# Small Group Guide

**Based on the Sermon: "The Authority and Willingness of Jesus to Forgive Sin"**

**Text: Luke 5:17-26**

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## Overview

This week's message, delivered by Pastor Kurtis Rogers of Rabbit Town Community Church in St. John's, Newfoundland, focused on the account of Jesus healing a paralyzed man. While the physical healing is striking, the deeper message is this: Jesus has both the authority and the willingness to forgive sin. This guide will help your group explore that truth together and consider what it means for everyday life.

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## Key Takeaways

- Sin is not merely one problem among many in the world. War, addiction, and suffering are symptoms of the deeper root disease of sin that entered creation at the Fall.
- Jesus does not wait for us to climb our way to him. He comes down to meet us in our brokenness.
- Faith is the necessary condition for forgiveness. The paralytic brought nothing to Jesus except trust.
- Christianity is not about working your way into God's favor. It is about being welcomed into a family.
- The paralytic went home glorifying God without shame. We are called to do the same in our daily lives.

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## Discussion Questions

### Opening Question

1. Think about a time when someone showed up for you in an unexpected or sacrificial way. How did that make you feel? How does that experience connect to the idea of Jesus coming down to meet us where we are?

### Digging Into the Text

2. In Luke 5:20, the first thing Jesus says to the paralytic is not "be healed" but rather that his sins are forgiven. Why do you think Jesus addressed forgiveness before physical healing? What does that order of priority tell us about what Jesus considered the man's greatest need?
3. Pastor Kurtis pointed out that in the culture of that day, people assumed the man's paralysis was the direct result of personal sin. How do you think that assumption shaped the way others treated him? How does it change the scene to hear Jesus call him "friend"?
4. The Pharisees were theologically correct that only God can forgive sins, yet they completely missed who was standing in front of them. What are some ways people today might have accurate information about Jesus but still miss a real relationship with him? How does Pastor Kurtis's illustration about Tiger Woods help illustrate this idea?
5. Pastor Kurtis described the common view of God as someone sitting at the top of a mountain while we try to climb our way up to him. How does the gospel challenge that picture? Where do you see this "climbing the mountain" mindset show up in everyday thinking, even among Christians?
6. Read Ephesians 2:8-9. The sermon used the illustration of a child opening a Christmas gift and asking, "How much do I owe you?" Why is that response so misguided when it comes to salvation? In what ways might we still act as though we owe God for the gift he has freely given?

## Going Deeper

7. Pastor Kurtis shared a story about facing intense opposition and even threats when planting a church in downtown St. John's. He described a moment in the dark on his bedside where he sensed the nearness of Jesus in a powerful way. Have you ever experienced a moment of difficulty where you felt the nearness of God in an unexpected way? What did that teach you?
8. The paralytic went home glorifying God in front of the very crowd that had just witnessed the confrontation with the Pharisees. Pastor Kurtis asked whether we are sometimes more ashamed of Jesus than we are willing to admit, especially when we return to our workplaces, schools, and families. Where do you find it most difficult to openly glorify God? What holds you back?
9. Pastor Kurtis warned about a "Pharisee within every one of us" that tends to reduce faith down to outward behavior and to-do lists while ignoring the condition of the heart. Can you identify any areas in your own spiritual life where you may be going through the motions without genuine heart engagement?

## Application and Reflection

10. The paralytic and his friends were so determined to reach Jesus that they climbed on a roof and lowered him through the ceiling. Pastor Kurtis asked, "Are we this desperate to get to Jesus?" What would it look like practically in your life this week to pursue Jesus with that kind of urgency and intentionality?

# Practical Applications

- Set aside intentional time this week to bring something specific to Jesus in prayer, not a to-do list, but a genuine, honest conversation about where you are and what you need.
- Identify one person in your life who may have "paralysis of the soul," someone who is bound and has not yet heard or responded to the gospel. Commit to praying for that person by name this week and consider one practical step you could take to point them toward Jesus.
- Reflect on whether you are living as someone who knows about Jesus or someone who truly knows him as a friend. Journal or discuss with a trusted believer what a deeper, more personal relationship with Christ would look like for you right now.
- Consider how you can support the church planting work in Newfoundland and other least-reached places. Pray specifically for Kurtis Rogers, his family, and the Rabbit Town Community Church this week. Ask God how your group might be part of the mission, whether through giving, going, or sustained prayer.
- The next time you are tempted to feel that God is distant or uninterested in your situation, return to Luke 5:20 and remember that Jesus looked at a man the world had written off and called him friend.

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# Closing Prayer Focus

Close your group time by praying together over these three areas:

1. Gratitude for the forgiveness of sin made possible through Jesus Christ.
2. Boldness to glorify God without shame in the places where you live and work.
3. The least-reached people of the world, including the 1% evangelical city of St. John's, Newfoundland, that they would have access to the gospel through faithful church planters and supporting churches.