

Moravian Women's Association

Devotional Paper

June 2014

With a Little Help from my Friends
Read Mark Ch2 v 1 – 12

This is a wonderful passage for more than one reason. It is a story of friendship – of four friends helping their friend who was paralysed. You probably first heard the story as a child in school or Sunday School. It paints a vivid picture of four men carrying a mattress or stretcher, on which their friend is laying, up the outside stairs of a humble house. Life was very different in Palestine in those days. Life was very public. In the morning the house door would open and mostly remain open as an invitation for anyone to come and go as they pleased.

How different to life for us today! There may be some places left in this country where doors are left unlocked but very few I think. The island of Sark in the television programme An Island Parish could be one!

The house in our story soon filled up when people heard that Jesus was there once more in Capernaum so the resourceful friends, not deterred, climbed onto the flat roof. This area was used as an extension to the house, often for baking or drying clothes or as a place of rest and quiet. The ingenious friends knew also that the construction of the roof would be easy to dig through as it was essentially beams filled with brush wood and clay and then earth covered over with grass. It would be easy to repair afterwards and so they dug away, lowering their friend directly at the feet of Jesus.

Jesus probably smiled inside at the faith of these men who easily dismissed practical barriers that they had to overcome. Isn't that what he had to do every day?

He looked at the man and said "Your sins are forgiven you". It may appear a strange start to the healing but it was universally understood that all sickness was the result of sin. No sickness could be cured until sin was forgiven. Even today modern medicine agrees that the mind can, and does, influence the physical condition of the body and that a person can never have a healthy body when their mind is not in a healthy state. Once Jesus brought to the man the forgiveness of God, the paralysed man knew that God was no longer angry with him, he was now his friend and therefore he was cured.

It is definitely true that the man would never have been brought to Jesus and thus forgiven and cured unless he had been helped by his friends. His friends would not have acted in this way if it had not been for their strong faith. So the story has a happy ending.

It is a story of friendship. It is a story of faith. Most importantly it is a story of still relevant to us today.

Jesus says to each of us today God is not angry with you. Don't be afraid. Get up and come home to me.

For discussion

1. How do you feel you have been brought to a faith? Was it through family or a friend?
2. Have you helped to bring others to share your faith?

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