

February 3

Faithful Friends, Naysaying Nitpickers

It happened, when Moses held up his hand, that Israel prevailed...But Moses' hands were heavy...Aaron and Hur held up his hands, the one on the one side, and the other on the other side. His hands were steady – Exodus 17:11-12

[Mark 2:1-12, Capernaum] When he entered again into Capernaum after some days, it was heard that he was in the house. Immediately many were gathered together, so that there was no more room, not even around the door; and he spoke the word to them. And there were Pharisees and teachers of the law sitting by, who had come out of every village of Galilee, Judea, and Jerusalem. The power of the Lord was with him to heal them. Four people came, carrying a paralytic to him. When they could not come near to him for the crowd, they went up to the housetop they removed the roof where he was. When they had broken it up, they let down through the tiles the mat that the paralytic was lying on. Jesus, seeing their faith, said to the paralytic, *"Son, cheer up! Your sins are forgiven you."*

But there were some of the Scribes and Pharisees sitting there, and reasoning in their

hearts, "Why does this man speak blasphemies like that? Who can forgive sins but God alone?"
Son, cheer up! Your sins are forgiven you... arise... and go to your house.

Immediately Jesus, perceiving in his spirit that they so reasoned within themselves, said to them,

"Why do you reason these things in your hearts? Which is easier, to tell the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven;' or to say, 'Arise, and take up your bed, and walk?' But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins"—he said to the paralytic—"I tell you, arise, take up your mat, and go to your house."

He arose, and immediately took up the mat, and went out in front of them all and departed to his house, glorifying God; so that they were all amazed, and glorified God, *who had given such authority to men saying, "We never saw anything like this!"* They were filled with fear, saying, "We have seen strange things today." [Luke 5:17-26, Matthew 9:2-8]

1. Whose faith did Jesus see? Have you had faith for your friends? What was the result?
2. How might the Scribes have felt when the man walked? Have you "naysayed"? How?
3. Jesus, please forgive my sins today and always, and please help me with the problems...

