



**That's What
Friends Are For!
Mark 2:1-5**

What Was It Like for a Paralyzed Man Back Then?

- **Someone has to provide his food, help him eat (fix his food), clothe him**
- **Someone has to carry him (He'd have a hard time getting vaccinated in today's world)**
- **Someone has to shift him to prevent bed sores**
- **Someone has to clean him when he soils himself**
- **Nothing medically was done for paralyzed people (P.T., O.T., Rehabilitation Therapy; No A.D.A. laws to enforce their rights, jobs)**

This is a Story About a Paralyzed Man and His Friends



- **Anyone in this condition was beggar dependent (no job; he depended on people dropping coins beside him)**
- **I'm sure that he dreamed of "normal health"; walking, playing with kids (but when he wakes up he is still a prisoner of his own body)**



What Does He Have Going for Himself?

- **He has some amazing friends; without them we have no story**
- **Without his friends, he never gets to Jesus, or gets healed, or gets his sins forgiven**
- **I've wondered how would he have developed friends like this based on our culture today (today's culture would be really hard on him)**
- **Many people challenged with disabilities today often say that the major problems they have are from the so-called, "normal people"—Who are unkind in their responses to them**

Who often look away to avoid eye contact (unkind world)

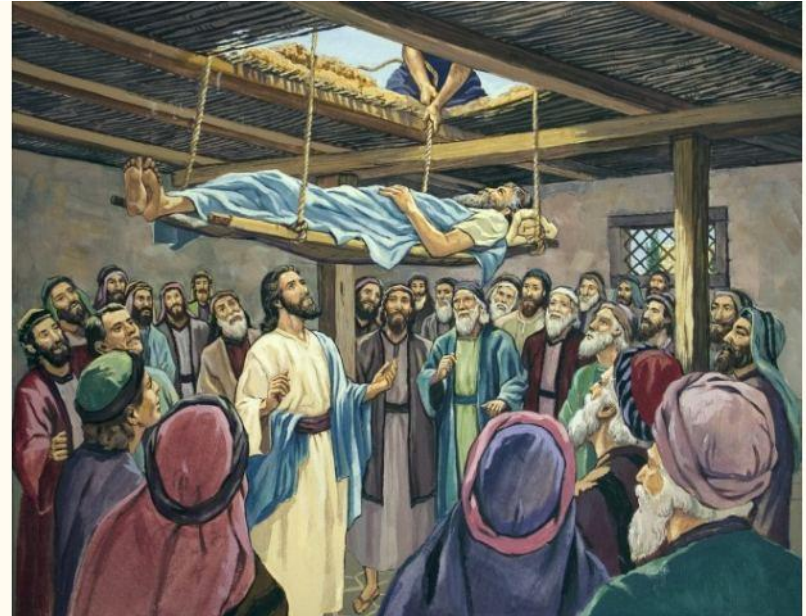
Example: Coach who had his own disabled player beat up so that he wouldn't hinder his team when the game began

- **But here is a group of 4 men who refused to let anything stop them**
- **Surely their friendship had already fought through “formidable obstacles” (inconvenience, social stigmas, high cost of time and energy)**
- **Imagine with me (put yourself in his place), what this paralyzed man goes through every day; when your friends have to carry your mat all the time (you are very vulnerable)**

Observations



- When someone is carrying your mat, they can see you in your weakness. They can hurt you if they drop you!
- Carrying someone else's mat challenges your faith with their vulnerability
- Wherever people love, accept, and serve each other in the face of weakness, there is fellowship (communion) at the mat (deaf, blindness)
- It's saying, *"I agree to help you and you agree to let me help you!"*



Point: Every One Has A Mat!

Your Mat-Symbolizes your weakness, imperfections, brokenness; it's the "as is" tag that we try to hide from others

- Maybe your mat is your temper. You have a habit of spewing venom out of your mouth that is known to injure those whom you say you love. You even hate the way you talk at times. But YOU DO MEAN TO INJURE in your conversation!
- Maybe your mat is your inability to trust people. Your hurt from previous relationships makes it difficult to develop a new one; therefore you are always, "on guard"
- Maybe your mat is a feeling of inadequacy when around people you think are accomplished or that you want to impress
- Maybe your mat is fear. You never seem to have the courage to say what is needed and so you always, "tuck your tail and run," or remain speechless even when you're right

Then There is “Mat Management!”

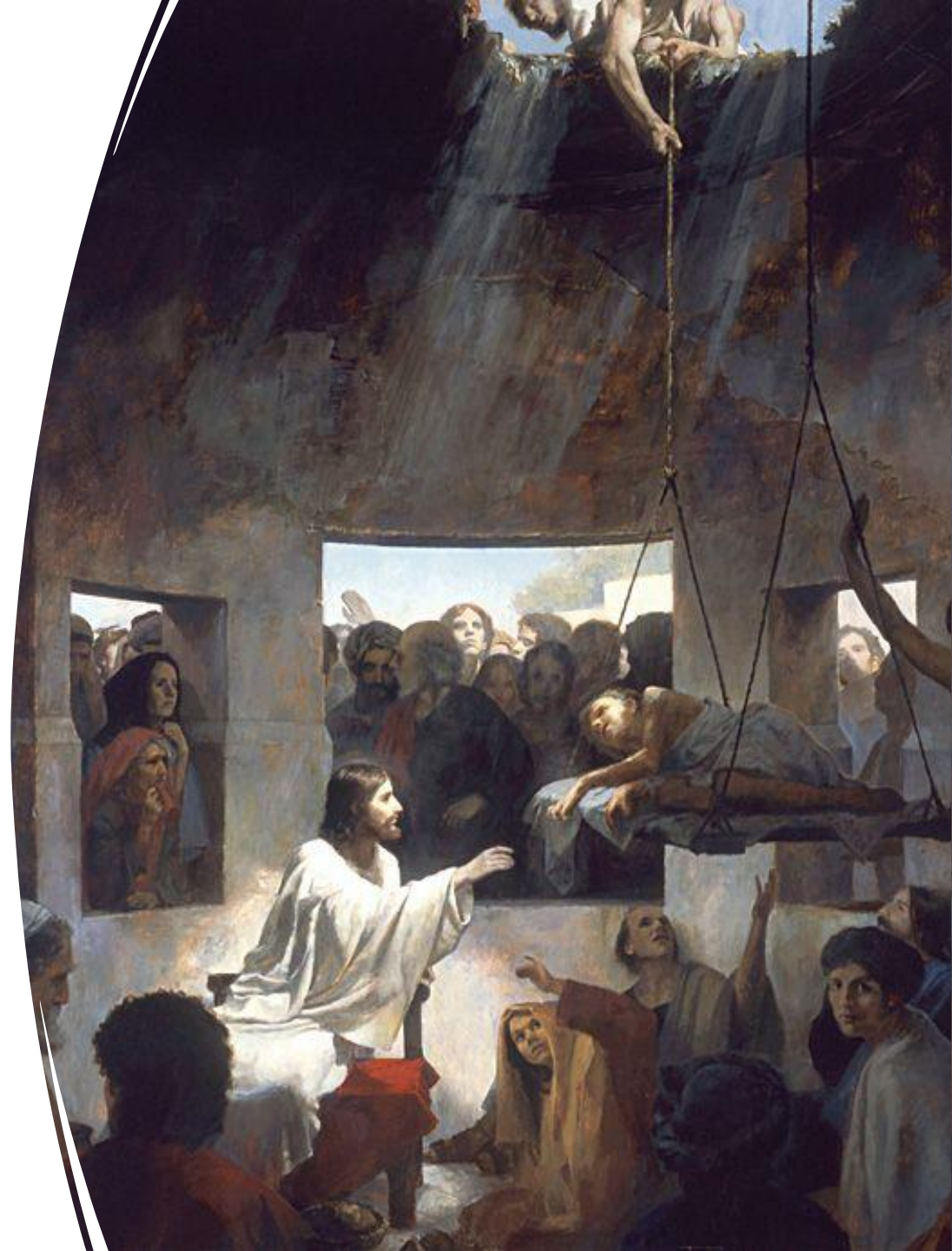
- We spend our whole lives pretending we don't have a mat
- We appear so healthy and strong that people assume that we can walk anywhere we want
- “Mat Managers” can see other people mats(have the spirit of mat identification for others), but they never can/will reveal their own
- Some of us can get real good at convincing people of our strengths, abilities and competence: But we will never live in communion with people and have quality relationships until we are honest about our vulnerabilities
- That's why I believe that the apostle Paul showed leadership by revealing his spiritual challenges (his mat) Romans 7:19-21
- Authentic Leaders with “known personal challenges,” enable others in their church family to work to defeat their own

So, One Day Jesus Comes to Town!

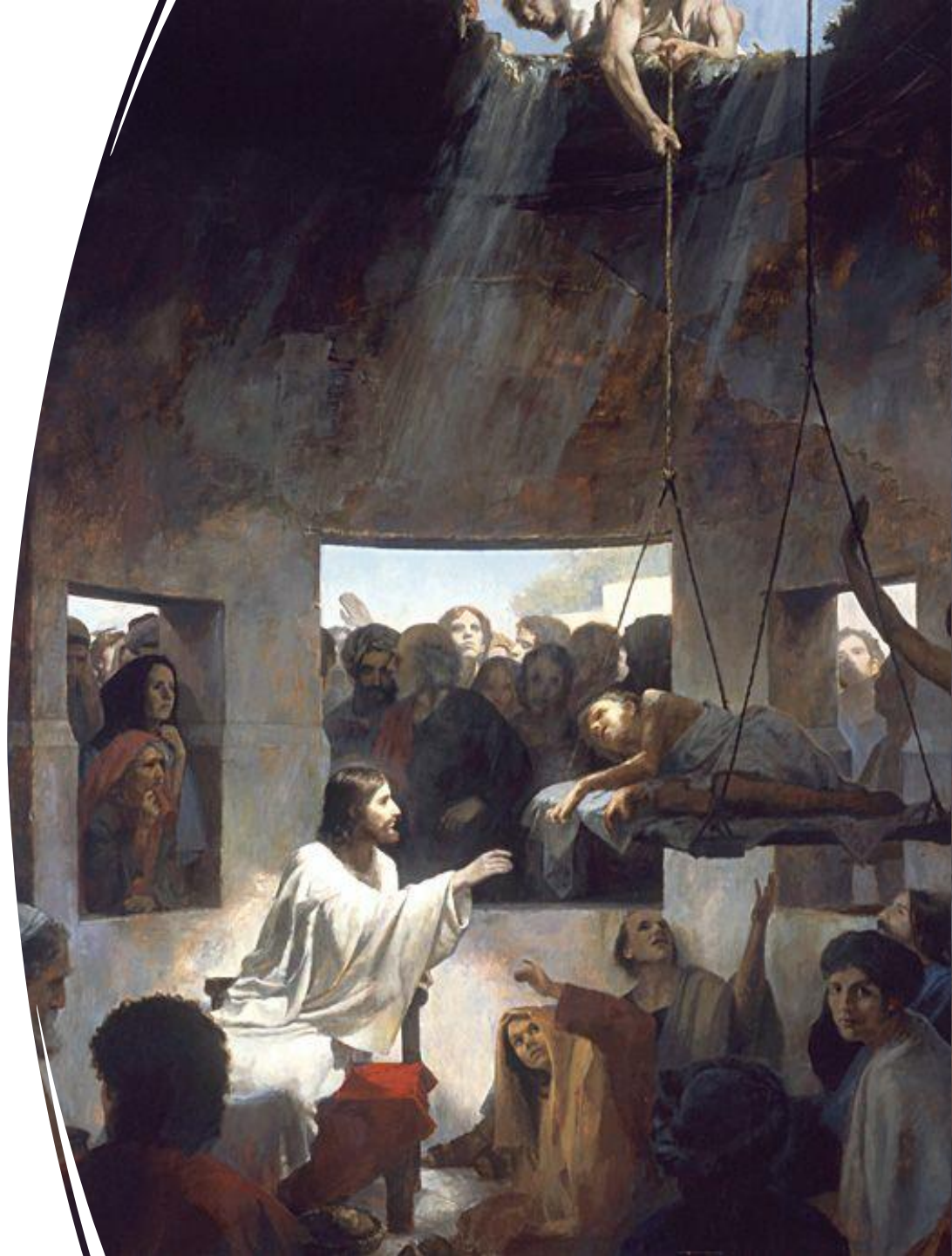
- **These 4 men decide to go and hear Jesus, but they make a conscious decision to take their paralyzed friend with them**
- **But, now, to do this is going to make things harder logistically; but they are not thinking about themselves, but their friend**
(Ex. Our deaf family members are facilitated by the improvising of Ron and Wanda Cobb and Our Leadership)
- **So, they go to where their friend is, and tote him to the house where Jesus is teaching a lesson**
- **When they get there, Matthew's gospel says that the place is already packed (the crowd jamming the entrance so that no one could get in or out of the door, much less four men carrying their friend on a stretcher)**

Friends Improvise!

One of them suggested that they should make a hole in the roof of the house and lower their friend inside (this wasn't vandalism; roofs back then, were made of cross beams and reeds, branches and dried mud)

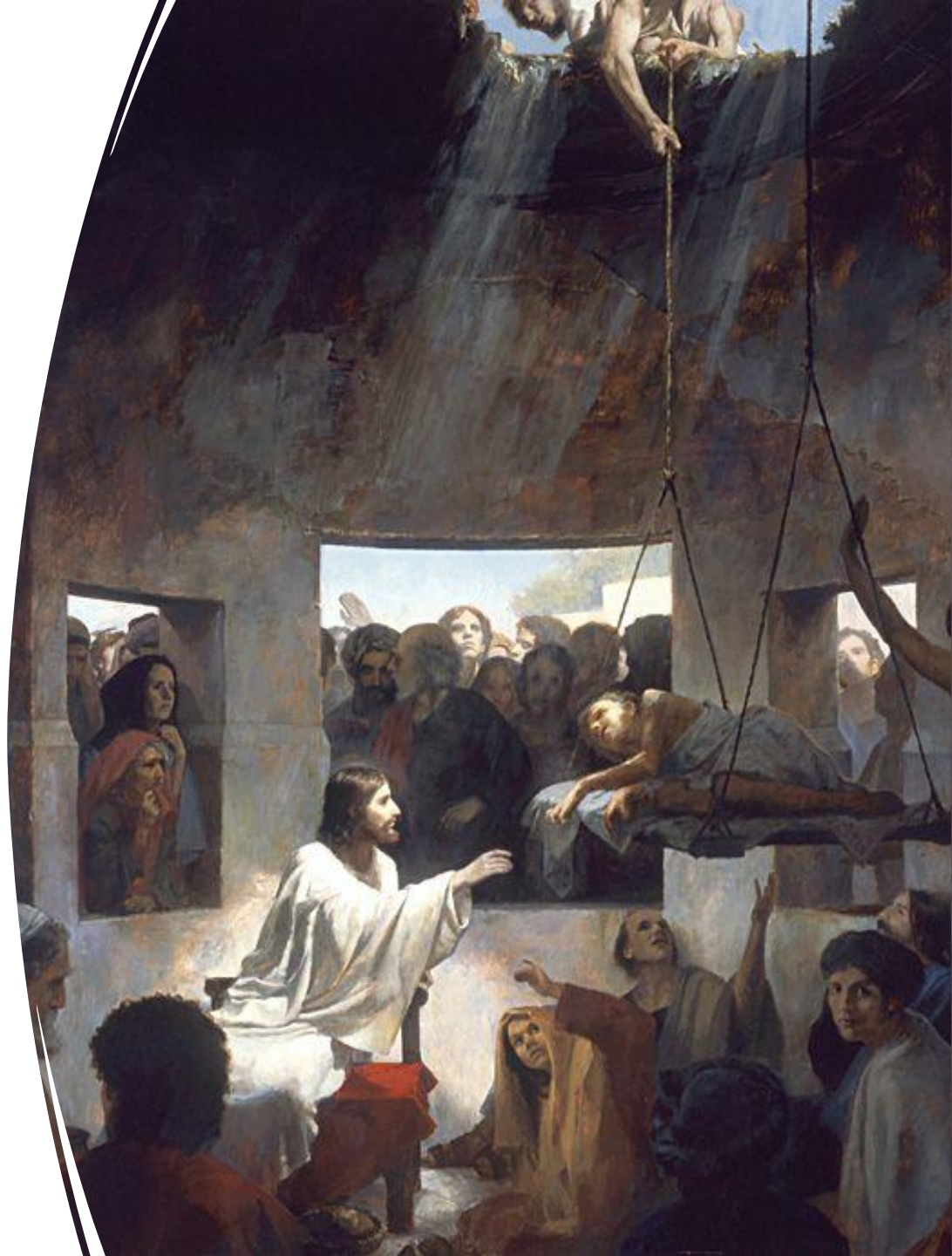


Imagine that as Jesus is teaching this crowd, a distraction occurs above him, with some noise, a few pieces of reed, and dust begins to settle on the people below, to the point that Jesus has to stop His discourse because now the roof has opened up



**Four guys are
seen up above
the crowd,
letting a man
down into the
crowd while he
is lying on a
mat**

**(They wanted their
friend to experience
Jesus like they did)**



Observations

- Notice verse 5, “*When Jesus saw their faith,*”
- Usually, the healing stories speak of Jesus seeing the faith of the one asking for healing for themselves or their child
- Here it’s the faith that Jesus sees primarily of the friends (not the paralyzed man or his relatives)
- Folks, friends are people who have made a major “ROOF CRASHING COMMITMENT,” to others!
- I think that in this word we have confused the term “friends,” with “friendly people,” and they are not always the same
- There is a world of difference between being friends with someone because they are useful to you and being a friend

Definition of a Good Family

(It fits this text, fits a good church, a group of friends)

A Group Which Possesses and Implements an Irrational Commitment to the Well Being of Its Members (the key word is “irrational”)

- In great communities, people carry mats and crash through roofs without asking, *“What’s in it for me?”*
- Good communities have a lot of “Roof Crashers.”
- Good churches have a lot of “Roof Crashers.”
- Roof Crashing involves 2 things (not just rearranging roofs)
 - #1 Noticing a situation (sorrow, loneliness, deficits, disability)
 - #2 Doing something about it (write/text a note, listening to a person even though you are busy, inconveniencing yourself)

Finally, Jesus Knew That the Man Needed Forgiveness of Sins as Well as Healing

- Sometimes people can make snide remarks like: *“What can a paralytic do anyway?”*
- Jesus knew that we can commit some of the worst sins in the world without moving or lifting a finger (Resentment, Jealousy, Envy, Bitterness, Prejudice, Evil Attitudes)
- It’s sad to see people who are sick, ABUSE people who are well as they try to help them live a better life
- It’s as if they become envious and jealous of their “wellness,” and manipulate with evil intentions the conscience of a loved one or a friend (undergo verbal and physical persecution)
- Jesus recognized that this man, though disabled, needed an “attitude adjustment,” So he says, *“Son your sins are forgiven you”* True Friends also call you to a higher standard of living
- That’s Also What Friends Are For; John 15:14, James 4:4

The Plan of Salvation

Hear the Gospel **Acts 15:7**

Believe the Gospel **Acts 15:7**

Repent of Sins **Acts 17:30**

Confess Christ **Acts 8:37**

Be Baptized **Acts 8:38**