
LOVING JESUS, LOVING PEOPLE, PLOWING A COUNTER-CULTURE

LEADER DETAILS:

- **TEXT:** Luke 5:17-26
- **MAIN IDEA:** How Unbelieving Friends Become Believing Friends.
- **GROWTH FOCUS:** I want my group to talk more than me this week!

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- **Family Dedication - February 19 and 22 in both Ringwood and Totowa.** Family Dedication is an opportunity for parents to declare their faith and share their desire to raise their kids in a home centered on Jesus. Sign up today and invite your loved ones out!
- **Marriage Workshop – February 14th – 8:30am-12:00pm.** Join us for a morning of praise & worship, a light breakfast, and an awesome workshop led by Pastor Adam Flynt. **Registration is \$25 per couple or \$15 for individual. Whether you are married, dating, or single,** there is something for you as we all seek Jesus together!
- Our **Student Ministry's Winter Retreat** is happening **February 20–22**. We'll be rocking out at High Point Bible Camp in Pennsylvania. This is a great way for our teens to connect with each other, their leaders, and the Lord. Sign up on the Digital Bulletin.
- **200 Club** – Pastor Ryan encouraged those who are willing and able to **park at least 200 steps away** on **Sundays at our Totowa Campus**, to make parking easier for new folks and those who have a harder time walking long distances. It's a great way to serve, and to get some extra steps in towards New Year's goals :)

GETTING STARTED:

- **Watch this week's Community Extras Video** (A bit longer this week – 8 minutes).
 - (Pastor Ryan's questions on the video are included below, so feel free to let your group know you will get to them)
- **Optional Icebreaker:** Share a highlight from your Christmas this year.

Faithful Friends

Read Luke 5:17-20

This is our third week studying this account. In the first week, we focused on being the one on the mat—recognizing our need for friends who will carry us to Jesus. Last week, we looked at being the kind of friends who remove obstacles so others can reach Him, just as they tore open the roof. This week, Pastor Ryan highlighted that because of the friends' faith, the paralyzed man encountered Jesus and received healing—both physically and spiritually.

💡 Pastor Ryan emphasized that unbelieving friends come to Jesus through the faith of their believing friends. How have you witnessed this in your own journey or in the lives of those around you?

The sermon talked about “casting” (or sharing) our faith. Ryan gave examples - inviting a new neighbor to church, sharing you went to church when asked what you did on the weekend, sharing how faith in Jesus gets you through hard times, etc.

💡 What are some ways that you have tried “casting” your faith that you’ve found effective? Or what are some ways you think you’d like to try?

*Leaders: We want this group to be a place where people feel safe to be honest, even when life is messy, and where growth is possible. **As you introduce the next question**, modeling vulnerability by sharing your own struggles can help invite openness from the group.*

💡 Most likely, all of us have held back from “casting” or sharing their faith with others. **What are the reasons that typically hold you back at times?**

💡💡 How can we overcome those barriers? When do you find you are the most courageous?

💡 What should our motivation be for sharing our faith? (2 Corinthians 5:14; John 3:16; 1 Tim 1:5)

💡 Sometimes all we get is a cast, but sometimes we get to share the full Gospel. This is a great tool to continue to sharpen. How would you go about sharing the Gospel in 1 minute or less?

Facing The Critics

Read Luke 5:21

Here we see that Jesus (being God) forgives a man’s sins, and yet all the Pharisees do is criticize. As we are faithful, we will inevitably gain some critics. Pastor Ryan mentioned two thoughts when we face criticism as we live out our faith:

1. Be humble, and let them inform and coach
2. Do not let them paralyze you, but go to first principles (what matters, identity in Christ, etc.)

💡 Can you share a time when someone had a valid criticism, and you were able to grow from it?

💡 Was there a time where someone discouraged your faith? How does it still affect you to this day? Or how did you overcome it?

Serving and Seeing Jesus at Work

Read Luke 5:22-25

In the sermon, Ryan pointed out that because the friends were willing to sacrificially serve their friend, they witnessed a miracle. In the same way, it's when we love Jesus and people sacrificially, we also see His power more clearly at work.



Why do you think this is the case?



Was there ever a time that you served – inside or outside the church – and God showed up and just blew you away?

Celebrate

Read Luke 5:25-26

Pastor Ryan pointed out that just as the people were amazed at how Jesus healed the paralyzed man, as we choose to live life on mission this year, we also will be amazed and be able to celebrate the awesome things God will do.



What is something that you want to celebrate this year, as you press into what Jesus has for you?



In weekend services, we got a card with 4 key dates, where we pray and fast for God to save people here in North Jersey – Christmas, Easter, Church Outside, and Baptism Weekend – And a spot on the bottom to write a name of one person you will commit to pray for to become a Christian this year. If you have that name, how do you plan to be intentional about reaching them with the Gospel this year? How can we as a group support each other?

GROWTH STEP THIS WEEK

Outward Action: Try “casting” your faith one time this week.

Inward Prayer: For God to reveal and help you overcome obstacles in your heart and mind when it comes to sharing your faith with others.

PRAYER TIME

Pray for opportunities to “cast”.

Pray for courage and humility in the face of any critics we face as we seek to be faithful followers of Jesus.

Pray for faith for God to do more than we can every ask or imagine this year as we live on mission in North Jersey.