

1. **The Power of 'Their' Faith:**

In verse 2, Jesus sees '*their* faith' (the friends of the paralysed man). Last week we looked at the Centurion's faith for his servant to be healed.

Is Jesus responding to these people's faithful desire for a friend or colleague? How might these last 2 passages encourage you to "carry the mat" for one another when someone in our group is 'paralysed' (spiritually, emotionally or physically)

2. Jesus calls the paralysed man "Son" (*Teknon*) in v 2

Does knowing that Jesus views us as "family" or "children" change the way we approach Him with our "messes"?

3. 'Either this man was, and is, the Son of God, or else a madman or something worse. You can shut him up for a fool, you can spit at him and kill him as a demon or you can fall at his feet and call him Lord and God, but let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about his being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to.' – C.S. Lewis

Do you think Jesus was "blunt and confrontational" about His identity and authority (v2-6) to forgive in this passage? Why do you think with Jesus there is so little middle ground/ambiguity?

4. How does Jesus' sacrifice on the cross show that God's involvement in our lives (especially when we ask Him for forgiveness) isn't selfish or controlling, but for our ultimate good? Are there other examples you can think of to back this up?

5. We can forgive others because we have been forgiven first by God.

**Read Parable of the Unforgiving Servant** (Matt 18: 21-35)

Can you see yourself in the story of the unforgiving servant? If so, how? Does the story of Corrie Ten Boom's (Spirit-breathed) forgiveness of the Nazi guard help bring perspective to our individual struggle to forgive quickly?

6. Unforgiveness is like "drinking cyanide and hoping the other person dies." Have you ever experienced the paralysis of unforgiveness? What were the effects that you experienced? What did you learn from that experience?

7. "Everyone thinks forgiveness is a lovely idea, until they have someone they really need to forgive." (C.S. Lewis)

Why do you think we find the *concept* of forgiveness so much easier than the *practice*?

**Pray Together** –

Thank you God that you are our Creator, who gave His only Son to forgive us.

Give us the strength of the Holy Spirit to release any "prisoners" (including ourselves) through the power of forgiveness.