

Which 4 of Your Friends Will Carry You to Jesus?

You probably know the story of the paralyzed man who was healed when Jesus was teaching in a house in Capernaum. Mark's Gospel says the poor guy was carried by four men. We don't know how long they traveled. What we do know is the unnamed men were determined, even desperate, to get an audience with Jesus.

When they arrived and saw the crowd blocking the doorway, the four friends came up with an ingenious idea. They climbed on the flat top of the house and removed the wooden slats, packed clay and straw, which first-century roofs were made of (see Mark 2:3-5). They had no permit to dismantle the house. I imagine some of the dust and debris fell on the people below, including Jesus and the smug scribes who were spying on Him.

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Some Bible scholars believe this unusual scene happened at Peter's house, because Mark tells us Jesus was staying with Peter, and He healed Peter's mother-in-law there (see Mark 1:29-31). It's fascinating to think that right after Peter invited Jesus to stay with him, his house may have been surprisingly "remodeled" by four strangers! That's what happens to all of us when we allow Jesus full access to our lives.

After the dust settled and sunlight burst through the hole in the ceiling, Jesus didn't rebuke the four friends for making a mess. Instead, He welcomed the noisy intrusion. And He admired the four men for their recklessness. Mark 2:5 (NASB) says, "And Jesus, seeing their faith, said to the paralyzed man, 'Son, your sins are forgiven.'"

The paralytic couldn't get close to Jesus on his own. His legs were useless. But he had four friends who cared enough about him to take him to the healer. And when they ran into an obstacle, they were so determined to help their friend that they staged a radical home invasion.

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Do you have four friends who would do the same for you?

This past weekend at a men's retreat in Georgia, I told that story and asked the men to think about their network of support. I meet so many Christians today who struggle making friends. Some live in isolation because of shame or depression. Others struggle with fear of rejection. Still others battle social anxiety.

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