



## Through the Roof

**Bible Story:** Mark 2:1-12

*Mark 2:3-5 And they came, bringing to Him a paralytic, carried by four men. And being unable to get to Him because of the crowd, they removed the roof above Him; and when they had dug an opening, they let down the pallet on which the paralytic was lying. And Jesus seeing their faith said to the paralytic, "My son, your sins are forgiven." (Read [Mark 2:1-12](#).)*

We use the expression, "through the roof" to imply that something has suddenly gone sky high, seemingly out of control. Prices, taxes and tempers can all go "through the roof." In Mark 2 we see a **man** go through the roof. However, the direction is not up and the situation is not out of control. The man is literally let **down** through the roof under the careful control of his concerned friends, and into a situation controlled by the Lord Jesus Christ.

The account of the healing of the paralyzed man in [Mark 2:1-12](#) contains a number of lessons for growing Christians. To help us understand these lessons, however, let's consider the background for this miracle. The most unique feature of the setting, of course, is the creative way in which the paralyzed man's four friends brought him to Jesus. There seemed to be no way they could get the paralyzed man to Christ because a pressing crowd filled the room and blocked the entrance to the house where the Lord was teaching. No problem for ingenious friends! They just opened up a hole in the roof of the house and forced the crowd to stand back by lowering the man and his bed down through the roof! Can you believe it?! They deliberately ripped up a roof in order to make room for their friend before Christ!

Now it's important to recognize that this "tearing up the roof" was **not** a destruction of property. Historical background information is helpful and important when interpreting and applying Scripture. A first century home in Palestine had a flat roof composed of large stone tiles which were easy to remove and easy to replace. The tiles were sometimes covered with dirt or sod for insulation purposes. So there was no need to rip up shingles and saw through plywood and beams in order to make a sizable opening in the roof! God is certainly not teaching us from this portion of His Word that it's OK to break the law and destroy property as long as it's for the purpose of getting a person to Christ! The roof was not destroyed or damaged--only temporarily opened up.

Remember also that a first century home had an outside staircase up to the flat roof. This enabled the four men to carry their paralytic friend and his bed up to the rooftop without spilling him and without employing an elaborate ladder or block and tackle system! The "bed," of course, was not a heavy inner spring mattress and frame but a lightweight pallet or mattress-like pad. Thus the hole in the roof was not gigantic in size! All of these basic background considerations preserve us from visualizing impossible situations and making wild applications.

Was the paralyzed man disappointed when Jesus said to him, "Son, your sins are forgiven"? After all, he and his friends had come expecting a healing. Wouldn't he have felt shortchanged if he was forgiven but unhealed? To answer these questions we need to recognize that in the Jewish mind-set of that day physical abnormalities and sickness were the judgment of God for serious past sin. Even the disciples were so indoctrinated with this idea that they asked the Lord about the blind man in [John 9:2](#), "Who sinned, this man or his parents, that he should be born blind?" While the Lord corrected their thinking in the case of the blind man, it is true that some physical problems in those days (as well as today, by the way) were the direct result of sin.

Consider the Lord's statement to the healed paralytic in [John 5:14](#), for example: "Behold, you have become well; do not sin anymore, so that nothing worse may befall you." The implication is quite clear that the man was paralyzed because of past sins. Most likely, then, the paralytic who was let down through the roof was weighed down by a burden of guilt which he had carried, rightly or wrongly, for many years. To hear the Lord pronounce that his sins were forgiven lifted a great load from this man's guilty conscience! And any lingering doubts about the truth of his forgiven status were removed when the Lord also pronounced the "icing on the cake"--"Take up your bed and walk."

The fact that the paralytic actually did pick up his bed and walk not only caused the crowd to marvel and give glory to God; it also blew away any vestige of an argument from the on-looking skeptics concerning the ability of the Lord to back up His claim--the ability to forgive the man's sins.

The ball was certainly now in **their** court. Since only God could forgive sins, what other conclusion could they draw about Jesus? It was quite clear that the One who had claimed the ability to forgive sins was also in control of supernatural power! The obvious answer to the Lord's question concerning which was easier to say, "Your sins are forgiven" or "Take up your bed and walk," would answer the unspoken questions of the skeptics--in no uncertain terms.

It's hard to miss the picture of salvation from sin in the healing of the paralyzed man. This is certainly the main spiritual lesson of this miracle. Not only do we need to be cleansed from the defiling aspects of sin, as seen in the previous miracle of the cleansed leper ([Mark 1:40-45](#)), but we also need to be healed from the paralyzing effects of sin as seen in this miracle. Sin stifles us and hinders us from being all that God intended us to be, but the Lord Jesus frees us from our imprisoning paralysis and gives us the power to "take up our beds and walk."

At the risk of over-spiritualization, it is interesting to notice that the Lord didn't carry the healed man's bed for him, but rather commanded him to take up his own bed--and walk! With the command came the strength to obey. The healed man was given the necessary strength in his arms and his legs to resume a normal lifestyle. When the Lord heals our disease of sin and removes its devastating effects, He gives us the strength to carry the normal loads of everyday life. He doesn't relieve us of our workloads and responsibilities, or even certain burdensome problems and trials of normal daily life--He enables us to carry them!

Some Christians have a hard time getting up from the bed--they remain partially crippled by a "victim" mentality or by memories of their past lifestyles because they haven't fully availed themselves of the strength the Lord provides. Some Christians get up from the bed, but they don't want to shoulder the responsibilities of an active Christian daily life! They seem to think that the **Lord** ought to carry their beds--and maybe even carry **them** as well! Their Christian lives go nowhere because they think that the Lord is obligated to provide for their every desire, whether they're willing to be obedient to Him or not!

No, the Lord asks us to **get up** off our beds of disability, **take up** the duties and obligations of a normal lifestyle and **move forward** in the Christian life--and He will give us the strength! Let's not expect God to do for us what He gives us strength to do for ourselves. Let's shoulder

our normal responsibilities (and all the hassles they sometimes entail), and get moving in our lives as obedient Christians!

The wording at the beginning of verse 5 is very significant. "When Jesus saw **their** faith..." The Lord not only took notice of the faith of the paralyzed man; He also noticed the faith of his four friends. God honors the faith of those who "assist" in the salvation process. We all know that our faith can't save someone else. No one is saved by proxy! But we can assist in the salvation process by **helping** our friends come to Christ.

We can do this by praying for them, by relating to them, by answering their questions and, by all means, showing Christ's love to them by loving them! It's like holding one corner of the paralytic's bed. It may take work and ingenuity, but God honors the faith of those who are actively concerned about bringing their friends to Christ. Are you actively engaged right now in carrying a corner of the bed on which a paralyzed friend is lying? God will honor your concerned faith. Just as a record of "assists" is kept in the sports of basketball and hockey, God honors "assists" in the salvation process!

How creative are we in getting our friends to Christ? "Creative evangelism" is certainly one of the main practical lessons God wants to teach us from this miracle. Jesus Himself was creative in His approach to people, and He was creative in His ways of drawing them to faith and trust in Him. He didn't have one "canned" method which He used with every person who sought Him out! When He spoke to people about spiritual realities, He looked for common ground on which to relate with each one individually.

The one common ingredient in our Lord's approach to each person that He contacted was His selfless love and patient concern for them as individuals. He was **real** in His interest and care. He took time, and made Himself available to all.

Early Christians "turned the world upside down" as they shared Jesus Christ with others. They didn't have the many tools for evangelism that we have today: literature, video and audiotapes, radio and TV, big church buildings for evangelistic campaigns, etc. They were creative by necessity! They didn't conclude that difficult circumstances, hard times and an unfriendly political climate meant that the "timing was bad" for bringing others to Christ!

If we had been the friends of that sin-sick and paralyzed man, would we have concluded that God had "closed the door?" After all, the **normal** approach to the Lord was blocked off! Maybe we would have concluded that the problems meant that it wasn't "God's timing" and told our paralyzed friend that his need would have to wait until a more "opportune time." Or would we have been like the faithful four who creatively "engineered" a way to get their hurting friend to Christ?

That was then. What about now? If we use creative engineering, how many "closed doors" will open up as we try to get our bosses or our teachers, our family members or our neighbors to Christ? Have we spent time searching out just the right piece of literature, tape or video for an individual? Have we creatively sought out just the right kind of invitation? Most importantly, have we **really** gone out of our way to be friends with a person whose life is literally paralyzed by the results of sin? Have we introduced that person to other caring Christians--maybe even to a Christian who has been healed of the same type of "paralysis?" Have we been open to every "through the roof" idea? Have we used every ounce of our creativity? Have we prayed for specific opportunities to get that particular individual to Christ?

Or are we unwilling to take the time and effort to reach out? Are we willing to take the risk of leaving our personal "comfort zones" for the sake of bringing others to the healing touch of Jesus Christ? Have we been using the "closed door" excuse or the "inopportune time" cop-out? Have we put down the "through the roof" ideas of others and refused to be creative ourselves? Have we been reluctant to carry even one corner of the bed of our paralyzed friend or, worse of all, walked away in fear or disgust of the paralysis?

Many creative and ingenious techniques of evangelism are yet to be thought of! Let's be willing to expand our thinking with "through the roof" ideas in reference to church evangelism as well as personal evangelism. Let's be willing to encourage, support and even join other Christians who come up with creative (and maybe even risky at times) attempts to spread the Good News. We may be surprised at how many of our friends and neighbors, paralyzed from sin and the load of guilt, are actually **willing** to be carried to Christ.

## **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. What was your favorite part of today's Bible story about the paralyzed man?
2. What do you think was the biggest miracle in today's story—Jesus healing the man or forgiving his sins?
3. Have you ever known someone that God healed?

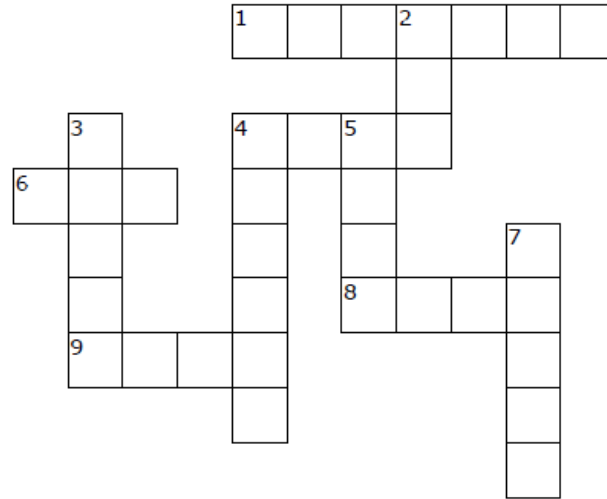
**CROSSWORD PUZZLE:** Jesus Heals a Paralytic

**WORD SEARCH:** Jesus Heals a Paralytic

# Jesus Heals a Paralytic

Which is easier: to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up, take your mat and walk'?  
Mark 2:9 (NIV)

Based on Mark 2:1-12 (NIV)



## ACROSS

1. Jesus has the power to \_\_\_\_\_ sins. (vs.10)
4. Jesus preached the \_\_\_\_\_ to the people. (vs. 2)
6. The paralyzed man was lying on a \_\_\_\_\_. (vs.4)
8. The paralytic was carried by \_\_\_\_\_ men. (vs.3)
9. Jesus said, "Take your mat and go \_\_\_\_\_. (vs.11)

## DOWN

2. The people were amazed and praised \_\_\_\_\_. (vs.12)
3. Jesus saw their \_\_\_\_\_. (vs.5)
4. The man got up and \_\_\_\_\_ out. (vs.12)
5. The men lowered their friend through a hole in the \_\_\_\_\_. (vs.4)
7. They could not get to Jesus because of the \_\_\_\_\_. (vs.4)

CROWD	WORD	HOME	FOUR	WALKED
MAT	ROOF	GOD	FAITH	FORGIVE

# Jesus Heals Paralytic Word Search

Jesus Heals a Paralytic  
Mark 2:1-12

X S D W K X P A M A Z E D U D  
I S K O Q K S W M G F H O M E  
G K L C F D L T A J O K R W U  
M W L X M U B D T Y U F P K N  
P A R A L Y T I C N R R M E N  
V K V C V P O L V M S O W B B  
F M Y O Q F P O V Q I O R X E  
A I S F W A E W A L N F O H F  
P V F O C I N E D B S M P C C  
F Y Q R F T I R H L E W R X A  
H U R G N H N E J A A V A Y R  
Z F D I L N G D R A I L I N R  
M A I V F X Q A T R J Y S R I  
U M L E Z X L C R O W D E D E  
J J H N W A L K B U Y F D K D

paralytic  
carried  
four  
men

crowd  
opening  
roof  
lowered

mat  
faith  
sins  
forgiven

walk  
home  
amazed  
praised

"But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins..." He said to the paralytic, "I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home."  
Mark 2:10-11 (NIV)