



**Sermon Discussion Notes  
2010 - Part 2**

**Opening Thought**

In challenging times it is so easy to not push ourselves to reach out. The tendency is to circle the wagons and take care of ourselves when hard times prevail. Yet a self-focused way of living leads to destruction and emptiness. Jesus put it succinctly when he said this:

*For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it.  
Matthew 16:25 NIV*

**Discussion Questions**

1. Do you believe there is a tendency to become self-focused during challenging times in our life? If so, why do you think this is the tendency?
2. Discuss this principle, "You can't help others without helping yourself!" In light of this principle read Proverbs 11:25b & Matthew 10:39.
3. We experience Joy not when focusing on survival but on serving others. If we take the word JOY and make it an acronym what does each letter stand for?
4. Read the passage below as a group.

***Mark 2:1-12 (See also Matthew 9:2-8, Luke 5:17-26)***

*1 A few days later, when Jesus again entered Capernaum, the people heard that he had come home. 2 So many gathered that there was no room left, not even outside the door, and he preached the word to them. 3 Some men came, bringing to him a paralytic, carried by four of them. 4 Since they could not get him to Jesus because of the crowd, they made an opening in the roof above Jesus and, after digging through it, lowered the mat the paralyzed man was lying on. 5 When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, "Son, your sins are forgiven." 6 Now 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?" 8 Immediately 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? 9 Which is easier: to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up, take your mat and walk'? 10 But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins . . . ." He said to the paralytic, 11 "I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home." 12 He 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!" NIV*

5. Why do you think they were late for the service that Jesus was leading? (a good excuse for lateness to church)
6. What was the main objective of the four friends in the story?
7. When they climbed on the roof to dig through this demonstrates what characteristic they had regarding trying to help their friend?
8. Jesus commented on whose faith when he healed the paralyzed man? (Mark 2:5) What does this say about what we are to believe about our friends when we expose them to Jesus? (see also James 1:5-8, Hebrews 11:6)
9. What was the greatest miracle that Jesus performed for the paralyzed man in the story? (Mark 2:5) Why do you think Jesus was emphasizing this? Discuss this principle: All healing is temporary but all salvation is eternal.
10. When the four friends of the paralyzed man saw what Jesus did for him how do you think it affected them emotionally and spiritually as they had a birds-eye view of his pardon and healing?

### **Concluding Thought**

When times are challenging we need to reach out beyond ourselves. The ongoing temptation to isolate ourselves in hard times will ultimately work against our joy and peace. When we help others we always help ourselves. We should always remember Christ as the ultimate model of this as outlined in the book of Philippians.

*5 Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus:  
6 Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped,  
7 but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant,  
being made in human likeness.  
Philippians 2: 5-7 NIV*