

“Position” Series

Echo Church | Week 50 | December 14, 2025 | Rich Saunders Jr. |
“The Unconventional Position” | Luke 5:16-26 NKJV

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16 So He Himself often withdrew into the wilderness and prayed.

17 Now it happened on a certain day, as He was teaching, that there were Pharisees and teachers of the law sitting by, who had come out of every town of Galilee, Judea, and Jerusalem. And the power of the Lord was present to heal them.

18 Then behold, men brought on a bed a man who was paralyzed, whom they sought to bring in and lay before Him.

19 And when they could not find how they might bring him in, because of the crowd, they went up on the housetop and let him down with his bed through the tiling into the midst before Jesus.

20 When He saw their faith, He said to him, “Man, your sins are forgiven you.”

21 And the scribes and the Pharisees began to reason, saying, “Who is this who speaks blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God alone?”

22 But when Jesus perceived their thoughts, He answered and said to them, “Why are you reasoning in your hearts? 23 Which is easier, to say, ‘Your sins are forgiven you,’ or to say, ‘Rise up and walk’?”

24 But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins”—He said to the man who was paralyzed, “I say to you, arise, take up your bed, and go to your house.”

25 Immediately he rose up before them, took up what he had been lying on, and departed to his own house, glorifying God.

26 And they were all amazed, and they glorified God and were filled with fear, saying, “We have seen strange things today!”

Introduction

In Luke 5:17-26, we see a powerful example of what it looks like to have faith that refuses to take “no” for an answer. A group of friends showed up with their paralyzed boy, determined to get him to Jesus. But when they got there, the crowd was so thick, the door was blocked, and the situation looked impossible. Most people would’ve turned around, but not these guys. They said, “If we can’t go through the door, we’ll go through the roof.”

They were willing to break through barriers—literally—to position their friend for a miracle. And here's the challenge for us: Do we have that kind of faith? Do we have the kind of community that will tear the roof off to get us to Jesus?

Because let's be real—the church today has become a place of politics, cliques, and theatics. But the real question isn't about how many followers you have or how much money you can raise. The question is: Can you get me to Jesus? Are you willing to do whatever it takes—even if it's messy, bold, or unconventional—to help someone encounter Him?

Point 1: Faith Breaks Barriers

In first-century Palestine, homes were typically constructed with flat roofs made of wooden beams covered with a mixture of clay, mud, and straw. These roofs were often used as additional living space, accessible by an external staircase. Removing the roof would have been a messy, labor-intensive process, likely causing a scene and disrupting the gathering below. This act of tearing through the roof was not only bold but also socially disruptive, as it interrupted the teaching of a prominent rabbi. Yet, the friends prioritized their faith and their friend's need over social norms and potential criticism.

Faith is not passive; it's active and persistent. The friends in this story didn't just hope for a miracle—they acted on their belief that Jesus could heal their friend. When they encountered the crowd blocking the door, they didn't turn back or wait for a more convenient time. Instead, they climbed onto the roof, removed the tiles, and lowered their friend into the presence of Jesus. This was a bold, unconventional act of faith that demonstrated their determination to overcome any obstacle. Faith doesn't stop at the first sign of resistance; it presses forward, trusting that God will make a way.

Barriers in our lives can take many forms—fear, doubt, pride, or even the opinions of others.

How often do we stop short of our breakthrough because the path seems too difficult or unconventional? Like the friends in this story, we need to adopt a "whatever it takes" mindset.

Whatever the barrier, faith requires action.

"Faith doesn't wait for permission; it creates a path where there isn't one."

Point 2: Surround Yourself with Roof-Breakers

In Jewish culture, physical ailments like paralysis were often seen as a result of sin or divine punishment.

This man's condition would have made him an outcast, excluded from many aspects of community life, including worship in the synagogue.

His friends' actions were not just an act of faith but also an act of radical love and inclusion. By bringing him to Jesus, they were challenging societal norms and demonstrating the kind of community that reflects God's heart.

The paralyzed man's healing wasn't just about his faith—it was about the faith of his friends. He was physically unable to get to Jesus on his own, but he had a community that refused to let him stay in his condition.

These friends didn't just carry him; they carried his burden, his hope, and his future. They were willing to inconvenience themselves, face criticism, and even risk damaging someone else's property to ensure their friend had an encounter with Jesus. This story reminds us that the people we surround ourselves with can either limit us or lift us.

Who you surround yourself with matters. Roof-breakers are the people who will pray for you when you can't pray for yourself, encourage you when you're discouraged, and push you toward Jesus when you feel stuck. They're not afraid to challenge you or inconvenience themselves for your growth.

On the flip side, roof-builders are the people who create barriers, discourage your faith, and keep you in your condition.

"Your breakthrough is often tied to the people who are willing to carry you when you can't carry yourself."

Point 3: Remove the Limitations

The Pharisees and teachers of the law present in this scene were more concerned with maintaining religious order than with the man's healing. Their focus on rules and appearances created spiritual "roofs" that limited people's access to God. Jesus' response—both in forgiving sins and healing the man—challenged their legalistic mindset and demonstrated that God's power is not confined to human expectations or traditions.

When Jesus saw the faith of the friends, He responded by forgiving the man's sins and healing his body.

Notice that Jesus didn't criticize their method or focus on the mess they made. Instead, He honored their faith and used the moment to reveal His authority to forgive sins.

This teaches us that God is not limited by our circumstances, our methods, or even our mess.

The roof wasn't a limitation for Jesus; it was an opportunity to demonstrate His power. Sometimes, the limitations we face are the ones we've placed on ourselves or on God.

Faith requires us to remove those limitations and trust that God can handle the chaos.

What "roofs" have you allowed to limit your faith? Maybe it's the fear of failure, the opinions of others, or the belief that your situation is too messy for God to handle. Removing limitations means stepping out of your comfort zone and trusting God to work in ways you can't predict.

"Faith isn't pretty, but it's powerful. Stop worrying about the mess and start focusing on the miracle."

Conclusion: Positioned for a Breakthrough

In Luke 5:17-26, we see a powerful example of what happens when faith meets determination. The paralyzed man's life was forever changed because he had friends who refused to let him stay in his condition. They didn't let the crowd, the roof, or the chaos stop them—they tore the roof off, removed the limitations, and positioned him for an encounter with Jesus.

This story challenges us to reflect on our own lives and our role in the lives of others. Are we willing to do whatever it takes, even if it's messy or unconventional, to help someone experience the power of God? And are we surrounding ourselves with people who will carry us when we can't carry ourselves? The truth is, the roof is not the limit—faith is.

So, tear the roof off, remove the barriers, and get to Jesus. Let's be a church that's not about politics, cliques, or theatrics, but about positioning people for life-changing encounters with Him.