

Mark 5:21-34
The Touch of Faith

²¹ And when Jesus had crossed again in the boat to the other side, a great crowd gathered about him, and he was beside the sea. ²² Then came one of the rulers of the synagogue, Jairus by name, and seeing him, he fell at his feet ²³ and implored him earnestly, saying, "My little daughter is at the point of death. Come and lay your hands on her, so that she may be made well and live." ²⁴ And he went with him.

And a great crowd followed him and thronged about him. ²⁵ And there was a woman who had had a discharge of blood for twelve years, ²⁶ and who had suffered much under many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was no better but rather grew worse. ²⁷ She had heard the reports about Jesus and came up behind him in the crowd and touched his garment. ²⁸ For she said, "If I touch even his garments, I will be made well." ²⁹ And immediately the flow of blood dried up, and she felt in her body that she was healed of her disease. ³⁰ And Jesus, perceiving in himself that power had gone out from him, immediately turned about in the crowd and said, "Who touched my garments?" ³¹ And his disciples said to him, "You see the crowd pressing around you, and yet you say, 'Who touched me?'" ³² And he looked around to see who had done it. ³³ But the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came in fear and trembling and fell down before him and told him the whole truth. ³⁴ And he said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace, and be healed of your disease."

May God add his blessing to the reading and preaching of his Holy Word.

Let us ask God's blessing on the preached word today:

"Gracious heavenly Father, we come to you today thanking you for our Lord Jesus Christ, for all his mighty miracles of healing and deliverance, all his tender compassion and gracious goodness. Teach us more about him today as we learn of him in your Word. Show us the Lord Jesus, show us his glory, we pray, in his name. Amen."

She was weak, she was tired, she was very ill, she was poverty-stricken, she was lonely. But she was determined, and she had a spark of hope within her. She had heard of Jesus of Nazareth; she had heard how he had healed many sick people. She had to get to him. She had to touch him. If it was the last thing she did, she had to get to Jesus. Now she had found him. "Now if I can just get close to him," she thought. "Will they let me through? Will they push me away? I've got to reach him, if it's the last thing I do..." These were likely some of her thoughts.

Jesus did not see her. There were people of all ages and all backgrounds all around him, pressing toward him, trying to get close to him also. He was looking in the opposite direction, but all of a sudden, he knew someone had touched him. Many people were

touching him, he could hardly keep his balance. But someone touched the fringe, the edge of his garment, and it was not like the other touches and pushes he was getting.

He felt power leave his body and flow into someone. Jesus knew someone had touched him with faith. He knew someone in the crowd had touched him with living faith, with strong faith, with desperate faith, with believing faith. So he wheeled around, “Who touched me?” he said.

This is the historical event we will be thinking about today. Oh, it was a glorious day for this woman. It was a day that ended her suffering. It was a day of release for her – release from the 12 yearlong captivity of her body by a debilitating illness.

She had had a serious issue of blood for 12 years. It was not just her monthly cycle, but it was a continuous flow that would not stop. To lose blood is to lose the vitality of life that keeps one alive. And so she was continually weak and drained.

And to make matters worse, according to the Law of Moses, she was considered unclean because of the continual flow of blood. She had no doubt read so many times in...

Lev. 15:25-27 ²⁵ “If (A) a woman has a discharge of blood for many days, not at the time of her menstrual impurity, or if she has a discharge beyond the time of her impurity, all the days of the discharge she shall continue in uncleanness. As in the days of her impurity, she shall be unclean.

²⁶ Every bed on which she lies, all the days of her discharge, shall be to her as the bed of her impurity. And everything on which she sits shall be unclean, as in the uncleanness of her menstrual impurity. ²⁷ And whoever touches these things shall be unclean, and shall wash his clothes and bathe himself in water and be unclean until the evening.

So people who knew her, who knew of her illness, - her husband, her children, her neighbors, her friends – they all avoided her – they stayed away from her. They didn’t want to touch her or have her touch them. And so her life was one of social isolation. It was almost as bad as having leprosy.

How shall we describe this poor woman? I want to use the word “depleted” to describe her.

What we see here is...

I. A Depleted Woman

By **depleted**, of course, I mean something that is totally run out, is empty. For example, if this hot dry weather continues throughout the summer, we’re going to see all the lakes and ponds in this area depleted of their water. Their water will evaporate and the level drop and fish may begin to die and cities may have trouble getting enough water.

The reservoirs will be depleted of water because of the hot weather and lack of rain.

This woman was depleted, she was lacking, she was poverty-stricken in several areas of her life.

- A. She was depleted of health – her health was gone. She had been fighting this battle for 12 years. She was “on her last leg,” we say. How much longer she could survive by this continual loss of blood was a relevant question.
- B. She was depleted of medical help. The text says in verse 26: ...***who had suffered much under many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was no better but rather grew worse.***²

She had gone to many doctors. They had tried every cure they could think of to help her, but nothing worked. It was always the same. There was hope that this new treatment would work. But none of them did. The doctors were baffled. They had never seen such a hard case. So medical help was depleted.

“The description of the medical profession was not intended to denigrate but to show how the power of Jesus transcends human limitation.” James Brooks, p. 96

- C. She was depleted of money.

The text says she “spent all she had.” All her savings were gone. It’s likely she had been selling things in her home just to pay one more physician, just try one more time. But now to add to all her troubles, her funds were exhausted, totally depleted, and she was poverty stricken. How could she even buy food to try and keep up what little strength she had?

- D. She was depleted of social contacts as has already been mentioned. Nobody would touch her. Nobody would shake her hand or kiss her or hug her. She was like those little infants that are never held by their parents – she was starved for human contact.

She was a totally depleted woman. But she had one thing going for her. Let us read again verses 27-28: ²⁷ ***She had heard the reports about Jesus and came up behind him in the crowd and touched his garment.*** ²⁸ ***For she said, “If I touch even his garments, I will be made well.”***

You see, she was not only a depleted woman, but she was

II. A believing woman v. 27-28

She had heard about this prophet named Jesus from northern Galilee. She had heard of his healing power. She had heard of how people suffering from all kinds of illnesses and afflictions and deformities were cured, usually cured instantaneously. She had heard of

his power to cast out demons and restore people to their right minds, at peace and free from the torment of evil spirits.

She was most likely a woman of faith, woman who knew and believed the OT scriptures. She had read about Yahweh's healing power in Psalm 103:2-3

^{B)}Bless the Lord, O my soul,
and ^{C)}forget not all his benefits,
³who ^{D)}forgives all your iniquity,
who ^{E)}heals all your diseases.

She had hope, because the scripture gave her hope.

And she had hope because the scripture told of one to come who would die for sins and bring healing to souls and bodies.

Isa. 53:6

*^{I)}**But he was pierced for our transgressions;
he was crushed for our iniquities;
upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace,
^{J)}and with his wounds we are healed.***

And she read of this promised one who would come and be anointed with the Holy Spirit of God in Isa. 61:1

*^{A)}**The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me,
because the Lord has ^{B)}anointed me
to bring good news to the poor;^[a]
he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted,
to proclaim liberty to the captives,
and ^{C)}the opening of the prison to those who are bound;^[b]***

Maybe, she thought, this Jesus of Nazareth was the promised Anointed One, the Messiah. Some said he was, some said he wasn't. But to her, it sounded like he was the Messiah.

So she went to find him. We don't know how far or how long she had traveled to find him. But she heard he was in a certain area and she went there. She saw a crowd up ahead and people were milling around, hundreds of people. And people were coming from every direction. Jesus' disciples were surrounding him and trying to protect him from the pushing, shoving crowds. And she heard his voice speaking. And hope rose up in her mind and heart. "How will I ever get through the crowd?" she asked herself.

v. 29 – Greek, "For she kept saying..."

She was not only a depleted woman, but she was a believing woman. She believed the reports of Jesus' healing power were true. She did not doubt. She had heard of people being healed. "If I can only get to him, if I can just touch the hem of his garment, I know he will heal me," she was thinking.

It was her hope, her belief that gave her the strength to keep pushing forward.

She was depleted, but she was believing. And she came up close to him. But she intentionally came behind him. She didn't want him to see her. She tried to be as inconspicuous as possible. She was considered "unclean" so she just wanted to touch the edge of his robe. "That will be enough. If I can just touch the edge of his robe, he will heal me," she thought.

Lenski – this was the "Shimla, a large, square cloth that was used as an outer robe and had tassels at the four corners according to the requirement in Deut. 22:12...two of the corners of the Shimla were brown back over the shoulder so that two of the tassels hung down behind. One of these, Mathew tells us, the woman touched, p. 221

III. A Mighty Healer – v. 29-32

And so she did. With the last ounce of strength she had, she reached out and touched the fringe of his garment or the tassels.

29 (E) And immediately the flow of blood dried up, and she felt in her body that she was healed of her (G) disease. 30 And Jesus, perceiving in himself that (H) power had gone out from him, immediately turned about in the crowd and said, "Who touched my garments?" 31 And his disciples said to him, "You see the crowd pressing around you, and yet you say, 'Who touched me?'" 32 And he looked around to see who had done it.

Kent Hughes, "The same power that he used to make the sea instantly lie flat and to restore the raving demoniac healed this woman of her long-standing illness." P. 126

So it happened. What all the doctors could not do, Jesus did immediately. As soon as she touched his garment, she felt the flow of blood stop and dry up. She felt healing surge through her body. She knew she was healed.

Jesus also knew it. Though many were pressing against him he knew someone had touched him with believing faith and healing power had gone out of his body.

Augustine: "flesh presses, faith touches." [quoted in Hughes, p. 126

So he turned around and said to the crowd, Who touched my garments? His disciples said, "What do you mean, Jesus? There are scores of people crowding around you and touching you" They were implying that he was asking a ridiculous question.

Yet Jesus kept looking. His eyes scanned the crowd behind him. So we see:

A depleted woman
 But a believing woman.
 A mighty healer

And now:

IV. A cured woman v. 33-34

³³ But the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came in fear and trembling and fell down before him and told him the whole truth. ³⁴ And he said to her, “Daughter, ^(U)your faith has made you well; ^(U)go in peace, and be healed of your ^(K)disease.”

Why was she so afraid and trembling? Because she was a woman, because she had been so unclean, because she had been so bold as to push her way through the crowd, because all had happened so fast and powerfully that she didn’t know how to respond, because she didn’t want to have to be exposed and her situation made known to the crowd.

He calls her “daughter” not because he was so much older than her, but because as Creator God he was the direct cause of her existence and life.

Re: “your faith” – cf. Eph. 2:8: ⁸ For ^(A)by grace you have been saved ^(B)through faith. And this is ^(C)not your own doing; ^(D)it is the gift of God.

What does Jesus mean? It is her faith, faith in what? – faith in Jesus. Faith is only as good as its object. It was her faith in Jesus that healed her. It was not his garment, but he himself, he had granted her faith to believe he could heal her affliction.

“go in peace” – she had been in continual distress. She was considered unclean by everyone, even her own children family and neighbors – now she was at peace – all her relationship that had been disrupted for 12 years were not being restored.

“Peace” “...is a status of wholeness and well-being because of a right relationship with God.” Brooks, p. 97

This is Shalom – peace of mind and body.

John Gill:

...he... turned himself towards the woman behind him, though the press was so large about him, and asked who touched his clothes; not for his own sake, who knew very well who had done it; but that the cure might be known to others:

not for the sake of ostentation and popular applause, but for the manifestation of his glory, and for the glory of God,

and for the strengthening the faith of Jairus, who was with him, and with whom he was going to raise his daughter to life;

and also that he might have an opportunity of showing forth, and commending this poor woman's faith, and of confirming the cure wrought, and of dismissing her with the utmost pleasure and joy.

Applications:

Main points:

- ***A Depleted Woman 25-26***
- A Believing Woman 27-28***
- A Mighty Healer 29-32***
- A Cured Woman 33-34***

Main point: whatever your great need is, come to Jesus, believe he will meet that need. Caveat: this is not “prosperity teaching” but NT affirmation that Christ still heals those who reach out in believing faith.

A Lesson in Faith

- we** must believe the reports (i.e., in the NT)
- we must have faith. Her faith was very strong – she was absolutely convinced that if she could just touch his garment, she’d be healed.
- we must take action (pray, call for elders, etc)
- we must fight through the obstacles (the crowd)
- we must grab the Master’s garment – reach out in faith

NT indicates healing for entire Messianic Age
God heals, not always (see Paul), but the promise gives us hope and spurs us to pray.

When you are depleted, gird up believing faith, go to him, receive his peace and provision as he may graciously provide.

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