



Tenacious Friendships June 30th / July 1st

Speaker: **Pastor Heather Zempel**

Scripture: **Mark 2:1-12**

Sermon Summary:

In the story of the paralyzed man on the mat, four men went to the extremes to get their friends to Jesus. Tenacity, vulnerability, and bearing the burdens of others are essential components of being a neighbor. And the ultimate goal is to get them to Jesus.

Sermon Series Questions:

1. What did God reveal to you?
2. What are you going to do about it?
3. What is one element of God's character you learned?

Sermon Specific Questions:

1. In this story, the man wanted to be healed. He did walk home with new legs, but also with the forgiveness of sins. Has there been a time in your life when you asked God for something and he gave you something greater? Has there been a time when he gave you what you needed in addition to what you wanted?
2. The 'mat' in the story can represent a burden we carry with us, something we try to hide, or hold back. We all have a mat. What is yours? What is the thing you try so hard to avoid, mask, and not let others see for fear they won't come any closer? What has happened before when you've let people in?
3. Who is helping you carry your mat? Whose mat are you carrying?
4. Our friends have great influence in our lives. Whose voices are the loudest in your ears? Whose faith is changing your life? Are there negative relationships that need distance?

5. What tips people off that we're followers of Jesus? What betrays our Christianity? Does our love for the world make others look at us and want to know Jesus?
6. Who is on your Romans 16 list? Contact them this week and thank them.

Activate Challenge

Be Prayerfully Intentional:

How can you be praying for your neighbors? This week, let's be intentional about praying for our neighbors together. Ask someone this week, "How can I be praying for you?" It will take a little bit of boldness, but it opens the door to some AMAZING things. After asking the question, pray over the situation or person in your quiet time. In your group, share your neighbor's prayer request with the group (NOTE: you do not have to name any names). As a group, intercede for each other's neighbors.

Time to Reconnect:

Life happens and sometimes we lose touch. Reach out this week to an old neighbor, coworker, or friend you haven't connected with in a long time. Through a phone call, a text message, or a social media direct message send someone a quick note to let them know that you have been thinking about them. Tenacious friendships should transcend time and physical limitations. *Thank you, Technology!*

Neighborly Investment:

Who are you investing in and who is investing in you? These are very important questions when we are examining the friendships and community around you. This activity helps to assess where have made progress on your Neighborhood Map (week 1).

1. Pull out your neighborhood map.
2. For each person, categorize them based on the following categories:
 - a. Neighbors who I am investing in
 - b. Neighbors who are investing in me
 - c. Neighbors where we are investing in each other
3. Ask yourself the following questions:
 - Which category do people tend to fall in? Where are the gaps?
 - How are you investing into these people?
 - What are you learning from your neighbors?
4. Share your thoughts with your group!

RESOURCES

VIDEO: The Power of Vulnerability

https://www.ted.com/talks/brene_brown_on_vulnerability

Brené Brown

BOOK: Love Does

Bob Goff