

Small Group #2 | Fake Friends vs. the Real Thing

INTRO

This story is about four men who paint a picture of true friendship. They go above and beyond to see their friend healed by Jesus. Read how Jesus responds to their faith by doing more than healing his body.

PASSAGE

MARK 2:1–12
(NIV)

A few days later, when Jesus again entered Capernaum, the people heard that he had come home. ² They gathered in such large numbers that there was no room left, not even outside the door, and he preached the word to them. ³ Some men came, bringing to him a paralyzed man, carried by four of them. ⁴ 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. ⁵ When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralyzed man, "Son, your sins are forgiven."

⁶ Now some teachers of the law were sitting there, thinking to themselves, ⁷ "Why does this fellow talk like that? He's blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone?"

⁸ 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? ⁹ Which is easier: to say to this paralyzed man, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up, take your mat and walk'? ¹⁰ But I want you to know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins." So he said to the man, ¹¹ "I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home." ¹² 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!"

QUESTIONS

1. Why do you think the four friends went to such trouble to bring their paralyzed friend to Jesus?
2. Jesus answers their faith by not only healing the man's physical needs, but meeting his spiritual needs through forgiveness. Why does Jesus do this?
3. The teachers of the law believed that those afflicted with physical ailments carried the weight of sin, or disobedience to God, in them. What could it mean for the paralyzed man to be forgiven of sin in such a public way?
4. In this story, Jesus is proclaiming that he is God, and does have the authority and power to forgive us of our sins. Do you yourself need to be healed by Jesus? Or, do you have a friend that you want to see healed by Jesus?

APPLY

We want to be the kind of community that brings each other to Jesus. Sometimes you will be the weak and struggling one who needs others to help you come to Jesus. Sometimes you will do the carrying. But we have to be honest with each other about our struggles in order to live this out. Are you willing to do that?

SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

Reflection: Jesus answers their faith by not only healing the man's physical needs, but meeting his spiritual needs through forgiveness.

Take a minute to reflect on a physical or spiritual need that you need healing from.

Prayer: Invite Jesus to bring healing to that need, or pray for someone else to be healed with this prayer exercise.

Sit in a comfortable position, and breathe slowly. Scan your body from your toes to the top of your head. Do you feel any tension, tightness, ache, or pain? As you name that place, say, "Welcome, Jesus, welcome," and let any tension go. Breathe deeply. Release. Then think of any issues in your life that you would like to share with Jesus. Name the issues and say, "Welcome, Jesus, welcome."