

Leader Corner

Rip the Roof

Mark 2:1-12

After the series of remarkable healings recorded in Mark 1, Jesus officially went viral. Chapter 2 begins as he returns to ministry headquarters at Capernaum, where news spread quickly that he was back in town. His fame generated crowds that flooded the house, blocked the door, and spilled out into the yard. If you didn't get there early, you probably wouldn't see or hear much, let alone get inside the house. Unless, of course, you could figure out some other way to get in... There are so many aspects of this wonderful story we could highlight, but this study will focus on the paralytic's four friends in v.3-5; particularly the enthusiasm with which they brought him to Jesus, and the heights to which they were willing to climb. We'll go step-by-step through their actions and see how each one might translate to our evangelistic efforts.

Main Idea: We "Rip the Roof" when we enthusiastically go above and beyond to bring people to Jesus.

Main Practice: Given your personality, strengths, and network, consider what enthusiastic evangelism looks like for you.

Main Teaching: Mark 2:1-12

As You Begin...: What's a movie or TV show you love? If you discover someone hasn't seen it, enthusiastically demand that they watch it as soon as possible! Go around the room and discover what you can't believe your group hasn't seen.

Connect with Prayer & Praise

Have someone in your group read the following Scripture aloud:

"Strengthen the weak hands and make firm the feeble knees. Say to those who have an anxious heart, 'Be strong; fear not! Behold, your God will come with vengeance, with the recompense of God. He will come and save you.' Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; then shall the lame man leap like a deer, and the tongue of the mute sing for joy."

– Isaiah 35:3-6, ESV

with Practice

As with most of Jesus' miracles, the point isn't the miracle. The miracle is a signpost pointing toward who He is and why He's here. The miracles fill us with praise, but we're not supposed to spend too much time on them. Rather, we're supposed to read stories like this and ask, "Who is this man? And *why* is he here?" This week, encourage your group to reflect on your current motivations for *why* you want to bring people to Jesus. Remember, it's not for their healing, their "breakthrough," or what he can "do" for you. We enthusiastically bring people to Jesus because of who He is, and what he's *already* done for you. Besides, forgiving sins is the greatest miracle of all.

with Principle

1. As a group, read Mark 2:1-12 together and discuss the key, biblically-based teaching points you recall from the weekend's sermon. What stood out?
2. Let's inspect the actions of the paralytic's four friends in detail and then ask a relevant question that might apply to us, starting with this: arguably the first thing these men did was *identify* a friend who needed help. What about you? Who in your orbit needs Jesus? If we're going to demonstrate an attitude of enthusiastically bringing people to Jesus, it will help to have those specific people in mind. Start by identifying a specific person.
3. Now the hard part. The four men were clearly *concerned* for their friend and wanted to see him helped. We know this because of their actions. What about you? Do you *really* have a deep concern for the person you identified above? Do you *really* want to see them helped? How would we know?
4. After identification and concern, the next thing to notice is that the men didn't go alone. There were four of them. Yes, probably because carrying a paralytic isn't a one-man job. But still, perhaps carrying your person isn't a solo act either. What if you didn't do it alone. Who can you get to help you?
5. Next, the men knew where they were going. They were going to Jesus because they believed Jesus could do it. With your person, do you *really* believe Jesus can do it? And...what is "it" anyway?
6. The next insight from this story is that sometimes, even if you execute the basics above, you probably won't get to the finish line without facing adversity that threatens to derail the whole thing. How might your attitude toward outreach be different if you *expected* adversity instead of being surprised by it?
7. The men didn't let this adversity stop them. Why not? Presumably, they could've said to their friend, "Sorry man, we tried. But it's jam-packed in there. Maybe he'll be around some other time." Why didn't they say that? Why were they so determined? Why shouldn't you say that? Why should you be this determined?
8. The business world has long known that innovation is when determination crashes headfirst into adversity. They weren't going to give up. But they also couldn't get through the door. So they *had* to find another way, which meant they *had* to get creative. How can you get creative? What might 'getting creative' look like with your person?
9. Finally, after adversity, determination, and creativity, the last step is courage. Or maybe boldness. Or fearlessness, or chutzpah, or nerve. It's one thing to come up with a creative idea; it's another to *actually do* it. Because at some point, one of these men literally said, out loud, "Hey, what about the roof? What if we drag him up onto the roof, pull the ceiling back, and then lower him down in front of Jesus?" At that point, the other three men had a choice to make. They easily could've scoffed at the idea because it's too dangerous, crazy, and amounts to destroying property. But this story exists because they actually had the *nerve* to do it. So what about you? Are you willing to do what it takes to bring your person to Jesus? Are you willing to rip off the roof? If not, how do you get to that point?
10. Meanwhile, this whole time, Jesus is minding his own business inside, preaching to a sold-out crowd. Suddenly, maybe there's a beam of light shining on his face and dirt falling onto people's heads. He looks up and sees the sky where the roof used to be, but what he sees more, v.5 tells us, is *their* faith...all five of them together, the four men and the paralytic (since the paralytic's faith is included too, given he allowed himself to be dragged across town and lowered through a ripped-up roof). What do you make of Jesus' words to the paralytic in v.5 and v.11?
11. Honestly, these men likely didn't *understand* who Jesus really was or what he was preaching. To put it charitably, they were probably fuzzy on the details. But they *did* understand, and believe, that He was the one, and *only* one, who could help their friend. That was enough. And while they were still up on a roof with a hole in it, they saw their formerly-paralytic friend stand up and walk out the door. How did they (and everyone) react (v. 12)? How will you react when your friend comes to Jesus?

for Further Study

There were many aspects of this famous story where this study chose not to focus. For example, the response of the scribes (v.6), the accusation of blasphemy (v.7) and the irony behind it, Jesus' ability to perceive their skepticism (v.8), His self-identification as the Son of Man (v.10, from Daniel 7), and the overall truth this miracle was intended to demonstrate (v.10). If you're able to study this passage further this week, it's rich with examples of how Jesus demonstrates who He is.