

The Miracle of Friendship

Perspectives

Luke 5:17-20

EXPLORING THE SERMON

- * What did you hear?
- * What did you think or feel about what you heard?
- * What is one thing you can take away from the sermon this week?

KEY VERSES

One day, while he was teaching, Pharisees and teachers of the law were sitting near by (they had come from every village of Galilee and Judea and from Jerusalem); and the power of the Lord was with him to heal. Just then some men came, carrying a paralyzed man on a bed. They were trying to bring him in and lay him before Jesus; 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 middle of the crowd in front of Jesus. When he saw their faith, he said, "Friend, your sins are forgiven you."

REFLECTION

This week, we reflect on this story from Luke from the perspective of the friends. When Jesus says to the paralytic in verse 20, "Friend, your sins are forgiven you," this is the only place in the Bible where He forgives sins on account of others. Jesus was moved by their faith and not that of the paralytic. ***Who in your life reminds you of the friends in this story? Have you experienced the grace of God in a significant way, such as the paralytic did, through the gift of friendship?***

We don't have marked, routine occasions to celebrate friendship. In his book [The Four Loves](#), C.S. Lewis describes friendship as the "least natural form of love." Treated as a luxury or lower form of love, friendship is not necessary in the same way as romantic or familial love. But yet Lewis reminds us that friendship *is* an extraordinary gift precisely *because* it's not necessary. Friendship is a rare thing, and it requires a lot of trust. Think about the different friends in your life. ***What are some ways that you celebrate those friendships? Do you regard your friendships highly enough?***

Friends are a means of grace to us, and friendship is a spiritual practice. Serving in the role of the friend who carries others is often the bigger blessing. Like the paralytic whose life was in the hands of his friends, friendship requires an enormous amount of trust and risk. ***When have you been able to be that friend to someone else? How might God be using this story from the friends' perspective to nudge you this week?***

For extra discussion: Jamil Zaki suggests in [this article from The Atlantic](#) that the remedy for this late pandemic malaise is not self-care, but rather taking care of others.

Heavenly Father, thank you for the gift of friendship. May we cherish it and focus on this gift of grace to us. Amen.