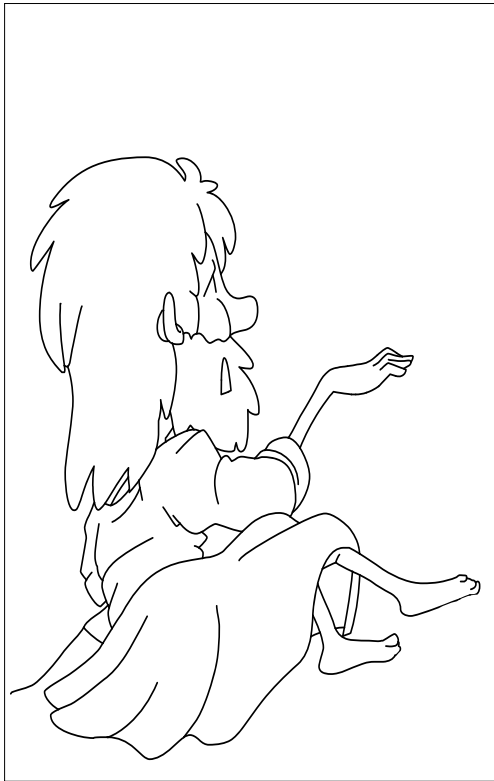




The paralyzed man

Colour me!



Mark 2:1-12

A few days later Jesus went back to Capernaum, and the news spread that he was at home. So many people came together that there was no room left, not even out in front of the door. Jesus was preaching the message to them when four men arrived, carrying a paralyzed man to Jesus. Because of the crowd, however, they could not get the man to him. So they made a hole in the roof right above the place where Jesus was. When they had made an opening, they let the man down, lying on his mat. Seeing how much faith they had, Jesus said to the paralyzed man, "My son, your sins are forgiven."

Some teachers of the Law who were sitting there thought to themselves, "How does he dare talk like this? This is blasphemy! God is the only one who can forgive sins!"

At once Jesus knew what they were thinking, so he said to them, "Why do you think such things? Is it easier to say to this paralyzed man, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up, pick up your mat, and walk'? I will prove to you, then, that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins." So he said to the paralyzed man, "I tell you, get up, pick up your mat, and go home!"

While they all watched, the man got up, picked up his mat, and hurried away. They were all completely amazed and praised God, saying, "We have never seen anything like this!"

Commentary

Wherever Jesus was, crowds gathered. He was such a great storyteller, and had such a compassionate way about him, that people wanted to be near him. And there were miracles too! Reports of healings soon spread and the four men with their sick friend had to check it out for themselves. They were certainly determined. Nothing was going to make them give up on helping their friend, even when it meant hard work, possible social embarrassment and even criminal damage. It was their faith and compassion that got them through to Jesus, and he recognized this. But there was an unexpected twist to the story that must have taken them by surprise as much as it did the crowds in the house.

Jesus didn't heal the sick man straight away, but instead forgave his sins. Jesus wanted to give healing on the inside first. This enraged the teachers of the Law, who knew that only God could do such a thing. The outer healing that came was indeed a great miracle, and it only went to prove that what the teachers were muttering about was true. Jesus is God and he can forgive sins. No wonder everyone was amazed.

Bible text taken from Good News Bible. Copyright © American Bible Society, 1992. Reproduced with permission from The Bible Reading Fellowship (BRF). Taken from The Barnabas Family Bible © Martyn Payne and Jane Butcher 2014.

Questions

- ▶ Have you ever been caught up in the middle of a crowd? What was it like?
- ▶ Why do you think the friends didn't give up when they saw how hard it was to get close to Jesus?
- ▶ Can you imagine what the people inside the house said to each other when they saw the roof above them being opened up?
- ▶ What is the most important part of this story, do you think?



Visual aid

Find an old cardboard box. Turn it upside down and then draw on windows and a door to make it into a house with a flat roof. Now cut a hole in the roof just as the friends did.



Activity idea

In many ways, the real miracle of this story is the friendship between the four men who took their friend to Jesus on a mat. Try to pick up the youngest member of the family on a piece of carpet like a stretcher. Carrying someone like this is hard work! And how does the one on the mat feel?



Prayer idea

The friends didn't give up, despite aching muscles, rope burns, blisters and all the cuts and bruises they must have sustained as they tore open the roof. Write the names of people you know on sticky notes and stick them on to a rectangular piece of fabric. Now take a corner each and lift it up to God in prayer with words such as "Lord Jesus, help us not to give up lifting these people to you, asking for your healing both on the outside and the inside."

Key verse

Jesus said to the paralyzed man, "My son, your sins are forgiven." (Mark 2:5).

Old Testament story link

Isaiah 61:1-3: Isaiah describes what it will be like when God's promised rescuer comes.



Colour me!

