

GOOD FRIENDS WILL CARRY YOU TO JESUS

Mark 2:3 And they come unto him, bringing one sick of the palsy, which was borne of four.

Mark 2:4 And when they could not come nigh unto him for the press, they uncovered the roof where he was: and when they had broken it up, they let down the bed wherein the sick of the palsy lay.

Mark does not specify who the four who bore the paralytic were – whether they were family members, friends or random strangers. The Bible often records familial relations and given the unlikelihood of random strangers going through so much trouble, we will assume that these were his friends. Think for a moment about the type of friends you have had since childhood. Who doesn't want to have friends? They give us a sense of belonging, accept us the way we are and always root for us. No wonder we look for our friends when we wish to mark important events in our lives – good times and memories are always inextricably linked with the company of good friends. “A friend loveth at all times, and a brother is born for adversity” (Proverbs 17:17). Job called his three friends “miserable comforters” (Job 16:2) and the Lord was displeased with them because they dishonored the bonds of friendship in Job's adversity. “Also against his three friends his wrath was aroused, because they had found no answer, and yet had condemned Job” (Job 32:3). Christian friendship comes with great responsibility. With the above in mind, let us consider the story of the four friends of the paralytic in Mark 2.

Note the number of the paralytic's friends – they were four. If two is better than one, than surely four is better than two. “Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labour. For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him that is alone when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him up” (Ecclesiastes 4:9,10). The paralytic was in a sorry state, but the man had four solid and faithful friends who did not abandon him when his physical state deteriorated. The more friends we have, the easier it is to be carried to the Lord. May we have many friends who carry us to the Lord Jesus! One of the best investments we can ever hope to make in this world is in friends who will take us to Jesus. We ought to surround ourselves with as many as possible. Philip was a friend of Andrew and Nathanael, and they were all from Bethsaida. “Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. Philip found Nathanael and said to him, “We have found Him of whom Moses in the law, and also the prophets, wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph” (John

1:44,45). These brothers and friends “carried” each other to Jesus. Their bond was unbreakable before and after they met the Lord. Good friends will carry you to Jesus!

Next, the four friends were determined to take their friend to Jesus. God give us determined Christians friends who refuse to accept our paralytic condition! They got tired of staring at their friend’s hopeless condition as they saw him degenerate from day to day. They remembered the good times they ran, played and laughed with their friend, but now, a dreadful disease had reduced their friend to a vegetable-like existence. They refused to walk away. This is reminiscent of David who refused to see the army of Israel reduced to a trembling, cowardly bunch of incompetent soldiers. Armed with faith in God and a sling he determined to carry them back to the glory days of Joshua when no armies could stand against Israel. If one David could do this, how much four Davids? These friends were truly unstoppable! When they saw the crowds and the impossibility of entering the traditional way, they consulted with each and settled upon a radical idea – we will enter through the roof. Imagine friends lowering a sick man down into the operation theater at a hospital! Hallelujah! Thank God for friends who refuse to accept any hindrance that blocks access to Jesus! They did not consult with their paralytic friend – they only knew they were not taking him back. God give us friends who refuse to take us back to the world and our sins! God give us friends like Jacob who will do anything to get the blessings of Abraham and Isaac!

Gen 32:26 And He said, “Let Me go, for the day breaks.” But he said, “I will not let You go unless You bless me!”

Gen 32:28 And He said, “Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel; [fn] for you have struggled with God and with men, and have prevailed.”

It was sin that reduced the man to pitiful condition he was in. “When Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytic, “Son, your sins are forgiven you” (Mark 2:5). Sin is the great enemy of good friendship, but the solution is always Jesus. Forgive us and our friends our sins, O Lord! Friendship can blossom and rejoice once again through Jesus, our Savior. Put differently, the Lord blessed their friendship once again. Broken and strained relations can always be fixed – carry your friends to Jesus. We can only imagine how the friendship of these five friends blossomed and developed over the years. Certainly, they must have recounted this story many times, laughed and praised the Lord for this miracle. Is Jesus in our friendships? When is the last time we carried our friendships to Jesus for healing? What a friend we have in Jesus and what friends Jesus give us! May the good Lord bless your friends and friendship!