

The Wind Beneath My Wings

1. Warm-up Question: The Bible says, “As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens the countenance of another.” Proverbs 27:17. Jeff began Sunday’s sermon with a simple story about how the people we spend time with influence us in surprising ways. He told how David’s passion for football was contagious and caused him to learn to enjoy football. Can you think of a similar story in your own life about how spending time with someone change you in some simple way?

2. In his book “Learning to Pray,” Father Jim Martin describes the Jesuit concept of Contemplative Imagination as a way of praying the scriptures. The idea is to read a Bible story, then place yourself into the story through the power of imagination. You imagine yourself as one of the characters in the story, then contemplate what you see, hear, smell, and feel, then consider what God might want to say to you as you experience the story from that perspective. Let’s practice Contemplative Imagination using Sunday’s scripture. Read Mark 2:1-12, as printed on p. 3.
 - a. As you enter this story, imagine yourself as one of the characters in it, then tell us what character you choose and why.
 - b. As you experience the story from that character’s perspective, what do you see?
 - c. What do you hear?
 - d. What do you smell?
 - e. What insight do you gain by seeing the story through the eyes of your character? What is God saying to you?

3. When Jim Martin engaged our Gospel story through Contemplative Imagination, he saw himself as the man on the mat being carried to Jesus by his four friends. Jim’s attention was drawn to two key phrases. First, in the original Greek, the passage says the man’s friends were so determined to get him help, they literally “unroofed the roof.” Second, verse 5 tells us that Jesus forgave the man and healed him “when he saw their faith.” Note that it doesn’t say “when he saw the paralyzed man’s faith.” Instead it was the faith of the man’s friends that brought him into the healing presence of Jesus.
 - a. When in your life has a dear friend “unroofed the roof” for you? In other words, when has a friend done something extraordinary for you? Tell us about it.
 - b. When Father Jim imagined himself as the man on the mat, he found himself thinking about the people in his life who carried him to Jesus. Jeff told how his Mom and Grandma had played that role in his life through the example of their beautiful faith. In your group, take a moment for each person to say the name of a key person who helped carry them to Jesus. Once the names are all spoken, the group leader should lead a short prayer of thanksgiving for all those people.

- c. Tell us how the person whose name you spoke helped carry you to Jesus? What was it about them, who they are, and what they did that drew you to Jesus?
 - d. There's an old saying that goes like this, "People are like stained glass windows. They sparkle and shine when the sun is out. But in the darkness, beauty is seen only if there is a light within." Tell us about a time you've seen somebody shine even in the darkness.
4. It's not enough to be thankful for the people who brought us to Jesus. Jesus said, "Freely you have received, freely give." Matthew 10:8. In other words, we now have a sacred responsibility to pass it on and pay it forward by sharing our faith. But the idea of sharing our faith tends to make us anxious.
- a. None of us ever wants to be the obnoxious stereotype of someone who forces others into unwanted religious conversations. Have you ever done that or been on the receiving end of someone trying to "witness" to you in an off-putting way?
 - b. Jeff shared two Bible verses that can help us figure out how to share our faith in attractational ways. In Matthew 5:16, Jesus said, "Let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven." What insight does that verse offer about being an effective witness?
 - c. I Peter 3:15 says, "Always be ready to give an answer to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you, yet do it with gentleness and reverence." What insight does that verse offer about being an effective witness?
 - d. Often times we underestimate our ability to shine for God because we get so preoccupied with our failures. But everybody has weaknesses and failures. The key is how we deal with our failures. When we honestly acknowledge them and sincerely apologize, that actually makes our witness more compelling and beautiful. Have you ever experienced that, i.e., someone whom you admire even more because they humbly owned a failure?
 - e. St. Isaac the Syrian said, "The person who knows his sins is greater than one who raises a dead man by his prayer." What do you think he meant? Do you agree or disagree?
 - f. Shane Claiborne says, "The more I have read the Bible and studied the life of Jesus, the more I have become convinced that Christianity spreads best not through force but through fascination." What do you think he means? Do you agree or disagree?
 - g. Who in your life right now needs to see the light of Christ in you? What are some ways you can let your light shine for them?

Both Sunday worship services – 9:15 am and 11:00 am – have reopened and are taking reservations. Masks still required. To make a reservation, go to [LifeJourney.church/links](https://www.lifejourneychurch.com/links).

Mark 2:1-12

When Jesus returned to Capernaum after some days, it was reported that he was at home. ²So many gathered around that there was no longer room for them, not even in front of the door; and he was speaking the word to them.

³Then some people came, bringing to him a paralyzed man, carried by four of them. ⁴And when they could not bring him to Jesus because of the crowd, they removed the roof above him; and after having dug through it, they let down the mat on which the paralytic lay.

⁵When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, "Son, your sins are forgiven." ⁶Now some of the scribes were sitting there, questioning in their hearts, ⁷"Why does this fellow speak in this way? It is blasphemy! Who can forgive sins but God alone?" ⁸At once Jesus perceived in his spirit that they were discussing these questions among themselves; and he said to them, "Why do you raise such questions in your hearts? ⁹Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Stand up and take your mat and walk?' ¹⁰But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins"—he said to the paralytic— ¹¹"I say to you, stand up, take your mat and go to your home."

¹²And he stood up, and immediately took the mat and went out before all of them; so that they were all amazed and glorified God, saying, "We have never seen anything like this!"