

Four Friends (Devotional)

The following story from the *Gospel of Mark* chapter 2 gives evidence that Jesus, the Son of God, has authority to forgive sin and authority to heal. In other words, it gives clear testimony to the Deity of Jesus. But this account of miraculous healing and forgiveness of sins also shows what true friendship is like. Do you have friends like this? Or even more importantly, are you a friend like this to someone around you? The four friends in this story below were consumed by the desire to see that their paralyzed friend would meet Jesus and be helped and healed, which he was, but more importantly, this man left that room forgiven by the Lord. Let's now read this amazing story for ourselves.

1. And when He returned to Capernaum after some days, it was reported that He was at home. 2. And many were gathered together, so that there was no longer room for them, not even about the door; and He was preaching the word to them. 3. And they came, bringing to Him a paralytic carried by four men. 4. And when they could not get near Him because of the crowd, they removed the roof above Him; and when they had made an opening, they let down the pallet on which the paralytic lay. 5. And when Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, "My son, your sins are forgiven." 6. Now some of the scribes were sitting there, questioning in their hearts, 7. "Why does this Man speak thus? It is blasphemy! Who can forgive sins but God alone?" 8. And immediately Jesus, perceiving in His spirit that they thus questioned within themselves, said to them, "Why do you question thus in your hearts? 9. Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Rise, take up your pallet and walk'? 10. But 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, rise, take up your pallet and go home." 12. And he rose, and immediately took up the pallet and went out before them all; so that they were all amazed and glorified God, saying, "We never saw anything like this!"

These men dug a hole in the roof of this house, right above where Jesus was located and lowered their friend on his mat through the opening they had made. When Jesus saw their faith He said to the paralyzed man, **"My son, your sins are forgiven,"** and **"Rise, take up your pallet and go home."** The man, who before he met Jesus had to be carried everywhere he went, left the house forgiven of his sins and on his own two feet. Everybody was astounded and gave glory to God.

Do we exhibit the same desire and commitment to introduce others to Jesus? Are we willing to selflessly serve each other so that God will be glorified? Are we willing to go the extra mile it takes to introduce our friends to Jesus?

May the Lord bless you!