

BRINGING DOWN THE HOUSE

by STEVEN JAMES

GENRE: Comedy

SYNOPSIS: Seeking despite the obstacles brings us onto unexpected paths and brings results beyond our expectations.

DIRECTOR'S TIP: With a script like this, you almost have to treat it as four separate but intertwining monologues. The director won't have to focus on interactions between characters, but rather on the individual characters and the person they're speaking to (in this case the audience), as you do with any monologue. Your two main areas of concentration will need to be 1) creating interesting stage pictures with the placement of the actors and the furniture, and 2) working with the actors to make their speeches active rather than reflective (see definition).

TIME: Over 5 minutes

CAST BREAKDOWN: 4

TOPIC: Forgiveness, Judging Others

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE: Mark 2:1-12, Matthew 9:1-8

CHURCH YEAR SEASON: Any

CHARACTERS:

FRIEND- (male) a guy unashamed to bring his FRIEND to Jesus

OWNER- (female) the lady who opens her house up to Jesus

HEALED MAN- (male) a man who gets more than he hoped for

PHARISEE- (male) a judgmental man who worries about what others will think

PROPS: a stepladder, a big fat Bible, grilling utensils and apron, a rolled up mat, couch

COSTUMES: Contemporary. Owner is wearing an apron to grill outside, Pharisee is wearing an expensive suit, Healed Man and Friend are wearing jeans and a comfortable shirt.

SOUND: Wireless microphones

LIGHTING: General stage

SETTING: Bare Stage

Drama Ministry

service@DramaMinistry.com
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FRIEND: We'd been friends for a long time. Even though he was, you know...disabled. Couldn't walk or even move his legs. But we stuck by him. Helped take care of him. We gave him money so he wouldn't have to beg. And we told him all about what was happening in town. Kept him informed. He'd just lay there on his mat and listen. Taking it all in.

HEALED MAN: Not many people at the synagogue would hang out with me. I guess maybe I made 'em uncomfortable. Because I wasn't like them. But there were a few friends who cared. They would have done anything for me. In fact, one time, they did.

OWNER: (Dressed for a cookout; excited and a little over the top) Of course we'd heard about Jesus! He was like a hometown hero! Out there on the road, preaching and healing and helping the poor. I know, I know, he wasn't born here in Capernaum—just moved here after he started hitting the circuit—but still, when he came back we always threw a big welcome party. This time around, my husband and I offered to hold it at our place. And we couldn't wait to tell the neighbors!

PHARISEE: (Carrying a big Bible) News spreads fast around here. We knew all about Jesus. So we were there that day. He was preaching and then people started coming forward to be healed. I kept thinking, "What are the other people at the synagogue gonna say?"

FRIEND: (Walking toward the stepladder) We'd heard all about Jesus. And we believed. After all, that's why we brought our friend to him. We wouldn't have carried him through town and circled that house a half a dozen times looking for a way in unless we had. We knew Jesus could heal him. That much, we knew.

HEALED MAN: (Standing up and carrying his mat) I wasn't quite sure what to think. When they first brought up the idea I got my hopes up. Maybe Jesus was the answer. Maybe he could heal me. But when we got there, the crowd was so big that there was no way we were gonna get in there. Four guys carrying a man around on a mat could never squeeze through a crowd like that.

OWNER: My house! The teacher was standing in my living room! Of course, that was a little bit unusual. Most of the time when he came to town he'd teach in the temple or out in the streets or up in the hills. Especially when a big crowd came. But that day, he just stayed inside, even when the crowd started spilling out the door. Out my door!

PHARISEE: It was outta control. People everywhere. Sick people. Blind people. Prostitutes. Cripples. This Jesus character always brought out the lowlifes. Huh. He didn't do anything by the book—rules and order just didn't apply to him. (Sarcastically) It was all about people. He didn't let anything get in the way of reaching out to the people.