

THE CHURCH IN NEW YORK CITY CHILDREN'S MEETING LESSON

DATE: February 21, 2016

SUBJECT: JESUS MEETS MAN'S NEEDS: Healing the Paralytic

SCRIPTURE: Mark 2:1-12; Matthew 9:1-8; Luke 5:17-26

AIM: To help the children (1) know that they can come to the Lord Jesus, who is willing and able to forgive sins, and (2) be faithful and true friends to those around them.

SUGGESTED MEMORY VERSES: Psalms 103:2-3 (Bless Jehovah, O my soul; / And do not forget all His benefits: / He pardons all your iniquities; / He heals all your diseases;); Matthew 9:6 (But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins—then He said to the paralytic, Rise, take up your bed and go to your house.); Acts 3:19 (Repent therefore and turn, that your sins may be wiped away;); Psalms 86:5 (For You, O Lord, are good and ready to forgive / And abundant in lovingkindness to all who call upon You.)

SUGGESTED SONGS: 9042 BSS Go Jesus - Song 23 (I Can Come to Jesus); 9021 BSS Go Jesus - Song 2 (He's the Serving Savior); 9029 BSS Go Jesus - Song 10 (Jesus Is Here...We'd Better Take Our Paralyzed Friend); 9031 BSS Go Jesus - Song 12 (If You Ever See a Needy One); 1612 (Companions)

APPROACH: Ask the children: How many of you have good friends? What is the best thing that your friend has ever done for you? Perhaps they invited you to go someplace special with them? Today, you're going to hear about some friends that were not just good, but they were *really good* friends.

BACKGROUND: *(The following background is for the serving ones, and is intended to provide a better understanding of what kind of roof was over the house that Jesus was in. The details are not part of the lesson for the children. But the serving ones can bring sample pictures of what a roof may have been like to show the children.)* The roof of a house in Palestine was flat, surrounded by a railing that, according to Jewish law, had to be at least three feet high. The roof was an important part of the house: the family might gather there for conversation; it could be a quiet place for prayer; fruits or stalks of flax were sometimes laid on it to dry, etc. The roof was typically supported by a main beam and smaller cross beams. This latticed structure was covered by brushwood. Finally, a mixture of mud and chopped straw was beaten and rolled over the brushwood. (When sprouts of grass would appear after a rainfall, small animals were brought up to the roof to graze on it!) There were usually two flights of stairs—one on the inside of the house and the other on the outside—that made the roof easily accessible.

CONTENT: One day, the Lord Jesus was in a house, in a city called Capernaum. Many people wanted to hear Jesus speak and teach the Word of God, so there was a crowd gathered. Do you know how crowded it was in this house? It was so crowded that there was no longer any room, not even at the door! So if you wanted to go in through the door, there was just no way to enter.

But there were four men who really wanted to enter, no matter what. Why? Because they had a friend who was paralyzed. Being paralyzed is terrible. Paralyzed means that the person is so sick and unable to move because their muscles are extremely weak. They can't get up; they can't walk; they can't lift their arms or move their legs. Let's imagine what it's like to be paralyzed and stay still for a few seconds. But these four men knew that there was only one person who could help their paralyzed friend. The Lord Jesus! The problem was, the Lord Jesus was inside this house, and they could not get in.

But as we mentioned, these four men were really good friends, and they thought of a way. It was a very unusual way to get inside a house, but they were determined to bring their paralyzed friend to the Lord Jesus.

This is what they did. Somehow they went up onto the housetop, carrying their paralyzed friend who was lying on a mat. The rooftops were different than what you see on houses now. The roofs were flat and were made of natural materials including wood, mud, chopped straw and brushwood. These four friends started digging through the roof! Then they removed the roof where Jesus was! Now they had a way to get their paralyzed friend to Jesus. They lowered the mat that the man was lying on, until he was right in front of Jesus.

Seeing their faith, the Lord Jesus said to the paralyzed man, “Child, your sins are forgiven.” But there were some religious people called scribes and Pharisees who began to reason, saying, “Who is this who speaks blasphemies? Who can forgive sins except God alone?” They seemed religious and behaved well outwardly, but they were not such good people in their hearts. But Jesus knew what they were thinking. He answered and said to them, “Why are you reasoning in your hearts? Which is easier: to say, ‘Your sins are forgiven you,’ or to say ‘Rise and walk?’ But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on the earth to forgive sins—He said to the paralytic, “To you I say, Rise and take up your mat and go to your house.” And that is just what happened! The paralyzed man was amazingly able to walk! He got up and immediately took up the mat and went out before them all to his house, glorifying God. Everyone was amazed and they also glorified God, saying that they had never seen anything like this!

SUGGESTED APPLICATIONS TO CHOOSE FROM:

- **Jesus is God, and is therefore the only One qualified to forgive sins.** The Lord Jesus did what no other man could do—He forgave the paralytic’s sins. The healing of the paralytic showed that the Lord Jesus was not only a teacher of God’s Word, or a healer with God’s divine power, He was the very forgiving God Himself. He had the authority on earth to forgive sins.
- **The Lord Jesus is loving and compassionate.** The Lord Jesus was so tender and kind to the paralytic. He called him, “child” and forgave him of his sins. This shows us that we can always come to the Lord Jesus, who is still so loving and kind. He did not get annoyed that they broke the roof or interrupted His speaking. Perhaps we think the Lord is too busy because He has so many people to take care of. But the Lord is not too busy to listen to our prayers. He loves us and wants to hear us and take care of us.
- **We should help our friends in their time of need.** The paralyzed man could not come to the Lord Jesus by himself. He was too weak and could not move. He came to the Lord because some of his friends greatly loved him and had faith that the Lord could and would heal him. Even though they could not get in the front door, they found an extraordinary way to get their friend to the Lord. We also should care for the needs of our friends. Examples: (1) Perhaps we are good at playing certain sports, but our friend is not that good. We can help them rather than just running off and having fun ourselves. (2) Perhaps we have a friend that is not as good at reading certain words. We can help them read and improve. (3) Perhaps we can ride a two-wheel bike, but our friend just learned and rides slowly. We should not speed off, but ride with them and help them. (4) Perhaps our friend did not understand an instruction given by the teacher, but the teacher is too busy to help at the moment. We can help explain the instructions to our friend and show them what to do.
- **A true friend is someone who brings their friends to Jesus.** We can bring our friends to the children’s meeting, or a neighborhood children’s meetings, or even invite them to our homes after school. Let’s be faithful and true friends!

Adapted from the Church in New York City’s Children’s Meeting lessons: 2/10/91; 1/8/95; 2/9/97; 3/1/09; 2/20/11