

**SERMON TOPIC: Nobody puts BABY...in a box**

**SERMON OUTLINE**

**Luke 5 v 17 – 26 (MSG)**

One day as he was teaching, Pharisees and religion teachers were sitting around. They had come from nearly every village in Galilee and Judea, even as far away as Jerusalem, to be there.

The healing power of God was on him. Some men arrived carrying a paraplegic on a stretcher. They were looking for a way to get into the house and set him before Jesus. When they couldn't find a way in because of the crowd, they went up on the roof, removed some tiles, and let him down in the middle of everyone, right in front of Jesus. Impressed by their bold belief, he said, "Friend, I forgive your sins." That set the religion scholars and Pharisees buzzing.

"Who does he think he is? That's blasphemous talk! God and only God can forgive sins." Jesus knew exactly what they were thinking and said, "Why all this gossipy whispering? Which is simpler: to say 'I forgive your sins,' or to say 'Get up and start walking'? Well, just so it's clear that I'm the Son of Man and authorized to do either, or both. . . ." He now spoke directly to the paraplegic: "Get up. Take your bedroll and go home." Without a moment's hesitation, he did it—got up, took his blanket, and left for home, giving glory to God all the way. The people rubbed their eyes, incredulous—and then also gave glory to God. Awestruck, they said, "We've never seen anything like that!"

**KEY POINTS**

We are encouraged to not limit God or others by putting them in a box. The Pharisees and religious leaders tried to keep Jesus and the paraplegic within the box of their expectations. In the same way, we often confine God and other people with our limited perspective. There is often much more to the story than what we see on other people's exterior, and our God is greater and has so much more depth than the boxes we put Him in.

There are three ways to avoid "boxing in."

First, we shouldn't put people in a box. When we put a label on someone, it's easy to limit them and write them off. Instead, we should be "lifters"—people who look for ways to help those around them, regardless of what we see on the outside.

Secondly, we shouldn't box God in. He is omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent. He is completely capable of fulfilling every one of our needs! Instead of placing God in the box of our understanding, we need to stir our faith in His ability to do absolutely anything.

Lastly, we shouldn't box "this" (our experience with Jesus) in. The grace we've received, the relationship we have with God, and the life change that we have experienced shouldn't be contained within the church. Our homes, workplaces, and world are desperate for the hope of Jesus, and we can bring that hope wherever we go!

