

Speaking to the soul



Relationship with God

Some people brought to him a paralysed man on a mat. Seeing their faith, Jesus said to the paralysed man, “Be encouraged, my child! Your sins are forgiven.” Matthew 9:2

On the face of it, the needs of this man were absolutely clear. He was paralysed and needed Jesus to heal him. But Jesus started somewhere else. He knew that the man's first need was for forgiveness. He then turned his attention to the man's paralysis and healed him, and the man jumped up and went home.

Our first need is forgiveness too, because what matters before anything else is our relationship with God. Until we have been forgiven, we cannot enjoy the blessings of life with him. However, it is very easy for us to be distracted by other issues. Jesus wasn't for a moment suggesting that the man's paralysis was unimportant. It just wasn't the top priority. When we meet people with financial, addiction, health or relationship difficulties it is very easy for all our attention to focus on that particular need. However, Jesus' example should encourage us to look at their need to be right with God before anything else.

The other thing that strikes me in this verse is that it was the faith of the friends that triggered Jesus' response. Their role was absolutely crucial. The paralysed man was powerless to get to Jesus by himself. He relied on the kindness and effort of his friends and their involvement led to the complete transformation of his life. We should never underestimate the importance of our friendships, or of our ability to bless and strengthen them. I am sure that the paralysed man's friends would have been amazed at the impact of their practical help. As far as they were concerned, they had simply given their friend a lift. But the impact of their practical action was far beyond anything that they could have imagined.

QUESTION

Which of your non-Christian friends could you lead to Jesus?

PRAYER

Loving Father, thank you for your readiness to forgive me when I confess my sins to you. Amen