

## *Faith for Your Family*

On the edge of eternity, as we witness the fulfillment of events that signify the soon coming of Christ for His church, one of the most difficult issues many Christians face is having backslidden or non-believing children. This is such a struggle for some people that they try to ignore the discussions on 'last days' or hope the Lord tarries a good while longer. Certainly, the thought of eternity without the ones they love makes going to heaven something to let come 'in its time' rather than something to eagerly anticipate.

How can we live in that state of hopeful anticipation of the rapture if such is the case? Does the Lord want us to be cold-hearted toward our loved ones and warm-hearted toward Him? Or is this hoopla about the last days and His soon return overplayed?

When I'm asked about this, I frequently reflect upon a story in the Gospel of Mark that provides a huge degree of comfort. In Mark chapter two, we find Jesus in Peter's house where a large crowd had gathered around. Now, not too far away was a group of five men. One of them was paralyzed and had to be carried on a litter by the other four.

They'd heard that Jesus was in town and as they approached the house, it was obvious that they would never get close to Him; the crowd was just too heavy. But one of them got an idea – it probably seemed pretty crazy, yet they loved their crippled companion too much not to try it. Carefully, they wound their way around the house and climbed the stairs to the roof. Now the roof was flat and probably made

of timbers overlaid with branches and dirt about one to two feet thick.

Incredibly, they started tearing up the roof of the house and you can just imagine all the dirt and roofing material falling on the people inside below. Jesus may have smiled as these four guys then lowered their friend down by ropes into the midst of the crowd gathered in the house. What moxie these guys had – just wonderful faith expressed in this loving act.

Now, the Bible says, "When Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytic, "Son, your sins are forgiven you." " and soon afterward, "He said to the paralytic, "I say to you, arise, take up your bed, and go to your house." Immediately he arose, took up the bed, and went out in the presence of them all, ..."

The point is, that when He saw THEIR faith – not just the faith of the crippled man, but the faith of his devoted friends – He responded in forgiving this man's sins and healing his body. This fellow had not asked for forgiveness but certainly he was elated at the pronouncement. And Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever. (Hebrews 13:8)

So consider this, have faith for your kids, for your loved ones -- faith expressed in love. And TRUST the Lord. He is trust worthy! He'll not force anyone into His kingdom, but **He knows how to turn a heart and draw one near to Him.** (Proverbs 21:1, John 6:44) **He will not disappoint your hope** (Romans 5:5). You can rest in this – God loves your loved ones more than you and will honor your faith in Him for them. See also Mark 5:22-42 and Mark 9:17-27.