



They Met Jesus... On a Roof

Mark 2:1-12

Mark 2 tells the story of four men who carried their paralytic friend to the house where Jesus was teaching. The room was so crowded that they could not get in the front door and no one was willing to give up his place.

But these men were determined to bring their friend to Jesus; they refused to give up. One of the men noticed some steps leading to the flat roof of the house. In that day, flat roofs gave additional living space. Children played on the roof; moms did laundry; I would have hidden there with my favorite book and a cup of coffee when things got busy downstairs!

Suddenly, one of the men spied the steps and said, “Hey! I have an idea!” Within a few minutes, they had torn through the mud roof and lowered the pallet to where Jesus was standing.

As I read this story, I ask myself, “What kind of men would tear up a roof to help their friend?” Tearing the roof off a house is more than a little disruptive. If I were teaching, I would be annoyed when pieces of mud started falling from the ceiling! The listeners will be distracted. The homeowner isn’t going to be very happy about the hole in his roof.

One of the friends may have asked, “How will Jesus respond when we interrupt him in the middle of his sermon?” But these men would do *anything* to bring their friend to Jesus!

What kind of person tears a hole in the roof? Men of faith.

They had absolute confidence that Jesus was the answer to their friend’s need. Mark 2:5 includes a surprising statement. “And when Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, ‘Son, your sins are forgiven.’” That doesn't match my theology; I’m waiting for Jesus to see the paralytic’s faith! While I don’t doubt the faith of the paralytic, I think Mark wants to show that the faith of these men benefited their paralytic friend. They were men of faith.

What kind of person tears a hole in the roof? Creative thinkers.

If I had been carrying a corner of the pallet, I would have said, “Well, let’s go home. The house is too crowded; there is nothing we can do.” But these men kept looking for a solution until someone said, “All we have to do is tear through the mud tiles, lower the pallet through the beams, and Jesus will do the rest!” As one of my elementary piano students likes to say, “Easy peasy!” These men were creative thinkers.

What kind of person tears a hole in the roof? Men of compassion.

Even if you have the faith to believe Jesus can heal your friend and the creativity to find a way to get your friend to Jesus, it takes compassion to go to all the trouble to tear a hole in the roof. Critics will fuss at you; the homeowner will expect you to patch the roof; some in the crowd will laugh at you. Is it worth the embarrassment of all that attention? And what if after all your trouble, something goes wrong with the plan? Do I want to show up on a YouTube video labeled #EpicFail? It takes incredible compassion to care enough to follow through on such an audacious plan.

What kind of person tears a hole in the roof? Men of action.

Did you notice that there were four men in this group? I have been in enough committee meetings to know that when you have four people on a committee, very little gets done. Four men = four different ways of thinking. Four men = four different plans. Four men = a big chance that nothing will get done.

But these four men agree to a plan of action. They carry the man up on the roof, tear a hole in the roof, and bring their friend to Jesus. Jesus forgives his sins, heals him, and the man walks home.

As I read Mark 2, I ask myself: “Do I have the faith to believe that Jesus can and will solve the problems of my unbelieving neighbors? Do I have the compassion to do whatever is necessary to bring them to Jesus? Will I act on my faith?”

Are you willing to tear up a roof to bring a needy person to Jesus?

To be continued...