

Story of the Four Friends and the Paralyzed Guy

Based on Mark 2:1-12 by Linnea Good

Once there was a guy who was paralyzed. He couldn't walk because his legs wouldn't move. He couldn't really work, so, it is possible that he spent his days begging on the outskirts of town. Which meant he wasn't rich in money, I can tell you. On the other hand, he was rich in two other things: He was rich in faith, because he loved God and knew God loved him. And he was rich in friends. This guy had four devoted friends who helped him every day, getting him from his home to his spot out of town and back again at the end of the day. They carried him on a mat to and from home and made sure it was in the right place for his work-day. And at the end of the day, they carried him back. They were good friends.

One day, the friends learned some fantastic news. There was a healer in town. Somebody called Jesus of Nazareth was teaching and performing miracles in a home in their very own town. He was known far and wide. Their hearts leapt for joy! If anybody could help their buddy, it would be this Jesus.. So, they abandoned their own work, left everything and went back to bring their friend on his mat to Jesus.

But, when they got to the house, there was bad news. The whole house was already full to bursting with people. There didn't appear to be room for one more person standing up, let alone lying down on a mat. Plus you have to understand that, if people didn't want to get close to a paralytic, they didn't want to get close to the four guys who carried a paralytic around either. They didn't want to be touched by any of them.

So, they knocked at the front door. Can you help me with this?: *Knock! Knock! Knock!* But when all the people indoors looked out and saw four guys carrying a matful in the front door, they were not happy. All the people looked at them and said:

Song and Actions: "You can't come in! You can't come in! ! *(Arms extended in front in a Do-Not-Enter way)*
WE got here first!" *(Point at yourself with your thumbs on every beat)*. Can you help me with that? *(sing again)*

That was discouraging, but did that stop the four friends? NO! They went to the window, to see if they could spot another way in. They looked inside and what did they see? All the people staring back at them in an unfriendly way. And all the people said: "You can't come in! You can't come in! WE got here first!"

Now, this was really discouraging, They cast their eyes to the heavens and they... wait a minute! (dawning realization) "Have WE GOT A GREAT IDEA! There's a hole in the roof! There's a hole in ALL the roofs here, to let all the heat out! Don't worry; we'll get you to Jesus." And you're never going to believe this but they brought their friend up on the roof and began to lower him down from above into the crowd around Jesus.

Well, I can't tell you what it would have been like to be a paralyzed guy whose four friends were lowering him down through a hole in the ceiling into a roomful of hostile people. And I don't know what it must have been like to be Jesus – talking, teaching, healing – and to see a guy slowly start to descend from the ceiling by my head. But I think I can guess how the people who were inside the house were feeling! I bet I would have said: "You can't come in! You can't come in! WE got here first!"

But Jesus didn't say that. His heart was full of compassion for him. He looked at him lying there and he said an interesting thing: "Son, your sins are forgiven." He said this because he knew that everyone in that room was thinking the same thing: If that man's legs don't work, it's because God is punishing him for something bad he did.

But Jesus didn't say that. He said, "God doesn't punish people. God doesn't send sickness and accidents. God sends healing and love – all the time. I know what you're thinking. You don't like me speaking for God. Well, then – is it any easier for me to say: PICK UP YOUR BED AND WALK!" And – just like the four friends had hoped with all their hearts, the paralyzed guy slowly moved his legs, shook them, bent them, stretched them and suddenly ... jumped in the air and landed on his feet! He was healed!

So he picked up his mat, turned and said, "THANK-YOU, Jesus!", high-fived his buddies on his way out the door. And as the five friends walked away together, and maybe went to the gates of town to show everyone and say, "Look what Jesus did for me!"

Well, now, I can't tell you what happened after that, but I do think that all the people in that house learned some things that day. I think they learned that Jesus was no ordinary healer; that he had God's extraordinary gifts of healing touch. I think they learned that God doesn't send bad things to us – only healing and love. and I do believe that, never again was it ever heard in that house or in that town: "You can't come in! You can't come in! WE got here first!"