

## Teamwork

Mark 2: 1-12

After Jesus had completed his tour of the synagogues he returned to Capernaum, his home base during the early part of His ministry. The news of his coming immediately spread. Life in Palestine was very public. In the morning the door of the house was opened and anyone who wished might come out and in. The door was never shut unless a man deliberately wished for privacy; an open door meant an open invitation for all to come in. In the humbler houses, such as this must have been, there was no entrance hall; the door opened directly on to the street. So, in no time, a crowd had filled the house to capacity and jammed the walkway round the door; and they were all eagerly listening to what Jesus had to say.

Into this crowd came four men carrying on a stretcher a friend of theirs who was paralyzed. They could not get through the crowd at all, but they were men of resource. The roof of a Palestinian house was flat. It was regularly used as a place of rest and of quiet, and so usually there was an outside stair which ascended to it. The construction of the roof lent itself to what this ingenious four proposed to do. The roof consisted of flat beams laid across from wall to wall, perhaps three feet apart. The space in between the beams was filled with brushwood packed tight with clay. The top was then marled over. Very largely the roof was of earth and often a flourishing crop of grass grew on the roof of a Palestinian house. It was the easiest thing in the world to dig out the rifting between two of the beams; it did not even damage the house very much, and it was easy to repair the breach again. So the four men dug out the filling between two of the beams and let their friend down direct at Jesus' feet. When Jesus saw this faith that laughed at barriers he must have smiled an understanding smile. He looked at the man, "Child," he said, "your sins are forgiven." (**William Barclay's Daily Study Bible**)

1. In verse 1, what exciting news spread throughout Capernaum?
  
2. In verse 2, how many gathered in the house and what "good problem" resulted?
  - ⇒ Would you rather belong to a church that had stagnation problems or growing problems? Why?
  - ⇒ In your opinion, is your church growing or stagnant?
  - ⇒ If stagnant, how would you suggest to solve that problem?
  
3. In verse 2, what did Jesus do?
  
4. In verse 4, who opened a hole in the roof and why?
  - ⇒ Characterize what qualities you see in those who opened a hole in the roof.
  - ⇒ What do you see about their faith?
  - ⇒ What do you see about their compassion?
  
  - ⇒ Who was it they were trying to help?
  
5. What did Jesus say to the paralyzed man?

6. Why would Jesus say that first?

⇒ Does this statement surprise you?

⇒ What does unforgiven sin do?

7. What do we learn about the spirit of teamwork from these men who brought the paralytic to Jesus?

⇒ List some of the things that we can do together that we can never do without teamwork in the church. (Ecclesiastes 4:9-12)

8. Talk about how Jesus is the answer to people's needs today and what we can do to bring them to Him and the church.

9. In verse 6, how did the teachers of the law react to all of this?

⇒ When Christians are trying to help people, is it to be expected that some will criticize?

⇒ How do we handle unjust and unfair criticism of our ministry/church?

⇒ Who is it that we want most of all to please?

⇒ How do you handle it when people criticize you?

10. How did Jesus deal with His critics in verses 8, 9, 10, and 11?

11. In verse 10, what did Jesus have the authority to do?

⇒ Remember it is not our church, it is Jesus' church. (Matthew 16:18-19)

⇒ What are some obstacles to church growth?