

Visio Divina for IDPWD



A 'Dwelling in the Word' resource developed for use on or around 3 December, International Day of Persons with Disability.

The following introduction to the text is taken from Wikipedia¹:

Healing the paralytic at Capernaum is one of the [miracles of Jesus](#) in the [synoptic Gospels](#) ([Matthew 9:1–8](#), [Mark 2:1–12](#), and [Luke 5:17–26](#)).^{[1][2][3][4]} Jesus was living in [Capernaum](#) and teaching the people there, and on one occasion the people gathered in such large numbers that there was no room left inside the house where he was teaching, not even outside the door. Some men came carrying a paralyzed man but could not get inside, so they made an opening in the roof above Jesus and then lowered the man down. When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralyzed man, "Son, your sins are forgiven."

Some of the teachers of the law interpreted this as blasphemy, since God alone can forgive sins. Mark states that "Jesus knew in his spirit that this was what they were thinking in their hearts." ([2:8](#)) Jesus 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 says to the man "...get up, take your mat and go home." ([8–11](#)).

[Mark's Gospel](#) states that this event took in place in Capernaum. In [Matthew's Gospel](#), it took place in "his own town" which he had reached by crossing the [Sea of Galilee](#), while [Luke's Gospel](#) does not specify where the miracle occurred.^[5] In all three it is followed by the [calling of Matthew](#).

Accompanying the calling of Matthew is the statement "But go and learn what this means, 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice'" and "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick – for I have not come to call the righteous but sinners".

Provide an introduction to the text using the context above, or through any personal study using commentaries on the text.

Say: Let's practice dwelling in the word, with *visio divina*².

Read: Luke 5:17-26. Read it again a second time, slowly.

Use: the Grow Ministries '[Dwelling in the Word](#)' sheet to record your reflections if you like.

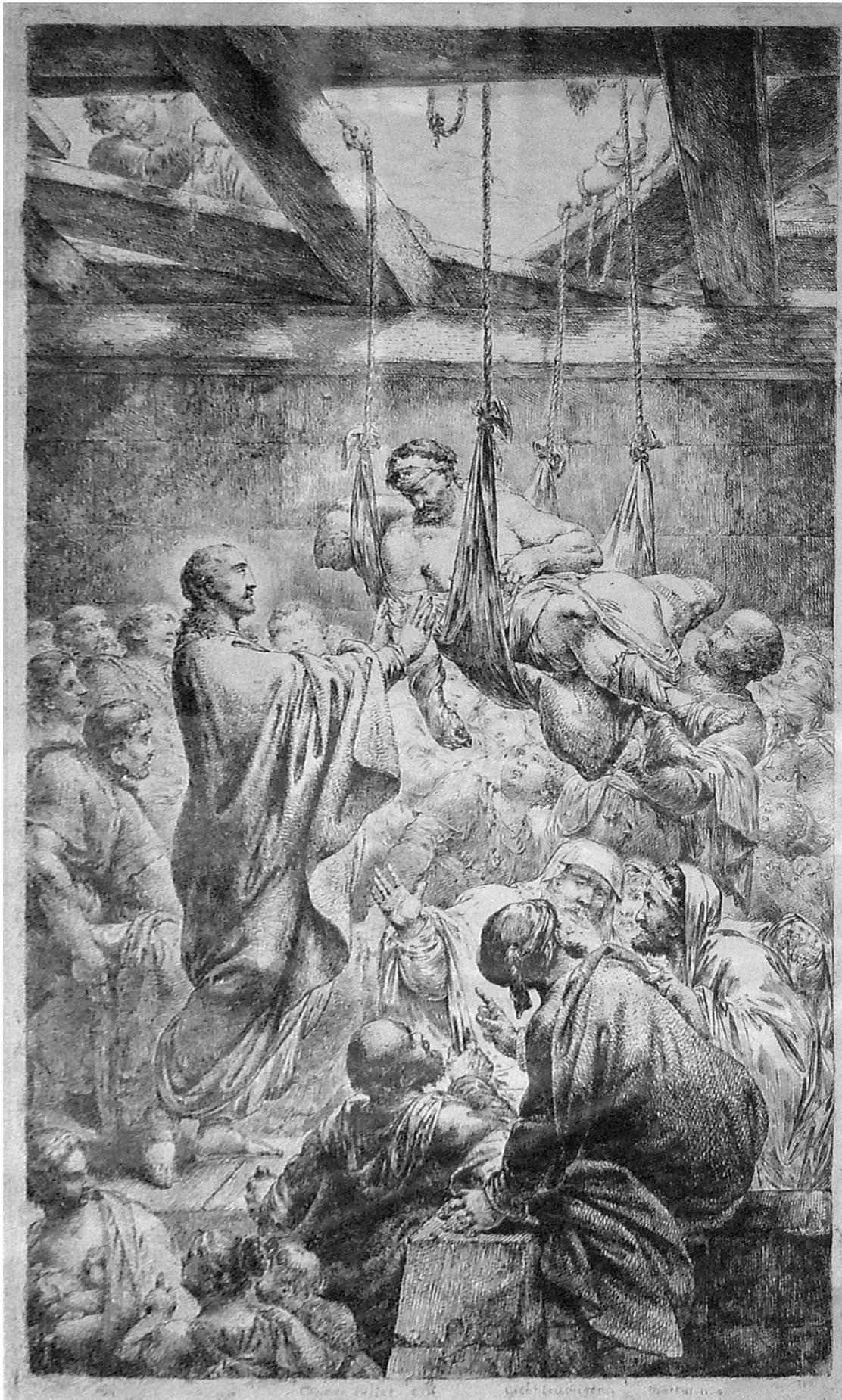


Invite attendees to **contemplate** the image provided (practicing *visio divina*). Allow 5 minutes.

¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Healing_the_paralytic_at_Capernaum

² Visit <https://www.prayerandpossibilities.com/pray-with-eyes-of-the-heart-visio-divina/> for a good description of how to practice visio divina; alternately, <https://www.lindsayboyer.com/visio-divina> has a thorough process and audio recording of visio divina instructions.

Image by Bernhard Rode - Self-photographed, Public Domain,
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=5782664>.



Reflect: as a group or in pairs.

What stood out to you from the reading and the image?

What questions do you have?



If reflecting in pairs, report back to the group what your partner said.

Notice what each partnership or individual has been noticing about the text and image.

What resonates with your spirit?

Reflect further:

Where do I see myself in the image? Is there a character or space I feel closest to?

Do I live with disability? Do I live with other people who live with disability?

Consider what we think of when we say people with disability – do we remember chronic illness, unseen conditions such as food intolerance and allergy, pain conditions such as fibromyalgia, lupus, arthritis and endometriosis, as well as physical and neurological changes such as hearing loss, vision impairment, multiple sclerosis and muscular dystrophy? Do we remember those living with mental illness or perhaps other cognitive challenges, such as memory loss with dementia?

If you are comfortable, speak about the disability you live with, or a friend or family member lives with.

Do we have a friend who we desire to meet Jesus?

To what lengths would we go to get them to meet Him? To have a moment with Jesus?

Respond to these questions internally. If you are a missional community, with the express purpose of reaching out to your neighbours and praying for them to meet Jesus, you may like to share these thoughts with the group.

What might it mean for us to pull the roof off a building (space or group) to allow those living with a disability to come close to Jesus?

What specific actions might make you, or a loved one living with disability, be able to more readily come close to Jesus in your Christian community (both physical and digital spaces)?

What might this story teach us about how God desires mercy, not sacrifice?

What **action** am I/ are we called to take as response to this time of dwelling and reflection? Share this invitation with another person or the group. Invite them to hold you accountable to the next steps you would like to take.

Close with Prayer.

If you are a missional community, you may like to pray for those individuals by name, for whom you desire an encounter with Jesus and for whom you would like to become close friends of Jesus.

If you are a congregation or ministry team, pray for the confidence to boldly invite others to come and meet Jesus. Pray for the confidence to pull the roof off any space that keeps people excluded from coming near to Jesus. Pray for energy and courage to take the next step in becoming a more inclusive community for all people.

Pray for hearts inclined toward mercy.