in prayer?

R E F L E C T & D I S C U S S

Read **Mark 2:1-12**

Ed made the point that Capernaum was a relatively insignificant town and yet Jesus does many miracles there. God has a knack for showing up in ordinary, insignificant places. In a world of 7.5 billion people, we live a somewhat insignificant life in the grand scheme of things. And yet this positions us for the presence of God. God takes ordinary people and turns them into active participants in the Kingdom.

- What ways do you see yourself as the paralyzed man and in what ways do you see yourself as one of the friends?
- How do you allow God to use you in the Kingdom? What does that practically look like?

P R A Y

Pray to close with your group.