



O&A Youth.

CURRICULUM

YOU MATTER WEEK THREE JUNIOR HIGH (YOU MATTER TO OTHERS)

March 19th-25th, 2023

THE LESSON IN A SNAPSHOT:

A lot of people are hurting, struggling, dealing with depression and negative thoughts, and many are isolated. You matter to God and you matter to people and people matter to God. People care about you and you are called to care about people. Who are you surrounding yourself with? The circle you are in will determine the person you become. Do you want to be a person of hope or a person of hurt to those around you?

OPENING QUESTIONS BEGIN WITH HIGHS & LOWS

(Begin with Highs & Lows. Use these if you want to get them talking more before playing the lesson.)

ICE BREAKER (Optional): Silent Ball - have everyone stand up in a big circle or around the room. Use a ball or pick an appropriate object that can be easily thrown and caught. The aim of the game is to be the last person to make noise or to not drop the ball. If you make a noise, you're out, if you miss a catch, you're out.

- 1| Where do you find most of your friend groups from? Like school, sports, church, other?
- 2| What is your longest friendship to date?
- 3| Who is that one friend you go to for anything?
- 4| How much would you say your friends matter to you?
- 6| If given the option of you having an all paid vacation and your friend has to have 3 teeth pulled or something equally awful, would you do it? (Basically, are you a terrible person? I would take the vacation in a heartbeat.)
- 7| When is a time you decided to ask for forgiveness instead of permission for something?
- 8| Have you ever been asked to do something that you thought was impossible or unreasonable? What happened?
- 9| Has God ever asked you to do something you thought was impossible or unreasonable? What happened?

SCRIPTURE

Luke 5:17-26

Jesus Forgives and Heals a Paralyzed Man

¹⁷ One day Jesus was teaching, and Pharisees and teachers of the law were sitting there. They had come from every village of Galilee and from Judea and Jerusalem. And the power of the Lord was with Jesus to heal the sick. ¹⁸ Some men came carrying a paralyzed man on a mat and tried to take him into the house to lay him before Jesus. ¹⁹ When they could not find a way to do this because of the crowd, they went up on the

roof and lowered him on his mat through the tiles into the middle of the crowd, right in front of Jesus.

²⁰ When Jesus saw their faith, he said, “Friend, your sins are forgiven.”

²¹ The Pharisees and the teachers of the law began thinking to themselves, “Who is this fellow who speaks blasphemy? Who can forgive sins but God alone?”

²² Jesus knew what they were thinking and asked, “Why are you thinking these things in your hearts? ²³ Which is easier: to say, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Get up and walk’? ²⁴ But I want you to know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins.” So he said to the paralyzed man, “I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home.” ²⁵ Immediately he stood up in front of them, took what he had been lying on and went home praising God. ²⁶ Everyone was amazed and gave praise to God. They were filled with awe and said, “We have seen remarkable things today.” (NIV)

LESSON/VIDEO DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

(These are based on this week's devotional video; use these questions as a guide.) In Jesus has the power to heal broken minds and bodies but he had another power: the power to forgive sins, to make people whole, and to empower them to do His work. We are called to carry people to Jesus and let Him do the impossible in their lives. In vs. 18-19, we see a group of men willing to go to great lengths to get their friend, a paralyzed man, into the presence of Jesus. They acted in faith to help someone who needed help could not help himself.

1. In vs. 17 Jesus came face to face with a crisis decision. He had political powers from all the country watching him, waiting to react. Would He heal and let those leaders react or would He hide His power in the face of unbelieving leaders?
2. The Spirit of God and power are intimately connected. Why do you think this is? (Having power is often connected to healing as well but always points back to God being the source of true power.)
3. The resourcefulness of these men helping the paralytic is noticed by Jesus. They had so much faith in his power they were willing to go to the limit to reach him. Why do you think their faith was so strong?
4. It says that when Jesus saw *their* faith in vs 20, he then turned to the man and called him friend. Why do you believe it was *their* faith that allowed for this man to be called a friend of Jesus? (They had the ability to bring the man to Jesus, it was essentially their works that gave the man the chance to even be *in the presence of God*. Without them, the man would not have had this experience.)
5. Jesus switches things up and instead of immediately healing, forgives the man's sins(vs. 20)? Why? (There is a deeper lesson here, he is showing that the entire salvation of men, physical and spiritual, depends on faith in Jesus. Jesus does not care about partial salvation, His life and ministry was centered on believing in the gospel.)
6. Jesus was deeply more concerned with the spiritual needs than He was the physical. After being challenged by the Pharisees, Jesus claps back with a question, “Which is easier?” SO which is easier- forgiving sins or healing? (The implication is the neither is possible. Especially not forgiving sins because that's only up to God. But since healing can only be done by God it probably means that if Jesus can heal then He can probably forgive sins too. So strictly speaking, neither is easier than the other because they both require the power of God. One can be proven while the other cannot. You can't “fake” heal someone but you can pretend to forgive sins.)

7. The men in this story went after someone who was an outcast and included him. What are some examples of people today that can easily be excluded? How can they be included into a circle of friends?

PERSONAL APPLICATION QUESTIONS

The truth is you matter to God and you matter to people, and people to God. We need to know we are cared about and to care about other people.

1. Do you struggle with feeling like you matter to people? Do you have people in your life that matter to you?
2. It's easy to lose hope or get discouraged in helping others grow closer to God. What would help us when we are feeling hopeless?
3. For Jesus, it was beyond healing the physical, it went to his heart and this happened because of the faith of his friends. You have the ability to have so much faith in what God can do that you can radically impact the lives and hearts of your friends. Do you believe this? If you do, how does this affect how you live?
4. What stops you or gets in the way of you trying to get your friends to Jesus? How do you think you can get past this?
5. If you began to pray for your friends by name each day who needed community or who need Jesus how do you think this would change your own heart?
6. How can you grow your heart in love for your friends? If your heart & love for your friends grew, do you think it would be easier to show them the love of Christ? How so? (You can show kindness, compassion, gentleness, show *genuine* concern, reach out to, pray for, invite to hang out, get gifts for, spend quality time with them, have a conversation with them where you don't talk about yourself but simply listen to them.)
7. We have to carry people to Jesus and find any way to get them to Him. You matter enough to impact the lives of others. How can *you* carry *your* friends to Jesus?
8. What friend can you reach out to this week and text and check in on how they're really doing? Name one. Ask them about school, their family, their friends.

Close in prayer.

DIG DEEPER: EXTRA NOTES ON THE PASSAGE FOR YOU

We almost never use these but they are more intellectually in depth insights into the text itself.

- Through his healing ministry, Jesus continued drawing the curious, miracle-seeking crowds despite all his efforts to get people not to talk about his miracles. Miracle working was not his main business. Preaching the kingdom and forgiving sins was. But the latter raised hostility as well as awe and praise. The company Jesus kept also raised hostility, but this only gave him opportunity to define his ministry as calling sinners to repentance.
- We lose sight of this: We want to see miracles of healing that bring awe and astonishment but forget that Jesus was much more concerned with forgiveness and the gospel of the kingdom of God than He was healing people's physical illnesses.
- In vs. 17 the pharisees were the most powerful and influential of the three major Jewish sects (the other two being the Sadducees and the Essenes.) They believed in strictly keeping the law, which they interpreted according to their own traditions however. They also were separatists who did everything they could to avoid contact with anything or anyone who was "unclean".
- The term "teacher of the law" (νομοδιδάσκαλος/nomodidaskalos) in vs 17 is believed to actually have been a word created by Christians so they could distinguish between Jewish and Christian teachers.
- In vs 18-19 there is a string of the preposition dia (διά) meaning "through" used in Greek. Each time they ran into an obstacle their faith and passion to get their friend to Jesus motivated to keep going and to push "through" to the midst or presence of God.

- An interesting way to study the Gospels especially is to focus solely on the direct discourse of the passage. This will usually reveal the heart of what is happening in the story. So for this passage: -20“Friend, your sins are forgiven.” -21“Who is this fellow who speaks blasphemy?.. Who can forgive sins but God alone?” -22-23- “Why are you thinking these things in your hearts? Which is easier: to say, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Get up and walk’?...24 But I want you to know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins.”... “I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home.” -26 “We have seen remarkable things today.” We see an inductive retelling of the story where it does not reveal the paralyzed man until the final verses and the emphasis is on Jesus as forgiver of sins.