1. **Intro:**
   1.1. **Presidents Day** – When George Washington was leaving home to begin, what would become his lifelong service for his country, he recorded the parting words of his mother, Mrs. Mary Washington: “*Remember that God is our only sure trust. To Him, I commend you...my son, neglect not the duty of secret prayer.*”
   1.1.1. Pray: President Bush.
   1.2. Many healings so far, & lastly a leper was made spot free!
   1.2.1. As ministry cranked up, Jesus made more time to be alone with His Father! (vs. 16) – Too busy not to pray!
   1.3. **OUTINE:** Hindered By Many; Carried By Four; Lifted By One!
   1.4. **Intro Story** – As a young lad I remember running into our back bathroom next to our kitchen to wash my hands. I would turn on the water & do a “hand drive by”. I could skip my palm across the soap (so I could say I used it) & through the water & hit the towel in breakneck speed.
   1.4.1. This one evening I think I went too quick! - My dad asked, “did you wash”, I said yes, & he checked! (he’s never checked) [mom must have tipped him off] Any ways, he marched me in & showed me this scrubber (I thought it was for the tile) – when I got done with that scrub “I KNEW I WAS CLEAN!
   1.4.2. As a youth I went to a priest for forgiveness. I said what ever prayers I was given. But I was never sure I was clean! (I felt a little more holy? I trusted in the system? But was I clean?)

2. **FORGIVEN!** *(17-26)*
   2.1. [1] **HINDERED BY MANY!**
   2.2. **Life on a 3x6 Matt!**
   2.2.1. His 1st Hindrance was his physical malady.
   2.2.2. Q: Ever laid in one place for a long time & start noticing *shapes* in the *ceiling tiles*?
   2.2.3. Life for him was pretty much reduced to a horizontal one.
   2.2.3.1. No convalescent hospital to be cared for; no physical therapist; no medical breakthroughs; no miracle drug; no specialist; no neurosurgeon.
   2.2.3.2. Life as he knew it was a 3’x6’ prison!

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1 America’s God & Country; pg.635,636
2 “Incredible Moments” Ken Gire; pg.21
2.2.4. His life, in his culture & time period, could be summed up to “dependency, humiliation, confinement, boredom, loneliness, frustration, & despair.”…until this special day!

2.3. Hinder By The Crowds!
2.4. His 2nd Hindrance was the crowds.
2.4.1. They wouldn’t move to let them in. “Hello, we’re busy in Bible Study for Pete’s Sake!”
2.4.2. In every crowd there seem to be Seekers, Spectators, & Spies.

2.5. Hinder By The Religious!
2.6. His 3rd Hindrance was the Religious group.
2.6.1. Pharisees & teachers of the Law sitting by – They could jumped up & lifted a hand! – Here were the real paralytics!
2.6.2. Instead they are only concerned who is rocking the religious boat!

2.7. Hinder By his own Heart!
2.8. His 4th Hindrance was the sin in his heart.
2.8.1. Doctors estimate that 50% of all physical sickness comes from emotional & spiritual problems: bitterness in spirit, an unforgiving spirit, holding grudges.
2.8.2. The most easily identified is probably the “ulcer” which are not caused by what you are eating but by what is eating you!

2.9. Maybe the problem you are facing today is not your wife or husband, not your boss, & not your parents. Your problem is sin.
2.9.1. There are times when we think that our greatest needs are for healing, for friendship, for more money. - Jesus helps us focus on the real issues of life: & our 1st need is the need for forgiveness & transformed hearts. ³
2.9.2. Ps: I’m not saying this man had paralysis because of sin!!!

2.10. [2] CARRIED BY FOUR!
2.11. A Little Band Of Believers!
2.12. Four Men & a Brainstorm!
2.12.1. Ok they were latecomers…but faith brought them!
2.12.2. They weren’t put off by the crowd of people thronging the front door. {Honey, Calvary’s parking lot’s full, let’s just go to IHOP!}
2.12.3. They didn’t use the excuse, “it must not be the Lord”!
2.12.4. They weren’t put off by the crowd of people that shooed & shushed them away! - They thought hmmm…“The outside stairs!!!”
2.12.4.1. Explain homes: Saw a house uncovered in Chorazin(Korazim) “Woe unto you Chorazin”. Stone on top, then dirt on that.

³ The Teachers Commentary; Libronix
2.13. Jesus saw their faith! - Not the paralytic’s faith, but the faithful fours fabulous faith!
   2.13.1. He saw their persistent, creative, & sacrificial faith!
      2.13.1.1. Body surf him over the crowd…nay!
   2.13.2. He saw 4 sweaty men willing to put a shoulder to their faith!4
      2.13.2.1. Gal.6:2 “Bear one another’s burdens.”
   2.13.3. They tore up someone’s roof, interrupted a home bible study, & inconvenienced everyone else that was listening.
   2.13.4. Jesus did say regarding his kingdom “the violent take it by force.”
      2.13.4.1. It’s a faith that laughs at barriers!
   2.13.5. But what’s more important a roof, or a man? (They weren’t asking, “Does he have homeowners insurance?”)
      2.13.5.1. I’m sure they fixed it, & actually it would be pretty easy to do.
      2.13.5.2. Too many people are more interested in the place, or the program, instead of the people!

2.14. They didn’t say we can’t preach – they didn’t need to, they “acted!”
   2.14.1. They thought, what CAN we do? – We can bear his soul on our hearts! - We can get him to Jesus who we know can help! – we can remove tile! – we can hand him down!
   2.14.2. If you can’t talk (or don’t know what to say), Can you weep for their soul?
   2.14.3. Maybe you can’t break through with language, but maybe you can w/compassion!

2.15. Pastor Ray Stedman uncovered their names: Frank Faith, Harry Hope, Larry Love, & Dan Determination.5
   2.15.1. Frank Faith said, “I believe we can get this man to Jesus.”
   Harry Hope said, “I believe there is hope for this man”
   Larry Love said, “I really love this guy. I hate his sin but love him.”
   Dan Determination said, “Let’s roll!”

   2.15.2. And so we have light starting to stream in. 40 fingers digging through the roof. Dust. People coughing. Dirt particles falling on the religious leaders robes that were just back from the cleaners!

2.16. Many people will never come to Jesus unless somebody brings them!
   2.16.1. The bible doesn’t say anywhere that sinners are to come to church! Everywhere in the bible it’s clear the church is to go where sinners are6
   2.16.2. We are to be engaged in going out where cripples are, & bringing them to Jesus!

4 “Incredible Moments” Ken Gire; pg.24
5 Ray Stedman; pg.40
6 ibid; pg.38
2.17. The paralytic’s friends provided a model for caring for shut-ins!
2.17.1. What are some practical ways we can follow their example?

2.17.2. Q: Do you know anyone that is bed ridden? Anyone in a convalescent home? Anyone in the hospital? Any lonely?

2.17.3. Take them Communion! Take them Worship! Take them Prayer! Take them a Daily Bread Devotional! Take em a Bible Study CD! Take them a Worship CD! Take them just yourself!

2.17.4. Go to where people are! - Go out & find someone to minister to. Prison visitation; Convalescent home; Find a need & meet it.

2.18. [3] LIFTED BY ONE!

2.19. It seems there is always in life: some who want to hold you back; some that will always hold you up; & Jesus to always hold you in His Heart!

2.20. It wasn’t what Jesus heard that captured His heart it was what He saw
2.20.1. Looking up Jesus sees there 4 heads silhouetted, thinking “These guys are good!”

2.21. Jesus Smiles: The Prince meets the Paralytic & the face of God smiles & says, “Be of good cheer!” (Mt.9:2) then, “Son, your sins are forgiven you!”
2.21.1. Within that emaciated body lies a crippled soul, paralyzed from sin, atrophied from shame.

2.22. Jesus is about to trap the trappers! (Like Wile E. Coyote trying to trap the Road Runner in all his ACME traps…he always ended up in his own trap!)

2.23. Syllogism - argument involving 3 propositions: it’s made up of a major premise, a minor premise, and a conclusion. An example is: “all birds have feathers, penguins are birds, therefore penguins have feathers.”
2.23.2. Correct major & minor, but wrong conclusion.
2.23.3. It should be: [1] This Man forgives sins. [2] Only God can forgive sin. [3] Therefore this Man is God!
2.23.4. Precisely the point. Their reasoning was exact…but it didn’t bring them to Christ.
2.23.5. “If that hole in the roof teaches us anything, it’s that faith is what brings a person to Jesus, not intellectual reasoning’s. Curiosity crowded the classroom, but it was faith that dug through the roof to bring the paralytic to the feet of Christ.”

7 “Incredible Moments” Ken Gire; pg.25
2.24. Which is easier? – Both are easy to say. But both are equally impossible to do…unless of course you are God!

2.24.1. In that case one is as easy as the other!
2.24.2. Any Charlatan or snake charmer could say, “your sins are forgiven!”
2.24.3. Jesus does here what NO mortal man can do…forgive sins…against God!
2.24.4. No person, no priest, no pastor, no denomination can do this!
   2.24.4.1. Sin is against God. You can’t go to anyone else for forgiveness. [i.e. if you sin against Mary, can you go to Jane for forgiveness? – No, you must go to whom you’ve sinned against]

2.24.5. Q: What is Christianity? What is the distinctive thing that Christianity has to proclaim to men? – The forgiveness of sin! ☺

2.25. The healing of the body is a great miracle, but it does not last.

2.25.1. The forgiveness of sin is God’s greatest miracle, It lasts forever, & accomplishes the greatest good!
2.25.2. “God’s goal isn’t to do a patchwork job on our lives…He came to make us whole!”
2.25.3. Spiritual healing is of much more value then a physical one. When Jesus heals a person’s spirit in salvation, there is also the healing of bitterness, hatred, lust, anger, gossip, & the like.

2.25.4. Physical paralysis is terrible, but worse yet is spiritual paralysis!
   2.25.4.1. We are all spiritual cripples.

2.26. (12a) The crowd that refused him entrance, now parts like the Red Sea in amazement, to make way for his exit!

2.26.1. The bed that carried him, he now carried.
2.26.2. Once the sign of his sickness, now the sign of his cure!
   2.26.2.1. Like them man whose money was his life. It was his only interest. It was all he lived for. Money was the sign of his sickness. Then he gets saved, & starts using his money to serve Jesus, & get people to Jesus. The sign of his sickness is now the sign of his cure!

2.27. Glorifying God – Folks that’s what its all about!

2.27.1. And how do you picture them departing? - I picture 5 grown men, arm-in-arm, laughing, even skipping down the street, w/tears of joy streaming down their cheeks! {Healed! - Made whole! - Forgiven!}

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8 Warren Wiersbe; pg.656
A little boy had disobeyed his mother, he got out his slate chalkboard & wrote, “Mom, I’m sorry I was bad. If you forgive me, wipe this out.” The next time he came by, his mother had wiped it clean.

Jesus has promised to do that for you!

Q: Has Jesus ever personally said to you, “Your sins are forgiven?”

Invitation: Hold your chalkboard out to Him this morning. He'll wipe it clean!

Job 14:17 “My transgression is sealed up in a bag, & you cover (lit. plaster over) my iniquity.”

We need to “raise some roofs” in order to get people to Jesus!

We need to do some difficult, out-of-the-ordinary, irregular things. “No crowd too thick; no stairs too steep; no wall too high to climb; no roof too thick!”

Thank the friends that brought you originally to Jesus!

1 gave a clear baton “Thanks for passing this on to me!”

Be more sensitive to others who have other forms of Paralysis:

Crippled by some debilitating set of circumstances.

Immobilized by some chronic disease of the soul.

Stunned by divorce.

Numb by the death of a loved one.

Buried under a heavy load of depression.

Shattered by a broken relationship.

“Remember that God is our only sure trust. To Him, I commend you...my friends, neglect not the duty of secret prayer!”