

Daily Discipleship

Seventh Sunday after Epiphany (B) – Mark 2:1-12

An Attitude of Discipleship: *Boldness*

Focus Question: *How is boldness an attitude of discipleship?*

word of life

“They were all amazed and glorified God, saying, ‘We have never seen anything like this!’”

Mark 2:12 (NRSV)

Read Mark 2:1-12

In the first chapter of Mark, Jesus was busy calling the disciples, healing, teaching, and preaching. Word about him spread throughout the area. The chapter concludes with Jesus staying out in the country because people kept coming to him. (Mark 1: 45)

Finally, Jesus came home to Capernaum. After a few days, the word got out. Jesus was home. Soon, people gathered at his home. In fact, the crowd of people overflowed out the front door of his home. No doubt, they came for different reasons. Some came to be healed. Others came to be taught. Maybe some came because they were curious. This man seemed like an oddity. So, Jesus spoke the word to them. (Mark 2:1-2)

1. *What do you think Jesus might have told the crowd?*

Imagine the surprise from some of the people in the home when part of the roof opened up and a paralyzed man was lowered down to be healed by Jesus. Keep in mind the roofs in Capernaum were much different than ours. Israel’s climate is arid, so roofs in the first century were made more for shade. The roof was composed of mud and grass rather than slate, shingles, or wood.

The friends of the paralyzed man were determined for Jesus to see their friend. Give them credit. They were creative. When there was no room inside the home or at the entrance, they pursued alternative options. They dug through the roof.

2. *What motivated these friends to such bold action?*

Jesus commended the faith of the friends. They had worked hard for their friend. They simply wanted the man to walk. That in itself would have been a miracle. Yet, Jesus had other ideas. He saw a greater need – the need for forgiveness. In offering forgiveness, Jesus disconnected any preconceived notions about this man’s sin being the cause of the paralysis. Even after the man was forgiven, the man remained paralyzed. The man’s paralysis was not a punishment for his sinful life. Not at all. Jesus knew the freedom and healing which comes from being forgiven.

3. *What kind of healing comes from forgiveness?*

Some of the scribes inside the house were outraged, but didn’t say anything. Inside their hearts they thought, “Why does this fellow speak in this way? It is blasphemy! Who can forgive sins but God alone?” (Mark 2:7 NRSV) Jesus knew their questions, so he posed a new question. Which is easier: to heal paralysis or to forgive?

4. *How would you have answered his question?*

With the power of the word, Jesus proclaimed, “I say to you, stand up, take your mat and go to your home.” (Mark 2:11 NRSV) He stood up and immediately grabbed his mat. People were amazed and gave God glory.

5. *What can be learned from the bold attitude of the friends of the paralytic?*

word among us

“Sin Boldly”

This familiar quote from Martin Luther tends to bring a chuckle. For a brief moment, we imagine Luther giving permission to us to live a wild life. Not so. Instead, Luther acknowledges sin as a part of our daily lives. We cannot help but sin. If we wait to act until we are without sin, we will never do anything for anyone. Please note Luther’s full quote:

“Be a sinner and sin boldly, but believe and rejoice in Christ even more boldly for he is victorious over sin, death, and the world. As long as we are here in this world we have to sin. This life is not a dwelling place of righteousness.”

Take a moment to reflect on Luther’s quote.

1. *What does Luther mean by telling people to be a bold sinner?*
2. *What does an attitude of boldness have to do with following Christ?*

The friends of the paralytic were bold. They carried their friend to a rooftop and dug through the roof in order to present their friend before Jesus. They made a mess, upset the scribes, and stirred things up. They disrupted and interrupted.

3. *Were they right or wrong to act so boldly? How so?*
4. *Luther was a bold man. How did he disrupt things?*
5. *Was Luther right or wrong to be bold? How so?*

Think of what the friends of the paralytic were willing to do in order for their friend to see Jesus. In many ways, the friends became the feet of their friend.

6. *Recall a time when someone’s bold behavior helped you to see Christ. What did that feel like?*
7. *Can a person be born with an attitude of boldness? If not, how can someone learn to be bold?*

Take a few moments to reflect on your own life. Remember times when you have been bold, especially for the sake of Christ.

8. *What prevents us from being bold for the sake of Christ?*
9. *What bold action might you take this week?*

Prayer

Savior of the world, you gave your life, so we might be saved. Help us this day to be a bold witness to you. Amen.

Dig Deeper

Mark 14:66-72

last word

This week, pray for courage to act boldly for the sake of Christ.



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7 Epiphany (B) Page 2 of 2