

lincolnberean

DATE: September 5, 2026
SERIES: Come In From the Crowd
MESSAGE: Community Helps Us Come In From the Crowd
PASSAGE: Mark 2:1-12
SPEAKER: Matt Meyer

Well, I love that story for Laura and Marshall, I love the picture that it provides us of what it means to come in from the crowd, like what we're talking about, right now, in this series, right? This idea that how do I draw closer to Jesus? And such a picture of a Life Group that's helping them, it was helping them come in from the crowd from this place of loneliness, place where they weren't in, they weren't in community.

And so we've been in this series for three or four weeks. This is the last week before we go back into Romans next week. And one of the things we noticed when you look at the gospels is that Jesus almost always had a crowd around him, right? Unless he made a way to get away from the crowd. There was a lot of people that followed Jesus. They were attracted to him. They followed him from town to town, but not everyone was actually with him.

Because the crowd is the place where you can be an observer, but not necessarily commit to anything specific. But Jesus was always calling people to come closer to him. He was always inviting them to become his disciple, to follow him in more specific ways to come in from the crowd.

And a few weeks ago, Lane took us through the story of Zacchaeus, right? The story you've all probably, if you grew up in church, you heard that story, you sang the song, like your entire life, but he was a tax collector, right? This is not in the song. Like, we didn't know, like, he was probably hated by his people. He was a traitor. He was considered as someone who was getting rich off of his own people. And Jesus invited him to come down out of a tree and have a meal with him. And that invitation, accepting that invitation, changed Zacchaeus' life.

Then last week, Ryan walked us through the story of what many of us would know as called the rich young ruler. And again, Jesus invited this man to follow him in specific ways, to come in from the crowd. He said to him, specifically for him, "sell your possessions," because they were an idol for him. "Give all that money to the poor and come follow me," Jesus said. But in that story, the man goes away sad, because he owned much property. He chose not to follow Jesus, not to come



lincolnberEAN

closer in that moment. It's a sobering reminder that not everybody accepts Jesus' invitation.

Well, tonight, I want to take us to another story of a man who encountered Jesus. It's a unique story. It's one of my favorites. Interestingly, this man could not have accepted Jesus' invitation to come to him on his own. He needed help, because he was paralyzed. He is called the paralytic. We don't know his name. The story's found in Mark chapter 2. If you would like to open your Bibles to follow along or pull it up on your device.

But while you're doing that, I want to invite you as we start out, before we get to the text, I want to invite you to imagine with me, for a moment, what life was like, had been life, like, for this paralyzed man? What must life have been like for a paralytic in the first century, in the ancient world? Because this man, his entire life, right, is lived on a mat that's three feet wide by about six feet long, and someone has to help him with everything. We don't know if he's fully paralyzed, quadriplegic, paraplegic. We don't know the details, but we know that somebody has to probably bring him food. They have to carry him in this story, so he has to be carried wherever he's going. Somebody has to probably help him get dressed each day. They have to move him from time to time to keep him from getting covered with bed sores. They have to help him use the restroom. They have to help him bathe, help him clean himself.

It's not a very fun existence. This man would never know the sense of independence that we prize so fiercely. Nothing probably can be done medically or it probably would have been—no surgeries, no rehab programs, no treatment centers. He has no way of contributing to society. He just has to go through life as a beggar. Laid by the side of the road, dependent on people dropping coins beside him so he can live another day.

We could surmise that he probably has dreams. He probably dreams when he sleeps, and maybe sometimes in his dreams he has a healthy body. Maybe he can work, maybe he can walk and run, maybe he's married, plays with his children. And then he wakes up, and he stares at a ceiling of a room he will never walk out of, and he looks at this body that holds him prisoner, and he looks at this mat that comprises his whole world, and he knows he'll never be free.

He has no money, no job, no way to get one, no influence, no family, and seemingly not much of a future. Does this guy have anything going for him? And you're going to see in the story today, he has one thing: he has some friends. He has some pretty amazing friends, actually. In one sense, the story we're about to read takes place because of his friends. Without his friends, he never makes it to Jesus, he never gets healed, he never gets forgiven. All of these things flow out of some



lincolnberean

very wise decisions that he made years ago to let some people into his life, to participate in a community. Right?

Participating in a community is the way, is a way, that we can come in from the crowd, the way Laura and Marshall did, but sometimes, sometimes it also takes a community to help us come in from the crowd. But, you know, I'm giving away parts of the story. So let's just go back. We're going to read the first seven verses of Mark chapter 2, verses one through seven.

1 When he [meaning Jesus] had come back to Capernaum several days afterward, it was heard that he was at home [somebody's home, Jesus didn't actually own a home, so somebody's home]. 2 And many were gathered together, so that there was no longer room, not even near the door; and he was speaking the word to them. 3 And they came, bringing to him a paralytic, carried by four men. 4 Being unable to get to him because of the crowd, they removed the roof above him; and when they had dug an opening, they let down the pallet on which the paralytic was lying. 5 And Jesus seeing their faith said to the paralytic, "Son, your sins are forgiven." 6 But some of the scribes were sitting there and reasoning in their hearts, 7 "Why does this man speak that way? He is blaspheming; who can forgive sins but God alone?"

So there are a lot of reasons that I love this story. So much going on in the story, right? There's crowds, it's exciting. There's teaching, there's healing, there's a little bit of debate that's going to go on here. There's forgiveness of sin. And one of the reasons I love this story is that Jesus, I think, is introducing what life is like in the kingdom of God to the people.

We're just told here, we're not told explicitly that, we're told that he's speaking the word to them. But in the previous chapter, chapter 1 of Mark. We're told that he is going around and proclaiming and preaching the kingdom of God is at hand, that it's here, right now, you can participate in it, come to me, follow me. So I just want you to mark that in your minds for a minute, this idea of the kingdom of God, participating in the kingdom of God. We'll come back to it.

But another reason I love the story is because of this guy's friends, right? Wouldn't you love to have friends like these? Let's just take a minute and think about the amazing characteristics. These guys are strong. I mean, physically, they have to be if they're carrying him around. They're caring. We're told they have faith, and I think you would probably agree with me that it's a tenacious faith to overcome the obstacles of carrying him, lowering him through the roof. They persevere through challenges. They're creative, they're not to be denied. They're willing to do anything. I mean, not just hoist him up, but like dig through the roof, destroy



lincolnberean

someone's home, to get him to Jesus. They're willing to touch and be associated with, quote, a "sinner."

That last one. The last one, that they're willing to be associated with the paralytic helps us understand that this group of friends, this little community, didn't happen accidentally. Because of this guy's physical condition, the deck was probably stacked against him of any community forming around him at all. In our day, people who wrestle with physical challenges like this, like paralysis, they often say the most difficult obstacles that they face are the attitudes of people who don't struggle with those things. Because those people don't know how to respond. They get anxious. They are unkind sometimes. They look away.

But in the ancient world, it was even harsher. The Greeks regularly disposed of infants that had physical anomalies. The Romans actually had a law on their books in the fifth century that stated, "quickly kill a deformed child." This was the culture of the day. And in Israel, he would have suffered from a different stigma. It was commonly assumed that people who were suffering, physically, had brought it on themselves because of sin. And illness, and especially paralysis, was often, if not always, associated with being because of sin.

So the fact that these four guys and the paralytic are friends, it's not an accident. It probably happened because of choices that they all made at different points in their lives. And in the face of formidable obstacles, social stigma, inconvenience, financial pressure, high cost of time and energy, they chose to become friends, to become a community.

See, people rarely drift into deep community. The kind of community that can help bring you in from the crowd. If you are in a community tonight, If you're in a Life Group, you're in some kind of a Bible study, some form of community, I'd like to challenge you to think about that community for a few minutes with a few questions that I have. Does your community bring you in from the crowd? Here's what I mean by that. Does your community draw you closer to Jesus? If so, how? If not, why not? And maybe why are you a part of that community? And what would it be like to be a part of a community that does that?

See, in the book of Acts, there's a very countercultural statement that's made about the first church, the community of people, the Jesus followers. It says that they met daily to discuss, to worship, to talk, to pray, to support one another, to discuss the apostles' teaching. And often I think that we seek to experience, participate, create first century community modeled off the scriptures, but we try to do it on a twenty-first century timetable. And it just doesn't work. Because you cannot fit Life Group into the cracks of an already overloaded schedule. The requirement for a deep community, the kind of community that can bring you to Jesus, is chunks of unhurried time.



lincolnberean

Because we can't do friendship in a hurry. You can't do parenting in a hurry and you can't do marriage in a hurry. You can try, but it never works out well. Can't do community in a hurry because it's not possible to listen in a hurry. It's not possible to mourn in a hurry with those who mourn. That doesn't even sound right. It's not possible to rejoice with those who rejoice in a hurry. We can't come in from the crowd in a hurry.

You ever notice that many of the people coming up to Jesus, they're in a hurry. It says, we're told, they run up to him, they blurt out their question, and then Jesus usually slows them down by asking at least one, usually multiple, questions that they have to slow down and think about and deal with, and most of the time they have trouble figuring them out. Because he wants them to slow down.

As Caleb said, last weekend, this weekend, next weekend, we are open registration for life groups. And so we're telling some stories through videos about how Life Groups have brought people closer to Jesus. One of the things that I want you to notice about this story, think back to the story of Laura that you just watched, is these stories take time. It only takes a few minutes to tell the story, two, three, four minutes, right? But usually the amount of time that's actually covered in these people's lives is months, sometimes years.

And Last week we heard about the Youngs, who had a Life Group of people bringing them to Jesus in prayer long before they took the step of faith to come in from the crowd and actually join that Life Group. Tonight you heard Laura's story, and it covered multiple months of connecting in a Life Group, getting to know each other. She said, it didn't happen right away, learning about each other's needs. Laura, by the way, has been a believer for a long time. Raised in a Christian home, but when she moved here with Marshall, she needed a community to help her come in from the crowd and keep taking steps toward Jesus, to encourage her, to trust God in a new place with new people. And it rarely happens quickly.

There's one more thing you can't do in a hurry, probably a lot of things, but one more I'm going to name. We can't carry someone's mat in a hurry. And everyone has a mat. Think again about this man, this paralytic, he must have gone through a lot, in his own mind, his own heart, to be friends with these guys. He probably, I think, wrestled with his sense of dependence on them. He maybe was jealous of their independence, that they walked to their homes each night after being together. He couldn't do that. He had to be carried. He had to be dropped off. I suspect he may have wanted to trade places with them from time to time. He may have struggled with how they saw him in his neediness.

See, it can be a very vulnerable thing to have someone carry your mat. When somebody's carrying your mat, they see you in your weakness. There's no way



lincolnberean

around it. There was a gift that formed between these men of trusting vulnerability and dependable faithfulness. This mat, which should have, according to society, should have created a gulf between them, instead became an opportunity for servanthood and acceptance and love. And when humans love and accept and serve each other in the face of weakness and need, community begins to form that brings us to Jesus. Because the truth is, everyone, has a mat. The mat is just a picture of human brokenness and imperfection.

Perhaps your mat is a temper that you can't seem to control. Or perhaps your mat is anxiety, fear over the future. Perhaps your mat is your inability to trust, you need to be in control. Your inability to share your feelings. Or maybe your mat has something to do with an awful thing that you did, that you've never told anyone about, and you still feel terrible, and guilty about it. Or maybe it's a sense of failure. Inadequacy. Plainness. Loneliness. See, everybody has a mat. Some of our mats are just not as visible as this guy's. Some of us are better at hiding our mats than others.

So I'm going to ask you a couple more questions tonight. Who carries your mat for you sometimes when you need it? To whom do you show your weakness and struggles? Who do you ask to pray for you? Who do you let see your brokenness? If we want to come in from the crowd, we can't always be the strong one. Sometimes. We have to let others carry our mat the way Laura did with her Life Group, and that vulnerability then draws us closer to Jesus.

And at times, it's precisely our mat that is the connecting point for deeper relationships and following Jesus more closely as a disciple. And as we're going to see in the story in just a few moments, it's only when we let others see our mat, when we give and receive help from each other, that healing becomes possible. See, that's the power of community, it allows us to bring each other to Jesus so we can be forgiven and healed and made more like him. Let's go back to the story for a minute, recap it.

Jesus is in this town, their town. And they've heard amazing things about him. He's teaching and so, of course, they want to go hear him, they want to go see him. And then one of them looked at the others and said, hey, what if what if we took our friend, you know, the paralytic? This could be really encouraging to him. So they talk about it, they make a plan. One of them goes and gives them a message and says, hey, we're going to come by around three o'clock today, we're gonna pick you up, we're going to take you to see Jesus.

And so they show up and he can't really say no because when they pick him up, they literally pick him up. And they go to the effort of carrying their friend all the way there, but when they arrive, there's this huge crowd. Verse 2 tells us that there's no room, not even near the door. Place is packed out. Jesus is most likely



lincolnberean

proclaiming the kingdom of God as he was doing in the previous chapter, but these guys, they can't get their friend to Jesus. Until one of them has a crazy idea, and as Jesus continues to speak, I think some pieces of the reeds and mud that the roof was probably built of begin to fall down in front of him. And it interrupts everything. People grow quiet, everyone starts to look up, and Jesus sees a man being lowered in front of him. Then he looks back up into the hole. And what does he see? Four sweaty, smiling faces, full of faith, looking down at him. Then he's so amazed by these guys' faith that he turns to the man and he says, son, your sins are forgiven.

And this just became a whole new thing. Do you think that's what his friends were expecting? You think that's what they were hoping for? That Jesus would proclaim that his sins are forgiven? I don't. I think they were hoping for healing. And what do you think the paralytic is thinking right now in the front of everybody? Do you think he signed up to have his sins talked about so publicly? Probably not.

Side note though. One of the things that happens when you get involved in community and Jesus is, in the middle of it all, your sin issues begin to surface if you allow your community to bring you to Jesus. Most of what happens to the paralytic in this story probably will happen to you. Sins will get named and dealt with. That might sound a little scary, but it's actually the best gift of all, especially for this guy. This guy who has been mocked and judged probably for most of his life. It has been assumed that his damaged body indicates he is spiritually inferior, mostly to be ignored, other than to drop a few coins because that's what Torah tells us to do. This is the man who is told by Jesus, you are clean, you are forgiven, you are right with God.

And here's what I think we struggle with in this part of the story. It seems like Jesus forgives this guy's sins based on the friends' faces that are still up there looking through the whole, right? Isn't that what he says? It says "seeing their faith, he says to the man." But what about the faith of the paralytic, doesn't that have to figure in somehow? If that's what you're thinking, I want to tell you hold on. We're going to get there.

But there's some other people who also have an issue, who are listening. We saw them in verse 6 and 7, the scribes and the teachers of the law. They have a very different reaction to this news of forgiveness, because the scribes saw it as their job—and not just saw it, it was their job—to establish clear-cut guidelines and boundaries. They decided what was acceptable and what was unacceptable in all spheres of life, so that the people could live according to God's will. That was the role they were supposed to play in Jewish society.

We kind of view them as scornful observers because we kind of know the end of the story, but in essence, they are correct in their evaluation of this particular



lincolnberean

situation. Let's put ourselves in their position for just a few moments. There's only two possible scenarios, right? God forgives sin, God alone forgives him, everybody can agree on that. To presume to forgive sins is an affront to the majesty of God, and they are right to label it blasphemy, because they don't know that Jesus was God. In fact, he's not even claimed to be God yet. So there's only really 2 options.

First option is the kingdom of God has come. That could be an option. Because the kingdom of God, the coming of the kingdom of God, must usher in the forgiveness of sins. Now, as readers, we know this is true because Jesus has just been announcing that. But they don't know that. Couple of verses in the Old Testament, all kinds of verses that talk about this, but I'm going to read two of them to you tonight. Isaiah 33, verse 22 and 24. This is prophetic from Isaiah talking about the coming of the kingdom. Here it is:

22 For the Lord is our judge, the Lord is our lawgiver, the Lord is our king; he will save us...24 And no resident will say, "I am sick" [which is interesting considering our situation]; the people who dwell there will be forgiven their iniquity.

The people who dwell in the coming age, the coming of the kingdom, they will be forgiven their iniquity. Then Jeremiah 31:34, Jeremiah is known as the new covenant prophet, as in the new covenant that God would make with his people. Here's what he says.

34 "They will not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' for they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest of them," declares the Lord, [here's why] "for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more."

So in their minds, The coming of the kingdom, that could be an option, but it's probably not the right one. Option number two is, this is blasphemy and it's punishable by death, which is the option that they take, right? They begin to reason in their heart, to discuss among themselves, who is this man? He's blaspheming. No one can forgive sins. And Jesus is going to respond to them because he's just as concerned about the scribes and the teachers of the law as he is about the paralytic and his roof-crashing friends. Let's look at his response. I'll start in verse 6 to give you the context.

6 But some of the scribes were sitting there and reasoning in their hearts, 7 "Why does this man speak that way? He is blaspheming; who can forgive sins but God alone?" 8 Immediately Jesus, aware in his spirit that they were reasoning that way within themselves, said to them, "Why are you reasoning about these things in your hearts? 9 Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven'; or to say, 'Get up, and pick up your pallet



lincolnberean

and walk'? 10 But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins"—he said to the paralytic, 11 "I say to you, get up, pick up your pallet and go home." 12 And he got up and immediately picked up the pallet and went out in the sight of everyone, so that they were all amazed and were glorifying God, saying, "We have never seen anything like this."

So Jesus, again, he responds to their question with a couple of questions. And one of them starts with the phrase, "which is easier?" And that, "which is easier," is kind of a reflective question. What he's saying is, on the one hand, to declare sins are forgiven can seem easier because there's no way to know outwardly whether that's occurred. But if you tell a paralyzed guy, he needs to stand up and walk out. Well, he better stand up and walk out. But on the other hand, it's harder to declare sins forgiven because to do so, and for it to actually happen, to be true, that person who's declaring it must possess the authority to actually forgive sin.

Here's another way of hearing Jesus' question, "which is easier?" To make a theological pronouncement about the forgiveness of sins? Or to provide empirical proof that the man's sins have indeed been forgiven by virtue of his ability to get up and walk away? See, Jesus is basically putting himself to the test of a prophet. In the Old Testament, when prophets would come and they would say, hey, I have a word from the Lord, and this is what's going to happen—if that happened, then they were like, this is definitely a word from the Lord; if that didn't happen, then that's how they knew this guy is a false prophet. He does not speak for God. So Jesus is saying, I'm going to heal this guy so that you know that I have authority to forgive sins.

And the man in this moment, he's such a great picture of coming in from the crowd. Such a great picture of participation in the kingdom. He's been brought near to Jesus and forgiveness and healing have both been proclaimed to him. But for him to actually experience, to actually participate, in those things would mean that he would have to by faith get up, pick up his mat, and go home. This is where we see the paralytic's faith. Which in this story, by the way, we don't ever hear any declarations of faith. We see their faith. The four friends, the paralytic, we see their faith. We see it in their actions because this man does exactly what Jesus says. He gets up and he leaves in the sight of everybody.

I think the four friends are also this amazing picture of coming in from the crowd by faith, bringing their friend in. Again, there was this teacher in their town who they had heard. He speaks with a different kind of authority. Like, it's different to listen to him. It's amazing the things he says, and he's traveling around, he's healing people, he's casting out demons, and they say to themselves, we know somebody who needs this.



lincolnberean

And so by faith, they go, they find their friend, they pick him up, they carry him all the way there—can't get to Jesus. They go up to the roof, they dig through the roof, destroy this person's house, and by faith, they bring their friend in from the crowd, they lower him in front of Jesus. And I think that's what Jesus is responding to when he's looking at them and he's saying to the man, "your sins are forgiven." And I think their participation challenged and strengthened everyone, not just the paralytic, because everyone in attendance that day, we're told, is praising God. They're amazed, and everybody probably who heard the story after that, it's like, what, we've never seen anything like this!

So what should our response to this story be as twenty-first century followers of Jesus? I would say our response is to participate the same way they do. Here's what I mean by that: we need to participate in bringing forgiveness and reconciliation to our world. Jesus calls himself—let me just dig a little further into something Jesus says in the text—Jesus calls himself the Son of Man in this passage. It's actually Jesus' favorite way to refer to himself in Mark. But no one else calls him the Son of Man. Jesus is the only one to refer to himself this way.

Later when the disciples are—Jesus asked them, who do people say that I am? In Mark chapter 8, the Son of Man is not one of the choices that they provide, even though Jesus, you're going to see in a minute, he uses the term all the time. It's also not what was claimed in his trial, that he was claiming to be the Son of Man. It's not written on the plaque that's above Jesus when he's crucified on the cross. But Jesus uses the term all over the place in Mark.

In Mark, we learn that the Son of Man has authority to forgive sins. That's the passage we're in right now. Later in chapter 2, we learn that the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath. Then in chapter 14, we learn that the Son of Man will be betrayed, he will suffer ignominy and death. Then we'll learn that he will be raised on the third day, Mark chapter 8, Mark chapter 9, Mark chapter 10. We also learn the Son of Man comes not to be served, but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many, it's Mark chapter 10, verse 45. And finally, we learn that the Son of Man will be seated at the right hand of power, return on the clouds, and gather his elect, Mark chapter 13, Mark chapter 14.

And there's not really a consensus on what this title was supposed to conjure up in the minds of a first century Israelite, but most scholars believe it has something to do with Daniel chapter 7. Because in Daniel chapter 7, there is this description of one like a son of man. And what they mean by that is, he looks like a human. But there's also, in the description, divine imagery because the man is described as riding on the clouds, which in the scriptures, only God rides on the clouds. So this one like a son of man is the representative of God's true people. He's opposed by the forces of evil, but God vindicates him, rescues him, proves him to be in the



lincolnberean

right and gives him authority. And in Daniel chapter 7, this authority enables him to dispense God's judgment, which is exactly what he does in Mark chapter 2.

Now, see, we tend to think of, we hear judgment most of the time negatively, and we think God's going to give them what they deserve. But here in Mark, the judgment that Jesus brings is grace and forgiveness and healing. Jesus has the authority to dispense God's forgiveness, and followers of Jesus are called to be for the world what he was for the Israelites, the people that he encountered. We must find ways of bringing those around us to Jesus so they can experience his grace and forgiveness.

And that starts with us bringing each other to Jesus from time to time. It starts with us being like the friends of the paralytic. And it starts, at times, with us being willing to be the paralytic, to admit that we are, to say to my community, "Hey, I'm struggling. Would you pray for me? Here's what I'm wrestling with. I can't fix myself. I'm judgmental of other people. Sometimes I need help getting pointed back towards Jesus. Because I can't find him in the mess of my life right now." Healing, forgiveness, drawing strength, encouragement—it rarely happens outside of Jesus. It rarely happens outside of relationships because we were made for relationship.

So, can I guarantee that if you were to step into a Life Group this fall, you're going to have an amazing experience like this guy? No. Because Life Groups are made up of paralytics. All of us. We just don't show our neediness as overtly. But if you don't join a Life Group, if you don't have people around you, if you don't have some form of community, there may not be anyone to carry your mat when you need it the most. You may not have anyone that can say to you, when you need it, "hey, don't forget Jesus is here, he loves you, he's involved, you can trust him."

And I know that it's risky to step into something new. Like joining a group where you don't know anybody, I know that can feel risky. But you know what my stepfather used to say to my mom all the time? He would look at her and he would say, "Baby, life is a risk. All of life is a risk." Could I encourage you this fall to maybe take a risk on a Life Group? And maybe for you, the risk is, "I'm going to do it. I'm actually going to join one. Never done it before, or I've tried it before, and it didn't work for me, but I'm gonna try again." Or maybe for you, you're in a Life Group, been in one for a long time, maybe the risk, the step, that you need to take in coming in from the crowd is to be vulnerable, to admit your need. Or maybe for you, the risk is when that happens for someone else in your group, when they begin to share their need, you don't ignore it, you don't try to fix it right away, you don't then start talking about your own need—you listen, you care, you pray, you point them back to Jesus because you believe that he's at work.



lincolnberean

So I'd encourage you to take a risk. Because communities like these, they still exist—communities that help us come in from the crowd and draw near to Jesus. And they're not always easy to be a part of. People's mats are sometimes heavy and awkward to carry, and there's always a roof of busyness or fear or conflict that has to be crashed through at times. But if we want to experience community, we can't stay on the edge of the crowd. We have to dig through the roof and find ourselves in the presence of Jesus.

It might not be pleasant at first because it can feel like you are a paralytic laid out on a mat in front of everybody. But once you meet the living, forgiving God in the person of Jesus in your particular situation, I think you'll find yourself like this guy: on your feet, going out into the world in the power of his love to bring others in from the crowd so they can experience Jesus' offer of healing and reconciliation.

You know, we started out tonight, I asked you to imagine with me what life was like for the paralytic in the ancient world—what life must have been like for this man. I'm going to invite you to imagine with me one more time as we close, imagine when the paralytic—he's probably not known by that anymore. He's probably known as the man who was formerly a paralytic. Imagine he's an old man now. He hits 80 or 90. The other members of his group are all using walkers and canes, but he's, you know, still going strong because he got a new pair of legs part way through his life. And as the years go by, each of his friends, they begin to pass away. One by one, they die. And each time one of them dies, he finds himself looking at that mat that's now rolled up and leaning in a corner of his house. And he keeps it because each time he looks at the mat, he remembers that little community of people that he was a part of that were willing to crash through a roof to bring him to Jesus.

You know, the paralytic's greatest gift, humanly speaking, it was not his legs, his new legs. It was his friends. It was a community that he was a part of, that helped him come in from the crowd, that got him close to Jesus. I hope that you would find that too—that you either have it or that you would find it, that you would be able to do that for others, and they would be able to do it for you. Let's pray together.

Heavenly Father, we're grateful for the grace, the healing, the forgiveness, the amazing things we see in Jesus. His ability to answer questions, his ability to say just the right thing and to care for people. We're also grateful for the example of these friends, these guys who would fight through a lot to get their friend to Jesus. We to pray tonight for some that are saying, yeah, I need that. I want that. I don't know where to find it. I've tried this before. It didn't work for me.

God, would you give courage to that person? Would you give faith, Lord? And those of us that are parts of a community, would you remind us that that is what



lincolnberean

we are trying to do, is to bring each other closer to Jesus? To listen, to care, to be vulnerable, and to listen to other people's struggles? And to pray, and to take the word of God, and apply it, to speak the truth in love? We ask you to do these things in us and through us. We pray in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

*Scripture taken from the NEW AMERICAN STANDARD BIBLE
Copyright 1960, 1962, 1963, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1987, 1988, 1995
The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission.*

Copyright 2026 Lincoln Berean Church. All rights reserved.

