



Leadership Training Class

CLASS TWO: LIFE LIVED IN COMMUNITY

OPENING QUESTIONS:

- 1) If you could have any superpower what would it be?
- 2) Who is one of your closest friends? What are some things you really appreciate about their friendship? How did you first become friends?

SCRIPTURE - LUKE 5:17-26

One day Jesus was teaching, and Pharisees and teachers of the law were sitting there. They had come from every village of Galilee and from Judea and Jerusalem. And the power of the Lord was with Jesus to heal the sick. Some men came carrying a paralyzed man on a mat and tried to take him into the house to lay him before Jesus. When they could not find a way to do this because of the crowd, they went up on the roof and lowered him on his mat through the tiles into the middle of the crowd, right in front of Jesus.

When Jesus saw their faith, he said, "Friend, your sins are forgiven."

The Pharisees and the teachers of the law began thinking to themselves, "Who is this fellow who speaks blasphemy? Who can forgive sins but God alone?"

Jesus knew what they were thinking and asked, "Why are you thinking these things in your hearts? Which is easier: to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up and walk'? But I want you to know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins." So he said to the paralyzed man, "I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home." Immediately he stood up in front of them, took what he had been lying on and went home praising God. Everyone was amazed and gave praise to God. They were filled with awe and said, "We have seen remarkable things today."

OBSERVATION QUESTIONS:

1. Why do you think the crowds gathering around Jesus were so big? What was drawing them to Him?
2. What do you think motivated these four friends to go to such extreme measures for this paralyzed man? If you had been the paralytic, how would you have responded to their actions? What would be going on in your heart as they lowered you through the roof?
3. The friends brought this man to Jesus for healing. Why do you think Jesus raises the issue of forgiveness? Why doesn't he just heal the man? Whose faith is Jesus responding to?
4. Why do you think the Pharisees are so upset by Jesus's pronouncement of forgiveness?



APPLICATION QUESTIONS:

- 1) What does this passage tell us about our need for community and the role of others' faith in our Christian walks?
- 2) In your own faith right now in life, do you identify more with the paralytic, the friends, or the teachers? Why?
- 3) Michael Kimmell, in *Guyland*, a book about college-aged men, writes:

"Friendship is the currency of 'Guyland.' But often it's a counterfeit currency, based on the suppression of emotion, false bravado, and toughness, a mutual recitation of allegiance to the Guy Code. Developing a genuine friendship - a real one - is difficult, perhaps the biggest risk a guy can take. It means being strong enough to show vulnerability, independent enough to brave social ostracism, courageous enough to trust another."

How can Chi Alpha avoid becoming a group of "Guyland" friends described by Kimmell in the above quote? What are ways we can challenge one another to grow in faith and encounter the healing and forgiveness of Jesus?

- 4) The men thought they were bringing their paralyzed friend to Jesus for physical healing, but it turned out that Jesus wanted to do an even deeper work of healing in his life. What are the things that most often draw us into Christian community? What needs are we most often trying to meet? What deeper purposes have you discovered that Jesus often meets when we live in intentional Christian community?

ADDITIONAL READING

Read the excerpt from James Bryan Smith's *The Good and Beautiful Community*.

- 1) Do you agree that churches often lower their expectations with the hopes of drawing more people in?
- 2) Describe the level of commitment you have been expected to make in various churches you've attended. How did the level of commitment affect you? Have you ever seen a higher level of commitment lead to genuine transformation?
- 3) The author writes, "I want a community who reminds me of who I am and will watch over me with love - which means offering both comfort and warning - so that I might live a life worthy of my calling." Do you desire such a community for yourself? What attracts you to this idea, and what reluctance do you feel toward this type of community?