

JESUS ENCOUNTERS

JOURNEY WAYPOINTS

May 18-24, 2025

A stop along the journey to study, share, and support one another while we learn the way of Jesus.

This Week's Big Idea:

Faith propels us toward Jesus, dismantling barriers—whether physical, intellectual, or spiritual—to facilitate a transformative encounter with Him.

Scripture and Study:

KEY TEXT: Mark 12:1-12; Eph. 2:8-9; Heb. 11:1,6 [Click here to access this week's scripture](#)

The paralytic man, bound by his condition, marginalized by society, likely weighed down by shame, was carried through the dusty streets of Capernaum by his four friends. These friends were driven by an unshakeable conviction in what they knew to be true: Jesus is the answer. Their faith was not some vague hope; it was a living, breathing, vivid assurance. This faith, a gift of God's grace, compelled them to act boldly, disregarding social norms, religious propriety, or the physical barrier of a crowded house.

The beauty in this story is striking - like the multi-colored beams of light refracted through a pure crystal. Faith is assurance and confidence in Jesus - even when what we hope for is still unseen. Faith is a gift of God that, united with the grace of God, draws us into an encounter with Jesus. Faith "digs" through legalism, intellectual pride, societal expectations - anything that obstructs access to Jesus. And it is in that encounter with Jesus where we experience life-giving transformation and radical change.

As the paralytic encountered Jesus, Jesus began to "work on him" from the inside out. The man and his friends knew that he needed to be healed. Jesus knew that the man needed to experience forgiveness - a release from all his unrighteousness. God desires that we would live in the freedom that comes through whole-person transformation - freedom that comes as we encounter Jesus in every area of our lives.

The paralytic's transformation was holistic. His forgiven soul was freed from sin's weight, and his restored body stood as a visible sign of God's power. The crowd's amazement—"We have never seen anything like this!" echoes the ripple effect of faith-driven encounters with Jesus. The friends' active faith, united with God's grace, brought their friend to Jesus, changing his life and inspiring others to glorify God.

Discussion Questions:

- What "roofs" in your life—such as pride, doubt, or religious traditions—hinder your encounter with Jesus?
- What would it look like to be the "friends" that break through barriers on behalf of someone else?
- The friends' collective faith (Mark 2:5) brought the paralytic to Jesus. How have others' faith or support helped you draw closer to Christ? How can you support someone else's journey to Jesus?

Apply It:

- Reflect on a personal "roof" (e.g., fear, intellectual pride, or shame) that keeps you from Jesus. Pray for faith to break through, asking for His transforming grace to be present in your awareness.
- Meditate on Hebrews 11:1 and James 2:17. Write about what it means to have a faith that acts to bring yourself or others to Jesus. How can you live this out this week?
- Identify someone in your life who needs Jesus. Commit to praying for them daily and look for one opportunity to "carry" them to Jesus through encouragement, service, or sharing your faith.