

The Power of Collective Faith

Mark 2:1-12

Introduction

According to Hebrews 11:1, faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. The Bible goes on to say that without faith it is impossible to please God. However, there are times during a person's walk of faith where believing and hoping is difficult, and where he or she can benefit from leaning on the faith of others to make it through.

Mark 2:1-12 tells the story of a man who was paralyzed. Not only did he face a physical challenge, he was also poor and hopeless. But he had some friends who knew Jesus and believed that Jesus was the solution to the lame man's problem. Since he couldn't get to Jesus to be healed on his own, his friends stood in the gap and helped him.

When Jesus saw their faith-in-action on behalf of another, He responded to their *collective* faith by healing the paralyzed man. While our individual faith is necessary to please God, our collective faith provides an opportunity for us to access the power of God in a unique way, and it allows us to experience the power of God at work in community.

Getting Started

1. *The Bible clearly defines faith for us. In your own words, how would you define faith?*
2. *Are you in a paralyzed place? Is there an area of your life where you just can't get going? Emotionally? Mentally? Physically? Spiritually? Share with your group.*

Let's Get Personal

1. Do you have people that you normally reach out to for help? Who is in your circle of friends? Write them down.
2. Look again at who you consider to be your circle of friends. Ask yourself the following questions. *Do they respond and come alongside you when you need them to? Are the people you consider your "circle" also believers? Do they encourage you towards Jesus for help through prayer and practical assistance?*
3. The paralyzed man's friends believed that Jesus could help him, but were also willing to inconvenience themselves by taking the time to make sure the man made it to Jesus to be healed. *Are you a person that others can go to when they need assistance? If not, why?*

Take the Next Step

1. *If you find that you do not have a group of believing friends who are supportive of you, how do you think that you could develop relationships with people who would surround you like the friends from Mark 2? What steps will you take this week to connect with a small group or connect with a ministry? During your prayer time this week, ask God to give you new connections with other faith-filled believers.*
2. When Jesus saw their collective faith, He healed the man, but the man still had a responsibility to walk in the healing that the faith provided. *Are you convicted about taking responsibility in an area of your life? Share with your group.*
3. In addition to physically healing the man, Jesus also offered him forgiveness for his sins as there was a spiritual issue that had led to his paralysis. *Is there a spiritual issue that you need to deal with? Ask your group to pray that God will clearly manifest that issue in your life and give you the grace to overcome it.*
4. We don't have to help everybody. We just have to make time to help somebody. *Who will you make time to practically support this week through your faith and actions?*

Renew Your Mind

"When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralyzed man, "Son, your sins are forgiven." Mark 2:5
