

That last song took me back to the 80s. Anyone around in the 80s?

It's a while back. I mean, really when you think about it. But that last chorus was taken from Psalm 97, where the Psalmist writes, for thou, O Lord, art high above all the earth, and you're exalted high above the heavens. So I love that. Here's why we're here this morning.

To exalt the Lord. We're going to exalt him by saying, singing the songs that we've sung. We're going to use those songs to, to. To speak to our hearts. We're going to exalt him by opening God's word and learning and.

And being encouraged by it, being challenged by it. We're going to exalt him by giving towards his work and his mission. We're going to exalt him by sharing in a moment of communion where we reflect on his goodness to us. And then we're going to exalt him by going out and applying what we've learned in the world around us. And that's how we exalt the Lord.

Some people think it's only with your hands raised. And that's beautiful. That's beautiful when you're worshiping with your hands raised, but it's just as exalting when your feet are moving and your hands are working and you're impacting the kingdom around you for God's glory. Amen. Amen.

We are in a series called Block Party. This is our second week. So if you missed last week, well, you missed a great sermon, honestly, and I'm speaking very humbly about it. But it was probably the best sermon that you've heard in a long time. And you weren't here, but you can look it up.

No need to applaud. Really. I'm being facetious. It wasn't a bad sermon. It just probably wasn't the best one you've ever heard.

But it was a good one. So look it up if you didn't get to it. We're back this week. Last week we looked at how God uses ordinary people in ordinary places, ordinary spaces who give themselves to God's work and how they can make it an amazing impact. We look at Peter's mother in law.

When was the last time you heard a sermon on Peter's mother in law? And how God used her to impact her, the entire community, in amazing ways. This week we're moving to Luke chapter five and we're going to talk about how a paralyzed man experiences healing because of four goofy friends. And I'm calling him goofy because I sort of picture him as, you know, Larry and his brother Darrell and his other brother Darrell and Joe Bob. That's how I picture these guys.

For some reason, if you know the reference, you know the reference. But these four friends do an amazing thing and they refuse to let

obstacles get in the way of their friend meeting Jesus. And their faith shows up in persistence and creativity and most of all, love. And so their example is going to challenge us to do the same way. How can our lives create pathways and tear down barriers so our friends get to meet Jesus?

I'm going to pray and as I'm praying, I'm going to give you permission to open up your Bible app or open up your Bible Bible and look into. I think we're going to be looking at Luke chapter five. That's what I said. So that's what we're going to do. You can turn to Luke chapter five and that's where we're going to hang out this morning.

Heavenly Father, we thank you for the way that you show up in the places that we are and if we're willing and we open ourselves to you, you do amazing things through us, around us, even as you're doing good stuff in us. And for that we are thankful. Now teach us from your word in Jesus name, amen. Back in the 90s at a church I was serving at Southside Christian Church. You can see the church as you're going to Bloomington.

Up on the hill, on the, on the east side of the highway, a group of about 12 young moms started a Bible study. But it very quickly became more than just a Bible study study. It became a support system. It became a sounding board for these young moms who just need someone to talk to. It became a prayer team as they worked through family stuff and kids stuff.

They cooked meals for one another. They took care of each other's kids when they needed to. They carried one another's burdens through life's very difficult, difficult seasons. And if it was only that, that would have been an amazing tight knit circle of friends who loved each other through thick or thin. But they realized something really incredible.

They realized that each of them had other friends in the community who needed to experience the same kind of grace, the same kind of community, the same type of hope that they had experienced through that group. And so they made room for others. They opened their group up and, and they began to invite others to it. The group very quickly overgrew the space that they had allotted those 12 girls around a conference room, and they had to move to a larger space. And before you knew it, over 100 women every Friday were meeting around tables just to love each other and encourage each other in the Lord.

And the idea was simply. And they're from all over the world. There was a strong international presence there. So women, young moms coming in who had no connections at all, all of a sudden had friends. And people who had never heard the name of Jesus are now sitting around a study, opening up their Bibles and learning about Jesus.

It's an incredible thing. They called themselves the Roof Crashers.

The idea was simple. This would be a place where we could bring our friends and our connections to meet Jesus. And the tone shifted from just studying about Jesus to making space for people to actually encounter Jesus.

That's the idea that we're leaning into this morning, that our lives can create pathways and tear down barriers to help others find Jesus. The name Roof Crashers comes from the account that we're going to read from the Gospel of Luke. Here's Matthew, Mark, and Luke all talk about it, but I find Luke's account to be a little more rich in some detail. So here's how it goes. And if you want to read along with me out loud, I'm going to encourage you, too, and we'll all just absorb this story together.

One day, Jesus was teaching, and Pharisees and teachers of the law were sitting there. And they had come from every village of Galilee and from Judea and Jerusalem. And the power of the Lord was with Jesus to heal the sick. Now some men came carrying a paralyzed man on a mat and tried to take him into the house to lay him before Jesus. When they could not find a way to do this because of the crowd, they went up on the roof and they lowered him on his mat, through the tiles into the middle of the crowd, right in front of Jesus.

When Jesus saw their face, he said, friend, your sins are forgiven. The Pharisees and teachers of the law begin thinking to themselves, who is this fellow who speaks blasphemy, who can forgive sins but God alone? Can you picture them saying that? Now, Jesus knew what they were thinking, and he asked, what? Why are you thinking these things in your hearts?

Which is easier to say your sins are forgiven, or to say, get up and walk? But I want you to know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins. So he said to the paralyzed man, I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home. And immediately the man stood up in front of them, took what he had been lying on and went home praising God. And everyone was amazed and gave praise to God and they were filled with awe and said, we have seen remarkable things today.

I love this moment of Jesus's ministry. Now if you read Mark's account of this, Mark tells us that he's back in Capernaum. That's where we were last week. We Peter's mother in law. And there's a part of me that sort of hopes this is Peter's mother in law's house.

Wouldn't that be cool? I picture in the background while this is happening. But now the news of Jesus has spread from last week and all the healing that took place after the synagogue service and there on Peter's mother in law's porch. And the news has spread. Oh my word.

There's thousands gathering now, hundreds at least, sick and hurting. And it's caught the attention of the religious leaders as well. The

Pharisees and the teachers of the law have come to see this man, Jesus for themselves and to stroke their beards and go, what's this all about? The Pharisees and the teachers of the law often get a bad rap in the Bible. But honestly, there's a lot about them that we would probably admire today.

They read the scripture, they memorize the scripture. Let's be honest, how many of you guys are really good at memorizing scripture?

Okay, well, let's give it up for the Pharisees. They take it seriously. They memorize scripture and they tried to obey scripture very carefully to the last little bit. They were obsessed with doing it exactly right. They knew their Bibles, but they did not yet recognize Jesus.

In fact, they found him a little bit, a little bit suspicious. Who was this man that was threatening to turn their world upside down? But Luke tells us that you couldn't deny that the power of the Lord was with Jesus. Remember that part of the scripture. And they could see right in front of them that lives were being transformed.

So many lives, in fact, that the crowd was just out of control. The room filled first people showed up, wanted to speak with Jesus and so he began speaking and sharing with them. And then, and then the room overflowed out onto the porch and people are standing in the doorways and looking in through the windows and, and, and then the porch overflows and people are out in the front yard again.

Peter's mother in law is having a really hard time keeping her grass looking good at this point.

And then these guys show up and it's hard enough for one person to shoulder, get him, get his way up in front of Jesus. Can you imagine trying to carry a gurney with a guy laying on it? So these guys start looking for another way in. Jethro and Darrell and his other brother Darrell and I don't know what the other guy's name was. I can't remember.

Now they're trying to find a way in.

Looking at the crowd, trying to see a path forward through the crowd. Maybe going around the house, checking out the alley. Is there a back gate or is the backyard a back entrance that they can get? Then Jethro says, ah, boys, I got a plan. Watch this.

Says, lift him up. And they got him up on their shoulders and they're, they're, they're crowd surfing him through, through the mass of people. And they get to the side and they, they edge up the stairs, make room, make room. Get out of the way. Get out of the way.

Get out of the way. I can't imagine they're the only ones on that roof. And they get there and they, they get a space and they start, they start clawing when no obvious path appears. Sometimes you got to get creative.

Now inside, Jesus is teaching. It's hot. It's hot in there. People are hanging on every word, however, and all of a sudden they're distracted by this little thread of dust coming down from the ceiling. What is that?

Jesus kind of brushes it away, keeps going. He's hearing some noises up there too, though. He stops teaching. He looks up the ceiling. He sees some more dust, a few chunks of plaster and mud, some straw come dropping down.

Plop, plop, plop. Moves out of the way a little bit.

And all of a sudden, a gleam of light actually comes through. And then I just pictured Jesus barely stepping out of the way in time. And the whole ceiling collapses right in front of them. But before, before they can even really take that in, they look up and there's this, this massive thing coming down through the ceiling, lowering this guy down on his mat. They set him right there, sort of cattywampus on the rubble.

And Jesus, I can't imagine. This, to me is a funny story. This is a hilarious story. And Jesus looks at this guy and he looks at the ceiling. And you know, you look up and there's these goofy.

This is Larry and Darryl and Darryl looking down through the ceiling. They're like, ta da, we got him to you.

Jesus looks at the man on the mat and he looks at the friends, and then he says these words that no One expected. First he says, friend, your sins are forgiven.

No conversations, nothing. That's what he leads with your friends, Friends, your sin is forgiven. Amazing words, full of grace. But Luke tells us that those words were prompted by something that we often don't expect when we think about forgiveness. Those words were prompted by the faith of his friends.

Faith filled friends can open the door for someone else to experience grace. I don't know if you've ever thought about that before, but Luke doesn't tell us much about this paralyzed man's faith. Nothing is said about his faith. Maybe he has some. Maybe he's the one that said, hey, Larry, Darrell, Darrell, Jethro, Jesus is over in Capernaum.

I need to get there. Can you help me get there? They're like, oh, absolutely, bud. We got you, we got you. But maybe Larry, Darrell,

Darrell, and Jethro heard about Jesus.

He said, hey, hey, Joe Bob, there's a guy over in Capernaum that, that we want you to meet. And he's like, oh, that's too big. I can't. No, it's too much. Don't.

No, no, no, no. Boys, put me down. Put me down. Put me down. And they're carting him all the way through the village over there to where Jesus is.

Maybe he protested the whole way as they carried him through the streets and up the stairs and then down through the roof. And he's sitting there and he's looking up at Jesus, but maybe he's leaning into the confidence of his friends and like, I don't. I don't know. Maybe. Okay, okay, try it.

Sometimes we borrow other people's faith, don't we? There's some Sundays where I come to church without much faith, a little overwhelmed with life and not seeing much of how we're going to move forward into the next phase. But I see your faith and I sing the songs with you, and my faith grows. I borrow your faith a little bit. Paul describes it this way.

And this is. This is the reason the church exists really, so that you and I may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith. Now, I don't want to build a whole theology around this idea of second hand faith, because most of the time scripture really calls on each of us to personally respond to God. Hebrews 11:6 says, without faith, it's impossible to please God because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek Him. Our personal faith is important, but you may have a friend who needs Jesus, but yet does not have Any faith of their own.

And I think Jesus would say to us like he gave it up for those four buddies. He says, listen, if you've got faith, leverage it on behalf of your friend. Pray seriously, love faithfully, keep showing up for these guys because who knows what your faith might make possible in the life of your friend.

There's a few other things though that I find fascinating about this account. And the first is this, that Jesus cares about the soul first and then about the symptoms of our brokenness. His buddies brought their friend to Jesus because they wanted his legs healed. They wanted that paralyzing, whatever that was to be removed and for their friend to be, to have the life that they wanted him to have. And the man himself probably expected his legs to at least get a mention when he met Jesus for the first time there in that dusty, overcrowded room.

And probably everyone in the room expected Jesus to say, you are healed. Even the homeowner thought, listen, if someone's going to tear

up my roof, there at least better be a miracle in the living room. But Jesus seems to ignore the visible need. He overlooks the visible need and goes to the deepest need. And he doesn't say at first, rise and be healed.

He says, first friend, your sins are forgiven.

I've got, I've got some dear friends that are really struggling right now. I mean really struggling.

And I suspect you're a little bit like me, that, that too often maybe. We want Jesus to heal our friends in the way we've already decided that they need to be healed. My friend has this going on. My friend's suffering with this. My friend's in this kind of unhealthy and unholy relationship.

My friend has this addiction that is completely destroying his life. My friend can't leave a home because of his deep seated anxiety. My friend has this, this and this. And we're like, well, they need Jesus so this, this and this can get fixed and they can be normal again.

These things matter. Jesus cares about these things. But those things are simply symptoms of a deeper issue, a deeper brokenness. And Jesus, the great physician, knows what to address first in our friends lives and in this moment. What he needs to address first is this guy and his sin.

He says, your sins are forgiven.

I don't know what that meant to that man, but I know over in the corner where the Pharisees are sitting, all hell breaks loose. Not visibly, but there is an inner explosion that Jesus, Jesus senses over there. You think the roof crashing was noisy. Over here you can just hear the Inside of their systems, just going off like rockets. They're like, what?

Blasphemer who can forgive sins but God alone? These Pharisees over here are so focused on a theological problem, a theological issue, their theological process, that they miss the man lying on the mat. Who needs Jesus touch? These guys want to control the flow of forgiveness. They think they know how forgiveness is supposed to work.

After all, in Jewish culture, you bring the right sacrifice, you say the right prayer, you go through the right systems, you follow the right procedures, and then you're declared righteous and you go on your merry way. But Jesus stands in front of them right now offering forgiveness with divine authority, and he completely upends the whole system. And they're like, what? Who are you to upset and change the flow of forgiveness that we've been operating under for the last thousand years? Well, Jesus says, I have the authority.

It's me. And to make that authority visible and to say, hey, I need to prove a point to you guys right now. Jesus tells the man then to stand up, pick up his mat that he's been lying on, and go home. And the man does. He picks up his mat, he walks out praising God.

Larry, Darrell and Darrell have the biggest, goofiest grins on their face. It's all been great. They're thrilled. They're walking out high fiving each other and everyone else they can high five on the way out of that yard. It's been a great day for them and their buddies.

And everyone around them is like, my word. We have seen crazy stuff today. This has been an amazing morning. Aren't you glad you came? I told you you should come.

I'm glad you're here. Amazing. But the craziest, most amazing thing might have been those four friends who were willing to do whatever it took to get their friend to Jesus. Our lives can create pathways and tear down barriers to help other people find Jesus. Here's the last word.

These people that we care about, our friends.

Sometimes Jesus heals the visible wound first, and then he calls someone to walk in a new obedience. Remember the guy at Bethesda? Jesus said, pick up your mat and walk. I can't. I can't.

Every time I try to get my healing, someone steps in front of me and I can't get in the water. And Jesus says, you don't need water, you need me. He says, pick up your bed and walk. He encounters him later and says, now don't go back to your own life. Don't do what you were doing.

Change. Sometimes healing comes first. And then the life change happens afterwards. But sometimes Jesus forgives first and then those broken places in our lives and those broken places in our friends lives heal over time as we learn to walk with him. And we, and we become victorious and overcomers through him who loves us.

But either way, Jesus is the one who controls that order. Jesus controls the timing. Jesus controls the process for our friends. Now we all have friends like this. We all have family that we care deeply about.

We want their lives to be good and healthy and happy. But we can become more concerned with their symptoms than we are their soul. And when we bring our friends to Jesus, we have to trust him as he addresses what is important first and then he continues to heal over time. Our calling is not to control the process. Our calling is simply to carry our friends to Jesus.

This morning you have someone in your mind. I'm sure that you're thinking this person needs Jesus. Ask yourself, why do they need Jesus? What about them makes you think they need Jesus? And if it's something like, well, they've got this drinking problem or well, they're messed up in this weird thing that's scary and say, okay, hold on, hold on, we're going to let Jesus take care of that.

And what we're going to do is we're going to pray for this soul. Here's the deal. It, it's, it's no good if someone gets up and walks out on their own two legs only to just continue to walk toward the path of destruction. It's no good if you're freed up from your alcoholism only to just go back to living life self centeredly and only focused on you. That's no good.

It's still brokenness. And Jesus says, I want to do something eternal in your life. I want to heal your soul more than your symptom, that's secondary. Your soul is primary.

So we pray for our friends and we love them, we care for them. When we can care for them, we crash through roofs for them if that's what it takes. We do what it takes to bring our friends to Jesus. And that's the whole point. We do what we can to create pathways and remove barriers so these people that we love, our family, our friends, can meet Jesus.

We're going to share in a time of communion here. And as we come to the table, just remember this. Before we carry any of our friends to Jesus, Jesus has carried us. He's carried our sin, he's carried our shame, our weaknesses. He carries our deepest need to the cross.

And so when we take the little element of bread and that little cup of juice. The bread reminds us that his body was given for us. He did what it took, he paid the ultimate so that we could experience life. And that cup reminds us that he gave his life, he laid down his life, he surrendered his life. That cup represents his blood that was poured out for our forgiveness.

This moment is not like a reward in the service for those of us who got everything right this week. We did it really good and now we can, we can reward ourselves and say, okay, now I'm ready for communion. Now I deserve this moment with Jesus. That's not what communion is. Communion is a reminder that we all need God's grace and that Jesus gives it freely to those who ask and he even gives it to those who don't know how to ask yet.

That's incredible. This morning, if you are here and you've never, never leaned into the grace of Jesus, this is an opportunity for you to do so and say, I have this much faith. Everyone around me seems to have so much more. I just have this much. And Jesus says, that's

enough.

Look at that. You let people pick you up. You let someone carry you to church this morning. I want to speak into your life. Your sins are forgiven.

The scripture says, anyone who's thirsty, anyone who's hungry, come and receive from the Lord what only the Lord can give. We don't often have an invitation this morning and there's no altar call per se, but this is a moment where if you need Jesus to speak to the deepest, deepest parts of your life. Not the symptoms, not the floating stuff up here, but the real stuff down here. Those hurts that drive you into destruction. And you want Jesus to help today say, lord, I want you.

I need you come into my life and I give you permission to speak whatever you want to speak into it. And if you've done that, going to invite you to take the cup and take the bread and say thank you Lord, that you love us. I don't know if there's water in the baptistry right now, man. We can. I'll do it over the kitchen sink if you want to.

But the follow up on following Jesus is getting up and doing something. Jesus said, take your mat and walk. I think Jesus would say to us this morning, if you have, if you are ready to take your next step with Jesus Jesus, then the next step is by entering the waters of baptism and declaring to everyone in this room, the crowd gathered around Jesus, that something miraculous has happened in your life and you want people to know about it. It's the equivalent of a high five. As you're walking out of that front yard, Jesus, this morning, meet with us, Holy Spirit.

Do the work that only you can do. Where there is healing, healing. Where there's forgiveness, we receive it.

Touch the broken parts of our lives and Jesus, help us be the kind of people who bring the broken around us to you. In Jesus name, Amen. Thank you for listening to this message from Sherwood Oaks Christian Church. Did you know you can watch all of our video content, both current and past, on our YouTube channel. Visit [YouTube.com/sherwoodoaks](https://www.youtube.com/sherwoodoaks) to watch message series and complete worship services.