



Series: The Way of Jesus

Sermon: Part 2 | We tear off the roof!

Date: March 17, 2019

Serve Week Celebration as sermon intro

The Way of Jesus. Man can't think of a better way to walk in the way of Jesus than serving other people and that's what we did all last week with Serve week. An awesome week for our church. Let me show you the big picture. As a church we are called by God to care for the people in our community.

Tangible expression of God's love. In fact we'll see that in our passage today. So, knowing that we are just one church, but that one church united together can make a big impact, we have focused our efforts on displaying the love of God to the children of Charlotte. Which means caring for schools, supporting adoption & foster care ministries, and ultimately supporting families of these children.

- We know if teachers are well supported, they can give their best energy to the students, the students get the best training, classroom dynamics change & eventually scores go up. So we serve schools any way we can. Eastway Middle, Hidden Valley, Renaissance West, & Old Providence. This week 50 of you came and prayed

over Eastway. We helped get some projects done around the campuses, & all of these schools combined We provided meals for 410 teachers & staff. I asked the principal of eastway, principal webb: What else? She starts sharing some vision for after school clubs. She needs legos & board games. We'll do that next. Because we are here to stay. And you know what, their test scores are going up guys. Their teacher turnover is way down. That principal is KILLING IT and we are going to help her & these other schools.

- We know that caring for children & their families means supporting the social workers who are busting their tails. So we asked Congregations for Kids how we can help. They said Social workers spend a lot of time in their car & they wanted to bless them with car kits. They asked us to do 100. We said how many social workers are in CLT? They said 435. So, we said we'll do that. And 4 community groups made 450 car kits yesterday to try and make their job a little easier so they can give their best energy to the families they are serving.
- Listen to this one: We believe in adoption & foster care. I mean there's no better picture of the gospel on the planet. So, we've teamed up with C.A.S. Listen to this: They do something called a birth mothers retreat. I love this. After the birth mom delivers and gives the baby up for adoption...C.A.S. is still caring for them. So they take them on a retreat & to love them & show the love of God to them. Every year they say multiple women come to faith. And this year Mercy got to provide gift bags to all 35 women going on the retreat.

All told, 375 Mercy Folks sacrificed time and money this past week and together...for just that one week...one church made a big impact for the gospel of Jesus Christ. And I don't share this to pat us on the back. But I know you were doing one of those things. And I want you to see the collective impact of us locking arms together and stepping into the way of Jesus together! This was just another step. We want this to be normative. Ya'll if Mercy Church were to ever vanish from this city I hope the local government would MOURN because they lost a care giver. Let the whole community say our beliefs are crazy. But let them at least say our deeds match this crazy love message we preach. You with me? GOOD. Today is gonna be wild.

We are continuing our series this week in the Way of Jesus. Last week we looked at what it means to encounter Jesus. And we said something very important about meeting Jesus. And that is that Jesus will meet you right where you are. But he won't leave you there. He will meet you where you are. Simon Peter was a fisherman who was not too sure about this Jesus. Jesus tells him to go out into deep water & put his nets down. Peter had just spent all night doing that, it wasn't working, and now this Jesus guy who he had just met comes along and says put your nets down. And we zoomed in on Peter's response where he says "We've already tried that, but because you say so Lord, we'll do it." That was Peter's way of expressing uncertain but willing faith. Which makes Peter relatable to us.

That's the way a lot of us start towards Jesus. It's with uncertain but willing faith. And the awesome thing about that

story was how Jesus blessed Peter's uncertain but willing faith. Big catch of fish. And then Jesus said ok time for you to follow me. And they left everything to follow him. And we said Jesus meets you where you are, doesn't leave you there. Gives you a new purpose in life and that's to introduce others to his saving power. That's what serveweek was all about. Us following Jesus, walking in the way of Jesus, displaying to others the love that Christ has given to us.

If Last week was relatable, TODAY's story is downright inspiring. Like, I want you to leave those doors like you are charging out of the locker room onto the field today. Or, maybe sports metaphor isn't your thing! Maybe you are like me now and the thing that gets you hype: Run outta here like your babysitter just arrived. Like you just found out the Chick-fil-a reopened at the arboretum. LETS GOOOOO!!!

This is the story of a few friends who believed Jesus was powerful enough to help their friend. It's simple. My job today is just to make sure you grab hold of the power in this passage. Because Mercy Church...we gotta be the friends in this story I'm about to show you. The friends in the story I'm going to walk us through literally tear off the roof of a building to get their friend to Jesus. That's how desperate they were, how creative they were, how confident they were that Jesus could help their friend. And man I'm praying that as we together step into the way of Jesus we go all in like these friends do.

Main Idea is a simple idea at the heart of Mercy Church. **We tear off the roof to get people to Jesus.** My aim today is to

bring you to a point of decision: **Do you believe Jesus has power to change people?** That's the thing. Action is just the expression of belief. If you believe that, tearing off a roof won't seem crazy. But let's dive in.

If you are newer to Mercy, welcome! We usually just walk through books of the bible here at Mercy. So right now we are in Luke. If you stop by our connections tent on the way out, Part of the gift we have for you is this really cool copy of the gospel of Luke. On one side it has the scripture and on the other side it has places for you to take notes while you are reading it on your own or while you are in here interacting with the sermon.

So today I'm just going to walk through the story. So many good things in it you are going to see. **Main idea: We Tear off the roof to get people to Jesus.** Ok let's get into it.

17 On one of those days while he was teaching, Pharisees and teachers of the law were sitting there who had come from every village of Galilee and Judea, and also from Jerusalem.

- Make sure you catch what is happening. Mark's gospel records this and says they were in Capernaum. Funny Enough he's PROBABLY at Peter's home. Well, Luke wants us to know all the big boys, all the religious leaders, had come out to hear Jesus. This is a broad-based investigative committee united in an attempt to show something was wrong with this young rabbi.
- The Pharisees took the law VERY seriously. You gotta understand them because in this story they are Jesus'

opposition. The Pharisees saw their job as protecting and defending the law of God. But they took it so far they began adding laws to the law of God. This way they could control the religious circle because they held the power to say what was allowed by God and what was not. And they've gotten word Jesus is trying to disrupt their control.

And the Lord's power to heal was in him.

- This little add-in is to prepare you for what is about to happen. This is Luke setting the scene. It's not like there was a time when the power to heal WASN'T in him. It's always there. In fact its still there today for you. God CAN heal you. He can heal your soul, he can heal the emotional wounds of your past, he can heal you from your physical ailments, he can heal you. The Lord's power to heal WAS in him, and IS in him. Jesus' power doesn't come and go. Because God doesn't change. His character is constant, his love is constant always directed towards us. There is never a time when his love is not directed towards you. There is never a time when his power is not available to you. Hebrews 13.8 Jesus Christ – yesterday, today, & FOREVER. DO YOU BELIEVE IT!?
- The friends we are about to see believed this. And this is everything about today. Let's be clear: The friends aren't the hero of this passage. Jesus is the Hero. Because Jesus is the one who forgives and saves & heals. He's the hero of this event and he's the hero of the bible. He's the hero of my life, the life of every

Christian in here, he's the hero of Mercy Church! I hope that's who you leave amazed by today.

18 Just then some men came, carrying on a stretcher a man who was paralyzed. They tried to bring him in and set him down before him. 19 Since they could not find a way to bring him in because of the crowd, they went up on the roof and lowered him on the stretcher through the roof tiles into the middle of the crowd before Jesus.

- Ok these are our guys. I want us to look at what they did to bring their friend to Jesus. Because this is the spirit I want in my heart. Like I want to take a syringe and extract it from these guys and inject it into my spiritual bloodstream. This is a straight up recipe for **tear-off-the-roof faith**:
 - **Humility** – Nobody knows their name. They aren't the hero. They aren't doing this to be remembered. Nobody is going to Instagram this & it go viral. They are just "some men." I want my purpose to be what Count Zinzendorf said in the 1700s – Preach Christ, Die, & Be Forgotten. In fact they feel freedom to put their own reputations on the line because their reputations don't matter. Getting their friend to Jesus matters. All the big wigs are inside. People who carry more social clout than them. And they are interrupting everything. It's raining dust & chunks of roof all over these folks. And then when the dust settles and sun is pouring in, a guy gets lowered down right in front of Jesus. My man is fully awake just trying

to get to Jesus. NOBODY's name is recorded though. Only one name that gets remembered here. Jesus. That's the point! The point isn't the men, but the Jesus these men believed in.

- **Sacrifice** – They were carrying a guy on a stretcher! That aint easy. They are sacrificing their time & their energy to get this guy in front of Jesus. They had to sweat to get that roof open. You know historians suggest this roof, if like others in that region at the time, was probably like 2 feet thick? A lot of that being clay. They didn't just casually peel back some shingles. They were busting this thing open! That was some work! Speaking of work...
- **Urgency** – I see some guys who were determined to break down barriers to get to Jesus. If the house is full...obviously the first inclination is to say "Well man, sorry the place is slammed. We can wait or come back." But no, they are determined & urgent. They believe Jesus has the power to help their friend. Their urgency drives them to creative problem solving. I mean what kind of determination do you gotta have to say...HEY HOW ABOUT THE ROOF!? Next guy says: Well, The Ceiling is the Roof! Amen. That'd be a great t-shirt. Let's GO! The guy is laying down. Gotta strap him to the stretcher & lift him up. Couldn't have been the first idea but it's the one Luke wants to make

sure we see. Because it shows such conviction. Happy Chaos of Trusting Jesus. LISTEN: I've got one life to live and so do you. If the gospel is true. That heaven and hell are real and the only way you can be saved from your sin is through forgiveness found in Jesus...Everything else just became secondary. And I CANNOT WASTE even one DAY helping people get to Jesus.

- St. Patrick

- **BELIEF!** – This is the most obvious one but also the most important. Pushing everything they were doing was a belief, a faith – Assurance of things hoped for, certainty of things unseen – That Jesus had the power to heal their friend. All of their ACTIONS were motivated by their BELIEF. And there is a pureness & simplicity to this belief that I think needs to inspire us. A child-like assumption that if I just get to Jesus, all will be better. And Jesus says in Matthew 18 that unless you become like a child you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. This is simple faith. Goes back to my original question. **DO YOU BELIEVE Jesus has the power to change people?** Have you experienced this power in your life like Peter had? Has he changed you? Do you worship him? **You'll never go to much effort to get someone else to a Jesus you are ambivalent towards.**

Now Jesus' response to this act is wild. That's what we see in verse 20. And we are going to spend some time there. They went hoping for Jesus to heal his body & Jesus TOPS that. Gives the man way more than he was expecting. Gives him eternal life. And we'll talk about that in just a second. This whole sermon is going to shift focus as the story focuses on Jesus' response. But before we do I want us to talk about what tear-off-the-roof belief might look like for us:

I see it in how we gather together for worship. & how we scatter to live our daily lives.

Weekend: You know our whole purpose here is to celebrate Jesus & exalt his gospel. He loves us & made a way for us to be reconciled to God. Jesus died in our place. And listen, the gospel is offensive. Let's be real with that. You are a sinner & Jesus is the only way. The gospel is offensive, but nothing else around here should be! So what our guest services teams say is that we tear off the roof for people to hear the gospel each weekend. We all come to church with all kinds of barriers preventing us from being able to tune in to the gospel message. Kids Teams, Connections Teams, Worship & A/V – here's what they are doing – they aren't just doing a job to do a job. They are tearing off the roof. That's why Band practices Thursday nights. It's not to put on a show, its to do everything they can to help you encounter the beauty & glory & power of Jesus!

* Story of sidewalk greeter – Saw a mom of two notably upset. Greeted. Helped her check in. Took time to just say "you doing ok?" A huge conversation followed about the life crisis she was in Saturday. Was able to care. Rosaria

Butterfield is a fantastic author & tells her story of coming to Christ as a grad professor at Syracuse U. She said in her most recent book about Sunday morning church. "we may never know the treacherous journey people have taken to land in the seat next to us."

Everyday life – We tear off the roof to get people to Jesus:

- This means sacrificing time and comfort and money to get to know others. Listen after work it would be easy for me to go sit on the couch. Ya'll I DO IT A LOT and sometimes its good to rest. Sabbath. But man, I've got one life and there are people I know that need to get to Jesus. They don't even know they are spiritually paralyzed.
- It means building friendships with neighbors.
- It means fostering and adopting. It means caring for the least of these in our community.
- Sometimes it means awkward conversations with people you care about.
 - D. L. Moody, the famous Evangelist, when eighteen years of age, was a boot salesman in his uncle's store in Boston. His Sunday School teacher was a Mr. Kimball, and he had set his heart on winning the young man for Christ. After praying about the matter, he arranged to visit him at the boot store. "I was determined," to use his own words, "to speak to him about Christ and about his soul, and started down to Holton's boot store. When I was nearly there I began to wonder whether I ought to go in just then during business hours. I thought my call

might embarrass the boy, and that when I went away the other clerks would ask who I was, and taunt him with my efforts in trying to make him a good boy. In the meantime I had passed the store, and, discovering this, I determined to make a dash for it, and have it over at once. I found him in the back part of the building wrapping up shoes. I went up to him at once, and putting my hand on his shoulder, I made what I felt afterwards was a very weak plea for Christ. I don't know just what words I used, nor could Mr. Moody tell. I simply told him of Christ's love for him, and the love Christ wanted in return. That was all there was. It seemed the young man was just ready for the light that then broke upon him, and there in the back of that store in Boston, D. L. Moody gave himself and his life to Christ.

Tear off the roof. Even if it means tearing off your fear. It's never NOT awkward to talk about spiritual things with people who don't normally talk about spiritual things. EV: two awkward people having a conversation. SO WHAT,.....

If I really believe Jesus has the power & willingness to save people, I will tear off the roof to get people to Jesus!!

Ok Now comes the exciting part of the story. Jesus' response to these guys and the man they've lowered down to meet him.

20 Seeing their faith he said, "Friend, your sins are forgiven."

Soak that up. Seeing their faith. Because faith apart from works is dead. Seeing their faith which is expressed in their determination to get to him & their belief he has power to help, he says Friend...your sins are forgiven. Now, some of you are like...wait doesn't the paralytic have to believe in order to be saved? YES. But we can assume this guy wasn't being carried around & lowered down all against his will. He was literally on board with this. But yes you should see how powerful the faith of a friend is.

But the more important thing to see is that Jesus doesn't heal his body...which is what they were all after. That's a shock to everyone. Instead he says "your SINS are forgiven." Now why oh why would he say that!?

That's nice Jesus but I actually came for physical healing. And this is what happens to most people. Jesus, what I really need is for you to fix my husband. Jesus what I really need IS a husband. Jesus what I really need is relief from the pressure at work. Jesus what I really need is for you to fix my demon child. Jesus what I really need is some friends in my same life stage. Jesus what I really need is for you to take away my chronic pain.

LISTEN: Jesus MEETS YOU WHERE YOU ARE. He hears what you think you really need. He doesn't shrug that off!! He cares. He loves you. He counts the hairs on your head, he calls you his child and he wants you to feel the love he has towards you which is more intense and complete than any love on earth.

AND BECAUSE OF THAT LOVE...He says what you REALLY NEED – Is forgiveness from your sin. That is your GREATEST need.

Now the timing and setting was very intentional by Jesus also. Because of the audience he had in front of him. Look at verse 21.

21 Then the scribes and the Pharisees began to think to themselves: "Who is this man who speaks blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God alone?"

These guys came ready to pounce. They were looking for an opening. Some flaw in his teaching. And notice the wording...they began to THINK to themselves. Nobody saying anything. Just sitting there being silent sermon critics. Notice the difference between the Pharisees & the roof-tearing friends? Roof-Tearers believed, Pharisees were skeptical. They were sermon critics. Roof-tearers were urgent, Pharisees were resistant. Roof-tearers took down obstacles to get to Jesus, Pharisees were obstacles keeping others from Jesus. Roof-tearers wanted others to benefit from the power of Jesus, Pharisees rejected his power & authority to benefit others. If you stop to think of it, not once in any of the gospels do you find a teacher or a Pharisee bringing anyone to Jesus for mercy and grace. You often find them opposing and resisting people who wish to draw near to Him. At best, you find the Pharisees and teachers passively tolerant. **Simple question: are you more of a roof-tearer or a sermon critic?** Are you sacrificing your life to get others to Jesus or do you sit and consume, and criticize when you hear something you don't like? And the answer depends entirely on who you believe Jesus is.

And Jesus was ready....

22 But perceiving their thoughts, Jesus replied to them, "Why are you thinking this in your hearts? 23 Which is easier: to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up and walk'?"

Which is easier to SAY. I love that. God's word has power. Not which is easier to do, but easier to say. Because what he says, is what will be. He isn't just turning this into a teachable moment. HE's God. he put all these things into motion so he could SHOW these guys who he really is. And to drive the point home he says this:

24 But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins" — he told the paralyzed man, "I tell you: Get up, take your stretcher, and go home." 25 Immediately he got up before them, picked up what he had been lying on, and went home glorifying God.

MAN THIS GUY HAS HAD A GOOD DAY! Sins are forgiven. And his body healed. And the point of the physical healing is what...IT'S JUST TO LET THEM KNOW FOR CERTAIN that Jesus has the power to do the important thing. The thing only God can do. That's why he uses that name for himself again. It's familiar if you were here for our Daniel series. He calls himself the Son of Man. Short reason he's saying that: He's saying he's the promised messiah to come and save the world from sin. And he heals this guy and here is how the story finishes.

26 Then everyone was astounded, and they were giving glory to God. And they were filled with awe and said, "We have seen incredible things today."

We've seen Jesus make a lame man walk!! PRAISE GOD! And the people around start giving glory to God. And I've got a few minutes left to say 3 things:

1. **The power that made this man walk is still at work in believers today.** The spirit of God comes in to your life. And MAYBE he heals you physically. I've seen him heal marriages. And maybe your marriage is on life support. Man, I have seen it. I've seen porn addicts set free. I've seen drug addicts set free. I've seen suicidal people find hope & purpose. I'm talking become totally new people their old friends wouldn't recognize. WHEN GOD SAVES YOU, he changes you. You become a new creation. MAYBE he heals your body, DEFINITELY he heals your soul. Leads me to the second point:

2. **We have the greater miracle.** here's the most important thing for us today. At some point...the paralytic will get old & struggle to walk. Changed circumstances are not eternal. The bigger miracle, the one that Jesus wants to make sure we understand: Is that he actually holds the power to forgive sins. And he not only holds the power, he WANTS to extend that power to you. That's the great thing. Listen to me, I will praise God if you have chronic pain and we pray over you and he heals you. God calls us to pray for that and we believe he can. BUT, I will PRAISE GOD MORE when you come up out of those baptism waters. BECAUSE THAT IS THE GREATER MIRACLE! That I sinned against God. Listen this is the gospel. The greatest miracle of all. God wants us to be with him. And so he made a way. And I don't have to work for it. I just have to receive it. This is why so many people say It's impossible to believe. I don't have to do good works to get into heaven?

What kind of religion is this? It's a miracle based one. Jesus died in my place. As payment for my sins. I don't pay for them. I spend my life celebrating what he's done of course. But not to earn forgiveness. I do it to worship the God I've come to know. Totally different, totally freeing.

3. We, Mercy Church, tear off the roof to get people to Jesus. C.T. Studd once said "Some want to live within the sound Of church or chapel bell; I want to run a rescue shop, Within a yard of hell." That's us. We are designing everything we do: weekends, groups, college, outreach, family ministry...to mobilize people to get people to Jesus. And you have a next step. What is it?