

THROUGH THE ROOF

Crowds continued to surround Jesus everywhere he went. One time, when people found out which house Jesus was staying in, they packed into every room. There wasn't space for one more person—even outside of the door!

As Jesus was teaching about God's kingdom, four men brought their paralyzed friend on a mat to see Jesus, believing he would heal him. But the only way they could get their friend inside the house was to climb on the roof, dig a hole through the clay tiles, and lower him down!

When Jesus saw the hole in the roof, he was impressed with the effort and faith of these men. Jesus looked at the paralyzed man lying in front of him and said, *"Everything you've done wrong is now forgiven."*

Some religious leaders were watching and listening to Jesus. They were offended by what Jesus said, and asked each other, *"Who does this man think he is? Only God can forgive people's sins!"*

But Jesus knew what they were thinking, and asked them, *"Why are you so offended? Would you rather I had just healed him and not offered forgiveness? I'll prove to you that I have power beyond healing—power to forgive every kind of evil."*

Then Jesus told the paralyzed man, *"Stand up! Pick up your mat and walk home. You are healed!"*

The man jumped up. He was no longer paralyzed! He pushed his way through the crowded house and out the door, and then he ran home. People were filled with wonder and amazement. They thanked God, saying, *"We've never seen anything like this before!"*

CALMING A STORM

Another time, after a long day of teaching, Jesus asked his disciples to take him in a boat across the lake to get away from the crowds for a while. As they set off, Jesus was exhausted, so he went to the back of the boat, put his head on a cushion, and fell asleep.

All of a sudden, a violent storm blew in with hard rain and strong winds. Waves crashed inside of the boat. Even though some the disciples were experienced fishermen, they couldn't keep the boat from filling with water.

The disciples ran to the back of the boat in a panic, waking up Jesus as they shouted, *"Don't you care that we're going to drown?"*

Jesus awoke, stood up, turned toward the water, and said, *"Quiet! Be still."*

Instantly the wind stopped blowing and the lake became calm.

Then Jesus asked his disciples, *"Why were you so afraid? Don't you believe in me yet?"*

The disciples were filled with wonder. They asked each other, *"Who is this man? Even the wind and the waves listen to him!"*

FEEDING THE MULTITUDES

During his travels, Jesus sent his disciples out in pairs to nearby villages, giving them power to heal and teach others about God's kingdom.

When they returned, the disciples told Jesus about all of the great things that God had done through them. Then Jesus said, *"Let's go to a quiet place where we can rest for a while."*

People had surrounded them all day, so much so that they hadn't had time to eat. So Jesus and his disciples set off by boat to a secluded field where they could rest. But the crowds spotted them and ran along the shore ahead of them.

When Jesus stepped out of the boat, a huge crowd had already gathered in the field. Jesus felt compassion for them and began teaching them about God's ways.

It was getting late in the day, so Jesus' disciples pleaded with him, *"We're in a remote place here,"* they said. *"Send the crowds away to nearby farms so they can get something to eat."*

But Jesus said, *"You feed them."*

"With what?" the disciples asked. *"We'd have to work for months to buy enough food for this crowd. We only have five loaves of bread and two fish!"*

Then Jesus told the disciples to divide the crowd into groups of fifty or a hundred and have them sit down in the grass.

Jesus took the five loaves and the two fish, looked up into the sky, and asked God to bless the food. Then Jesus broke the bread into pieces and passed it to the disciples to give to the crowd. Jesus also divided the fish for everyone to share.

Jesus continued to give food to the disciples until, finally, everyone in the crowd had eaten as much as they wanted. And there were twelve baskets of leftover bread and fish!

Thousands were fed that day—some said 5,000 families!

Wherever Jesus went—to villages, cities, and across the countryside— people pressed in to be close to him. They carried the sick and the crippled and begged Jesus to touch them. And Jesus felt great compassion for the people and healed them.

One time, Jesus explained where his power to perform these miracles came from. Jesus said, *"I don't do any of this on my own. God gives me the power to heal, raise the dead, and give life. Those who believe in me will find new life with God that's never-ending."*