

RISK IT
Community
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Discussion Notes
The Crossing Church
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OPENING

Being on this journey of faith can get risky. We might be called to share our faith, or live it out in a way we never have before. There are certain risks that we may choose to take and others we pass on. At the same time there are a couple of risks that we are compelled to take as followers of Christ. This weekend, we are starting a brand new series called "Risk It" that focuses on what it looks like to share our faith and live it out in our lives. Join us as we learn what God's Word says about taking risks and living outside of our comfort zones.

SCRIPTURE¹

Mark 2:1-12 "A few days later, when Jesus again entered Capernaum, the people heard that he had come home. So many gathered that there was no room left, not even outside the door, and he preached the word to them. Some men came, bringing to him a paralytic, carried by four of them. Since they could not get him to Jesus because of the crowd, they made an opening in the roof above Jesus, and, after digging through it, lowered the mat the paralyzed man was lying on. When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, 'Son, your sins are forgiven.'

Now some teachers of the law were sitting there, thinking to themselves, 'Why does this fellow talk like that? He's blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone?' Immediately Jesus knew in his spirit that this was what they were thinking in their hearts, and he said to them, 'Why are you thinking these things? Which is easier to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say 'Get up, take your mat and walk'? But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins ...' He said to the paralytic, 'I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home.' He got up, took his mat and walked out in full view of them all. This amazed everyone and they praised God, saying, 'We have never seen anything like this!' "

Proverbs 13:20 "Walk with the wise and become wise, for a companion of fools suffers harm."

OBSERVATION

We must choose our circle of friends wisely because of the enormous influence they have on our direction, decisions, priorities, beliefs and behavior. The friends of the paralyzed man:

- Cared greatly for him;
- They would not be denied;
- The frustration of the home owner did not deter them;
- They labored in order to help him;
- They celebrated joyously when he was healed;

If we are like most people, we can't tell our life story without referencing people who played significant roles along the way. Everybody with whom we come in contact either builds or erodes our faith in God so we have to choose relationships with discernment.

Question: If you think for a minute about your greatest regret, that chapter of your life that you wish you could go back and redo, who were the "friends" influencing you?

¹ All scripture listed is NIV unless otherwise indicated

APPLICATION

Because of his friends, the paralyzed man had access to Jesus Who not only healed him, but forgave his sins. This story tells us that God uses human relationships to providentially impact our faith in Him.

Question: Who do you believe God used in relationship with you to make your faith stronger or bigger? What did they do?

There is always a spiritual component to our relationships, so whom we surround ourselves with matters. We need to act intentionally so God can operate providentially. This means we need to fellowship with a circle of godly people who have our best interests at heart, give us godly advice and turn to God in prayer for us. We also have a part when we choose to participate and lean into these relationships, even though often times they are uncomfortable. The results can be the shaping of our view of God, the rescuing of our faith, and the encouraging of our hope as the truth of God intersects with real life. Grace is free. Growth requires our participation.

Question: Who are the people with whom you are currently in relationship?

Question: What is their influence on your life?

So, if there is a relationship foundation or structure that we can build that helps us build greater confidence in God, we don't want to miss it. Life change happens best in relationships.

Question: When will you be willing to be that person in other people's lives who is going to carry the mat for those who find themselves flat on their backs?

The Crossing Church is dedicated to helping you find your circle of relationship so God can build your faith and knowledge of God with people who care about you. The Group Connect can help you find a small group that meets on a weekly basis to fellowship, study God's Word, pray together, and draw closer to Him. We need to engage in intentional ways to see the providential encounters happen. Quality community happens in a circle, not a row just on Sunday morning.

Question: What, specifically, is keeping you from checking in on Group Connect and finding one that speaks to your heart?

It is also our opportunity to come alongside others who need our godly wisdom and intersection in their lives.

Question: When will you be intentional about some new relationships and giving God an opportunity?

Question: How many people do you have a plan to influence directly or indirectly for Christ during the next few years?

Divine appointments are awaiting you.

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, You are available to providentially interact with us and bring relationships into our lives that will uplift our faith if only we will participate. The opportunities are all around us if we will step out and face strange or uncomfortable situations that can change into lifelong friendships, with You at the center. Give us that courage through your mercy and grace. In Jesus' Name. Amen.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Beginning on September 18th, The Crossing Church will be starting a six week study called "Transformed" which will combine Sunday morning sermons with small group studies. Watch for information and study materials which can be purchased at every service in upcoming weeks.