

Thursday, March 5
Stand By Me ~ Mark 2:1-12

Every time I have heard or read this passage, I am impressed with the loyalty, determination, and faith of the paralytic's friends. They let no obstacle stop Jesus from healing their friend. Their faith that Jesus was in fact God's Son and Savior was astounding.

In our modern society, the cynic in me would probably scoff at the person dubbed as a miracle worker and the great lengths these friends took transporting the paralytic to be healed based on their faith in Jesus alone. I am picturing a crooked television evangelist. All of the shouting, the so-called healing, and the money these followers entrust to them. It seems crazy, right? There's the other side of me who scoffs at the scribes who claimed Jesus was blaspheming. They were equally going out of their way to persecute Jesus. Even after He healed the paralytic of his sins and paralysis, the "authorities" used this as more ammunition to persecute The Messiah. I would give the scribes some credit, but they actually witnessed a man being healed.

Why is this so different from the religious scams in modern times? Jesus asks nothing of him, He simply forgives him of his sins. He then turns to the scribes, and says, "Why do you question these things in your heart?" I believe the scribes had been so influenced by obeying the laws they did not listen to their heart. Sometimes it is hard for us to decipher what is truly right by God's standards, what is a scam, and what ungodly measures we are trying to justify or prove.

It is beautiful how these men and the paralytic followed their heart, their faith! Let us be like these Messiah followers, and trust our Healer!

Catherine Simmons is the Director of Involvement at Madison First UMC. Her husband, Jason, owns Middle Georgia Timber. Both graduated from The University of Georgia and enjoy the outdoors. They have three children: Nolie, Ruth, and Cal.

Jesus Forgives and Heals a Paralyzed Man

2 A few days later, when Jesus again entered Capernaum, the people heard that he had come home. ²They gathered in such large numbers that there was no room left, not even outside the door, and he preached the word to them. ³Some men came, bringing to him a paralyzed man, carried by four of them. ⁴Since they could not get him to Jesus because of the crowd, they made an opening in the roof above Jesus by digging through it and then lowered the mat the man was lying on. ⁵When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralyzed man, "Son, your sins are forgiven."

⁶Now some teachers of the law were sitting there, thinking to themselves, ⁷"Why does this fellow talk like that? He's blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone?"

⁸Immediately Jesus knew in his spirit that this was what they were thinking in their hearts, and he said to them, "Why are you thinking these things? ⁹Which is easier: to say to this paralyzed man, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up, take your mat and walk'? ¹⁰But I want you to know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins." So he said to the man, ¹¹"I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home." ¹²He got up, took his mat and walked out in full view of them all. This amazed everyone and they praised God, saying, "We have never seen anything like this!"