

FOCUS

The Magazine of Enfield Evangelical Free Church

Aiming to glorify God by calling and equipping people to be fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ

Needs, Wishes and Wants

As you chat to your friends and work colleagues, they may often speak of what they “need”? Even if they don’t use the word itself, they may well use phrases like, “I must have a sit down and a cup of coffee”; “I could really do with an early night”; “What I need is a holiday”; “I could do with a drink”. Other people, in more desperate situations may simply yearn quietly for something – the person in hospital who wishes to be home, or the person having a hard time who wants to have some relief.

Our perspective on what is real need is changed when we look at people from Jesus’ perspective. In Luke 5:17-26 we read the astonishing account of when a man with a great need was brought to Jesus.

The man was paralysed and so could only get to Jesus by being carried by others. However, the house where Jesus was teaching was so packed out that they couldn’t get to Jesus himself.

Their determination to get this man to Jesus is recorded by Luke: *“They went up on the roof and lowered him on his mat through the tiles into the middle of the crowd, right in front of Jesus.”*

If we had been there, I’m sure that we would have identified this man’s paralysis as his greatest need. But Jesus identifies something else. Jesus said to this paralysed man, *“Friend, your sins are forgiven.”* Some reading this might wonder if Jesus was blind to this man’s need.

The thoughts of the religious Pharisees and the teachers of the law went in a different direction. They thought that Jesus was blaspheming (in other words,

offending God). These religious men had no problem thinking that the paralysed man was a sinner. They knew that everyone has sinned. But they didn’t think that Jesus could forgive sins – since that is the realm of God himself. Incredibly, Jesus (who is God) *knew what they were thinking*. Jesus then showed them something they could see (he healed the man of his paralysis) – to prove that he can do what they could not see (provide forgiveness of sins).

As we consider the main ‘characters’ in this account we can realise a number of things which will help us during this month of *A Passion for Life*.

The greatest need of the paralysed man was the forgiveness of his sins. He would not have realised this before meeting Jesus. But the forgiveness that Jesus provided would have given him access to eternal life. This man will therefore have been enjoying the last 2000 years with God. During all of this time he will have realised this need being met was his greatest need of all. As we consider those we know this month, will we recognise that their greatest need is for forgiveness of their sins?

As we look to Jesus in this account we see that he is God, with the authority and power to forgive sins. As we consider the greatest need of those that we know, we must see that this need can only be met by Jesus.

The religious leaders didn’t see Jesus for who he is. They also didn’t see their own need of Jesus. As we approach Easter, we may hear some ‘religious’ people who will play down the importance of Jesus. There will be others who deny the forgiveness that Jesus came to win through his death on the cross and his resurrection from the grave. But let us trust what Jesus says about people’s greatest need, rather than those who question Jesus’ words and actions.

Finally, this account tells us about the men who brought their friend to Jesus. They were not easily put off. They were determined to get the paralysed man to Jesus – the only one who could meet his need. During this month, will we ask the Lord that we would be as single-minded in bringing those we know to hear of Jesus and the forgiveness that he alone can bring.

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