

## High Five: Expressing Faith in Love

Sept. 30, 2012: We Disciple in Motion: Mark 2:1-12

Intro: Jesus says, "Follow me." These were his words to Peter at the beginning of his earthly ministry and at the end of that ministry. Peter—and all the disciples—were to follow Jesus.

The words meant for Peter that he and his comrades would be in motion. Jesus was leaving the place where the boats were beached by the Sea of Galilee. He was going to the hills, to the desert, to Jerusalem, to the crowds, and to the cross.

And they were all to follow him, putting one foot in front of the other.

True disciples of Jesus have always been *in motion*.

Where will we go if we follow Jesus? Wherever he leads.

**I. The Wheels on the Bus Go Round and Round:** *Some men came, bringing to him a paralytic, carried by four of them* (Mark 2:3).

A. These four friends are in motion. They do not have a motorized vehicle or they would be bringing this friend to Jesus on the bus or in their pickup truck. But they do have a cot that will do to transport him. And they do have their legs that can get the job done even without an internal combustion engine. They get their friend on the bus and they bring him to Jesus.

1. Jesus "saw their faith" because they were in motion. Had the four of them sat and home watching their new LEDs, they would never have demonstrated their faith to Jesus. They had to get out of their easy chairs and bus their friend over to the meeting.

B. Jesus set his church in motion 2,000 years ago.

1. He did so even with this man who was healed. His instructions were, "Get up, take your mat, go home." The little word "go" appears perpetually in the instructions of Jesus to those about him.

2. He did so by challenging his very first followers to "Follow me."

3. He sent them out to the outlying villages to preach, to heal, and to cast out demons.

4. He commissioned them to go the ends of the earth.

5. He promised that this motion would not distance them from him. He said, "I am with you always, even to the ends of the earth."

B.

**II. The People on the Bus Go Up and Down:** *Now some teachers of the law were sitting their, thinking to themselves, "Why does this fellow talk like that? He's blaspheming!"* (Mark 2:6-7)

A. All kinds of people are on the bus. We have rich and poor, black and white, Jew and Gentile, male and female—humans of every description are on the bus.

1. We have impulsive and courageous people like the four guys on the roof.

2. We have intellectuals like these men in the house on the front row.

3. And we have guys like the paralytic who never say a word but need us more than anyone.

4. We are a perpetually moving assortment of strange and stranger companions on an interesting and exciting journey to become who God wants us to be and to represent him well in our world.

B. We are in this together, a church on the move. We do not go with Jesus on our own. We travel in groups and gaggles, schools and flocks. We need shepherds, servants, teachers, and pastors because we move together in this journey of the Christian life.

C. We experience the ups and downs of life, and we observe them in others.

1. People go up and down, friends. They are not generally monotone. They move up the scale and down the scale. They move in and out. They have highs and lows. That is the nature of being human. These four friends are like that. They unite for the purpose of bringing their paralyzed friend to Jesus. But they are all over the map the next day.

2. Sometimes people hit bottom. Sometimes they fall out of their seat. Sometimes they jump out of the bus. You are going to see all these things on our journey together. And what happens to the people on the bus may be very disturbing to you. It may unsettle you and shake your faith.

3. We know ourselves enough to prevent us from judging others who falter and fail.

C. We experience the changes of terrain, elevation, and pitch as we move together down the road.

\*\*\*We used to sit in the back of the bus so that, on those bumpy country roads, we could try to hit our heads on the ceiling of the bus. The bumps were fun.

D. Bumps are not as fun as they used to be. Having been through many rough spots, we long for the smooth and comfortable ride. The kids want to drive the short wheelbase sports cars. We who are older want that long wheelbase sedan that passes over the potholes and leaves us undisturbed.

E. The only thing we can do in the midst of the shake-ups and shake-downs of life is to trust our driver.

### **III. The Driver on the Bus Says Move on Back: “I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home” (Mark 2:11).**

*I was sitting in the front seat,  
Trying really hard to be the driver  
Thinking I was making real good time  
But always winding up the late arriver*

*But now I’ve been trying out the back seat  
And I find it is a very great relief  
Now I’m riding in the backseat  
And I’m leaving all the driving to the Chief.*

*I was barreling out full speed ahead  
I was running every stop sign I could see  
Thinking I’d give the Lord a shortcut  
But I found out he don’t need no help from me.*

A. I want to be the driver. I am afraid when others are driving. I want to be in control. This is my personality.

B. I am not the driver on this bus. The Holy Spirit drives this bus. “He will lead you,” Jesus said, and that is what he does.

1. Jesus is asserting his authority in this story. In fact, that is the main point: “in order that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins...” He said to the paralytic...”

2. The whole point of this healing is that Jesus has authority. He is in the driver’s seat. He is in charge. He is God’s representative, the Messiah, Lord of all. And we should learn not to question his position as Driver.

C. The driver on this bus keeps reminding us to move on back. We think we will see the way more clearly if we are in the front, crowding the driver. But we are only confused and helpless when things happen that we cannot anticipate. We are better off taking our seats behind the driver, allowing him to guide things for us.

\*\*\*My mother has lived her whole life with her nose pressed to the window. She loves to travel. Right up to a week ago, she was on a long trip to Canada with my brother and her twin sister, Delores, both 80 years old.

D. The only way to safely be in motion in this dangerous world of ours is to have the Holy Spirit as our driver at all times. We are seeking to follow him into our world.

1. Prayer is a key in our life of forward motion. We seek to know the heart of God, to discover his purposes, and to emulate his ways in all our dealings.

2. Bible reading is a key in our life of motion. We search the scriptures because we want to stay on course, stay on track, and avoid the detours that waste our energy and sometimes cause us to crash.

3. Fellowship with other believers is a key in our life of motion.

What are we likely to be doing if we follow Jesus? We will do what he himself did on this earth. We will be announcing the kingdom of God. We will be confronting evil. We will be caring for the poor and the sick.

Where would Jesus have us go in our neighborhood and our community? He sends us where he has already been and is already present. We see his footprints disappearing into the pain and sorrow. Jesus is already rescuing the desperate one by the roadway. He is binding his wounds, helping him to his feet.

He is looking over his shoulder, waiting for us. He is calling us onward, inviting us to follow.

If we obey, we are his disciples in motion.

And life has never been more rewarding or exciting.