

WHERE WILL YOUR FRIENDS TAKE YOU?

By John Bytheway

Has this ever happened to you? You're sitting in church listening to the speaker when all of a sudden you hear loud noises coming from the ceiling above. To your great surprise, the roof opens up, revealing the bright blue sky, and you see the faces of four men peering down onto the congregation. The next thing you know, they are lowering another man on a stretcher onto the chapel floor.

Has that ever happened to you? Probably not. But something similar happened during the Savior's ministry.

A Miraculous Healing

"Men brought in a bed a man which was taken with a palsy" the story begins in Luke 5:18, "and they sought means to bring him in, and lay him before [Jesus]." The only problem was they couldn't bring their sick friend in because the place was packed! Even the doorways were blocked with the multitude,

and there was no way to get inside.

At this point the friends could have given up and gone home. But they didn't. You can almost imagine the conversation: "What should we do?" says one. "I have an idea," says another. "Let's go up on top of the building, make an opening in the roof, and lower him to the floor!" You can also imagine the sick man at this point hearing these unusual plans and saying, "You're going to do what?"

The story continues:

"They went upon the housetop, and let him down through the tiling with his couch into the midst before Jesus.

"And when he saw their faith, he said unto him, Man, thy sins are forgiven thee" (Luke 5:19–20).

The scribes and Pharisees thought this was blasphemous, so Jesus responded:

"Whether is easier, to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Rise up and walk?

"But that ye may know that the



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Son of man hath power upon earth to forgive sins, (he said unto the sick of the palsy,) I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy couch, and go into thine house" (Luke 5:23–24).



If You Feel Spiritually Weak

Perhaps you haven't witnessed such an event, but there are a number of ways to apply this story to your life. You could put yourself in the place of the sick man. Let's say you were weak—not physically but spiritually. Where will your friends take you? Maybe there's a party or a movie or another activity, and you have little say in the matter—where will they take you? This story teaches us a wonderful lesson: There may come a day when you are not as strong as you should be. At that point your choice of friends will be critical. Choose friends who will take you to Christ. To have friends who will always take you to higher ground is an incalculable blessing.

What Kind of Friend Are You?

But there's another way to look at this scripture. Put yourself in the place of the friends. What kind of friend are you? Although the Savior was the one who healed and forgave the man, the friends are also worthy of mention. They loved their friend and wanted to help him. They didn't give up and go home when things were difficult. Imagine the joy they must have felt when they looked down through the ceiling and saw their friend take up his bed and walk! That's another lesson: Be the kind of friend who takes people to Christ. These friends were courageous, persistent, even creative. In every word, in every action, in every choice, you can lead people to the Savior, who can heal us not only physically but also spiritually. **NE**

The story ends beautifully:
“And immediately he rose up before them, and took up that whereon he lay, and departed to his own house, glorifying God.

“And they were all amazed, and they glorified God, and were filled with fear, saying, We have seen strange things to day” (Luke 5:25–26).