

Faith on Fridays—Faith and friends

Faith in Jesus makes up the Mechanics of Life.

Some men came, bringing to Jesus a paralyzed man, carried by four of them. Since they could not get him to Jesus because of the crowd, they made an opening in the roof above Jesus by digging through it and then lowered the mat the man was lying on. When Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralyzed man, "Get up, take your mat and go home." (Mark 2:1-7)

We know little about the people in this episode. One man was paralyzed, unable to get to Jesus. He had four male friends that would literally do anything to get him to Jesus. (Today, they would have been arrested for B&E.) The shocker of the incident is Jesus' words: "*When Jesus saw THEIR faith...*" One man's healing was rooted in the faith of four others. What do you make of that? Isn't faith a very personal matter ... like between me and Jesus?

Obviously, faith is personal. To a blind man Jesus said, "*Your faith has healed you*" (Mark 10:52). But, apparently faith is also corporate in nature—"When Jesus saw *their faith*..." The Philippian jailor asked Paul and Silas, "What must I do to be saved?" They answered, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—*you and your household*" (Acts 16:30-31). The disciple community offers the same evidence. If Peter wanted to follow Jesus, he had to walk with Matthew, the despised tax collector. So, to state it profoundly, there are no "Lone Ranger Christians!"

Seriously, what shall we make of this faith phenomenon? Let's return to the foundation! After the Creator pronounced seven "*goods*" we read this startling statement: "*It is not good for the male person to be alone.*" The human spirit was fabricated

for fellowship. Furthermore, whereas in our dis-eased condition we pretend that we're solitarily invincible, the truth is that we need another more than ever. Of the Gethsemane experience we are told: "*Becoming anguished and distressed, Jesus said to Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, 'My soul is deeply grieved, even to the point of death. **Remain here and stay awake with me**'*" (Mark 14:33-34). And then this: "*At three o'clock, Jesus groaned out of the depths, crying loudly, 'My God, My God, **why have You abandoned Me?**'*" (Mark 15:34).

Now this fact becomes understandable: there are no less than 59 "*One Anothers*" in the New Testament. Here are a few examples: "*Carry each other's burdens...*" (Galatians 6:2), "*Confess your sins to each other...*" (James 5:16), "*...Build each other up...*" (1 Thessalonians 5:11). The point is this: as with the original Twelve the journey of faith is built upon the foundation of community, of togetherness, of one another-ness!

"*When Jesus saw **their faith** ...*" Faith and Friends! They go together like "*peas and carrots*"!

Check back as we continue our **Faith on Fridays** series.