

The Life Challenge

"I came that they may have life and have it abundantly." John 10:10

Title: Faith

Speaker: David Manuel

Text: Mark 2:1-12; Luke 7:36-50

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(The material below is a resource from which you can select what will be most appropriate, challenging and transforming for your Life Group. There is far more material below than you could possibly tackle in one session. As you sense the Holy Spirit guidance, you will be able to select the right material for your group.)

DISCUSSION

Imagine This! Perhaps a parable? (by Ed Balzer with apologies to all)

Three friends were skiing at Whistler. They were having a wonderful day until one friend crashed into a tree. The result of the accident was paralysis. The very best specialists had been consulted. There was nothing that could be done to repair the damage. Of course, the friends were devastated!

There was nothing they could do, right? But one day one of the friends heard about a three-day conference on the topic of healing. The friend thought that perhaps they should bring their injured friend. But the event was sold out. They wouldn't even get into the place!

However, the friends were desperate, so they hatched up a plan. On the closing event of the convention, there would be a huge outdoor celebration. The friends convinced the North Vancouver Rescue Service to helicopter them and their friend in order to rappel themselves and their friend down to the closing venue right during the service.

So who was exercising faith? The faith healer, the paralyzed friend, or the two friends?

STORY #1: Read the Text #1 – Mark 2:1-12

- Who were the players in this drama?
 - Mark 2:5a – Jesus says he “saw their faith”. Who were these people?
 - What term does Jesus use as he addresses the paralytic? How does Jesus feel about the paralytic?
 - In Mark 9:8-11 we see the interaction between Jesus and teachers of the law:
 - ⇒ What were the key pieces to the conversation in this passage?
 - ⇒ How do you understand what Jesus was saying? From Jesus' perspective, what was most significant?
 - ⇒ Which is easier? To heal the paralytic or to forgive sins? Why?
 - Verse 10 describes Jesus as the “Son of Man.” See Daniel 7:13, 14. What distinguishes Jesus as the “Son of God” compared to “Son of Man?” See John 1:14
 - Where does Jesus exercise his authority as the Son of Man, on earth or in heaven?
 - Who got the glory at the end of this story?
- Even today, what is the biggest problem in humankind today? In very their depths of their souls, what are people yearning for, healing or forgiveness?

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STORY #2: Read Luke 7:36-50

- Again, who are the players in the story?
- Why did this woman with a shady background spend her personal fortune on Jesus? Vv.37, 38. Was she trying to bribe Jesus and get some brownie points so she could get into heaven? What was her real intent? Vv.41-43
- How does Jesus contrast the actions of Simon, the Pharisee and this "sinful woman"? V.44-46
- Verse 50 is the crucial point in this story. The woman did not pressure Jesus to forgive her based on the brownie points she may have earned. What are the two results because she has been forgiven?

What's the point of these stories for us?

In the past, South Abbotsford Church has demonstrated faith in Jesus. Before the 1980's, some South Abbotsford patriarchs saw the spiritual need of the Sikh's who had begun to come to Canada. Many were working in the berry fields of South Abbotsford's members. These patriarchs were convicted to find someone who could begin a ministry to Indo-Canadians. Pastor David Manuel was invited in 1980. Thus, Sikhs who have come to know Jesus and who have come to faith have come as a result of the faith these patriarchs. They had exercised such faith almost 40 years ago.

This was "difference-making faith!"

Application Points:

- Our prayer engagement: How might we pray?
 - ⇒ Are we more like the Pharisees and teachers of the law, or more like the shady lady?
 - ⇒ Do we love much, or not so much?
 - ⇒ What transformations would the Holy Spirit want to effect in my life? In our Life Group?
- How might the Holy Spirit be convicting us to exercise "difference-making faith" today, following in the footsteps of our spiritual forefathers? This could be a personal challenge, a Life Group challenge or a church-wide challenge.