

Sermon Series: Ordinary Solutions, Extraordinary Results
Sermon Title: “Getting to Where You Need to Go”
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Date: May 22, 2022

Scripture: Luke 5:17-26

17 One day while he was teaching, Pharisees and teachers of the law who had come from every village of Galilee and Judea and from Jerusalem were sitting nearby, and the power of the Lord was with him to heal.[a] 18 Just then some men came carrying a paralyzed man on a stretcher. They were trying to bring him in and lay him before Jesus,[b] 19 but, finding no way to bring him in because of the crowd, they went up on the roof and let him down on the stretcher through the tiles into the middle of the crowd[c] in front of Jesus. 20 When he saw their faith, he said, “Friend,[d] your sins are forgiven you.” 21 Then the scribes and the Pharisees began to question, “Who is this who is speaking blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God alone?” 22 When Jesus perceived their questionings, he answered them, “Why do you raise such questions in your hearts? 23 Which is easier: to say, ‘Your sins are forgiven you,’ or to say, ‘Stand up and walk’? 24 But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins”—he said to the one who was paralyzed—“I say to you, stand up and take your stretcher and go to your home.” 25 Immediately he stood up before them, took what he had been lying on, and went to his home, glorifying God. 26 Amazement seized all of them, and they glorified God and were filled with fear, saying, “We have seen incredible things today.”

Summary

Sometimes things, situations, circumstances even people get in the way of us getting where we need to go. Being able to be healed is not the issue, rather access and accessibility can get in the way. African Americans, women, differently abled, young people and other marginalized groups know how it feels to have barriers to accessibility. Paralyzed by -isms and other barriers, created by ourselves or others, some of us have been unable to move into our purpose. Such was the case with this paralyzed man in the text. But he had some friends who had heard that Jesus was in town. So they brought him to Jesus. The vastness of the crowd kept them from getting to Jesus, so they decided to lower the man on his stretcher through the roof to be placed at the feet of Jesus. When Jesus saw the faith of the man’s friends, he forgave the sins of the man, and then healed him of his paralysis, in the presence of the church leaders who expressed disdain for Jesus’s actions.

What can we learn from this narrative of the life of Jesus that can help us to get to where we need to go?

1. **Transform a big crowd into a beloved community.** Crowds often stand around looking, hoping things will change. But the actions of a few committed souls can transform the crowd into a community that can make way for healing.
2. **Treat obstacles like opportunities.** The friends didn’t let the obstacle of the crowd get in the way of the opportunity to get the paralyzed man to Jesus. They found a way. They went a nontraditional route; they went through the roof. They didn’t allow the barrier placed by the crowd to detract from their opportunity.
3. **Trade in your guilt for grace.** Coming to Jesus allowed the man to let go of whatever was holding him back, whether it was his own shortcomings or stigmas that had been placed upon him by others. Jesus provided the grace for him to be healed not based on the man’s faith, but the faith of his friends. Sometimes, our sisters and brothers stand in the gap for us until we can muster enough faith for ourselves.

Reflection Questions

1. What circumstances have created barriers to your getting where you need to go?
2. Describe a time when a friend(s) stood in the gap for you even when you didn't believe in yourself or your own healing. Whom do you need to stand in the gap?
3. What guilt do you carry with you that keeps you from accessing God's grace? How can you work to let it go?
4. What needs healing in our community (locally, nationally or globally)? What actions can Ebenezer take to create access, to lift barriers to circumstance which need to be healed?