

Does Jesus Care About You? Mark 5:21-34

Franklin Church of Christ
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PM Worship

Introduction:

We don't know how it started. The woman probably did not remember. She simply realized her menstrual cycle was not working cyclically. Her discharge had continued beyond the usual time. At first, she probably chalked it up to major stress. But it continued for one month, then two and then three... As a faithful Jewess, she no doubt prayed about it. However, she could no longer visit the temple and seek the aid of the Old Covenant priest/mediators. She was unclean (**Leviticus 15:25ff**). Everything she touched became unclean. Her mere contact with another person would make them "guilty" before the Lord (**Leviticus 5:3**). She was not allowed to enter the sanctuary of the Lord (cf. **Leviticus 12:4**).

Today, her condition is known as menorrhagia. It could have been caused by anything from stress, improper nutrition, hormonal imbalance, vitamin K deficiency to polyps, fibroid tumors, cysts or cancer. Her condition produces severe abdominal pain and leads to iron deficiency anemia, which can cause discoloration, fatigue, physical weakness, shortness of breath, lightheadedness, rapid heart rate, ringing ears and even further heart problems. Further, it can rob a woman of what she views as her distinctive role, making her infertile.

Aside from the physical trauma, there was the emotional trauma. She would have been cut off from everyone who meant anything to her, fearing they might become unclean. It was because of people like her that the Pharisees had developed their intricate rituals of washing as if to wash off the very filth of her existence. How do you think knowledge of that made her feel for 12 years? Today, menorrhagia is treated with anything from dietary improvement, hormone treatments, vitamin supplements to surgical procedures such as hysterectomies. However, in first century Palestine, the doctors apparently had no idea what to do. For 12 years, this woman, while surely praying to God for help, went to doctors. She suffered much at their hands. They took her money, but provided no cure.

How much hope do you think she had after 12 years of disconnection from the people she loved and the religion to which she was devoted? How do you think she felt after 12 years of bleeding, pain, weakness and fatigue? What outlook did she have after spending all her money and her time hunting down the medical specialists of her day only to find out once again that they were useless? But she had heard about Jesus. His works made Him so famous He could hardly show His face in the city for the crowds it would cause. The woman heard Jesus was back in Capernaum and ventured out into the crowds to see Him. If the people had known her condition, how would they have reacted, knowing they were being made unclean by this woman? She was convinced if she simply touched this powerful Jesus, she could be healed. Yet, she was equally sure if she told Him what she wanted, He would never let her touch Him in her uncleanness. In fact, wasn't He talking to one of the important synagogue officials? Certainly, she could not compare or compete with him for Jesus' time. Perhaps if she quietly brushed past Jesus touching His garments seemingly in the bustle of the crowd she could be healed and no one would ever know.

I can envision it now. With her head covered, she cautiously stepped through the crowd. Looking at the ground to avoid eye-contact, she tried to make her way through the knot of people without touching anyone, hoping no one would recognize her. She was nearly there. She had to move quickly because Jesus was heading to the synagogue official's house. She made it. She was behind Him. He would never notice her. No one would know. She touched the hem of His garment. Immediately, the flow of blood was stopped. She felt the change in her body, the strength returning, the headaches leaving, her breath steadying, her heart rate stabilizing, the pain ending. She had done it. She was healed and no one would be made guilty because of her presence because they would never know.

However, as she tried to blend back into the crowd without drawing attention to herself, even in her joy, the great Physician stopped, turned and said, "Who touched Me?" She should have known. How could One so holy and powerful be touched by one so unclean and not know it. The disciples were amazed at what seemed like a silly question. "Master, there are hundreds of people on this street. Why are you asking, 'who touched me?' How can we know?" But Jesus with His divine knowledge knew exactly who it was and looked at the woman. With fear and trembling she confessed what she had done. What would He do to her? What would the synagogue official do? How could she presume to touch Him? What would He say? I don't know exactly how Jesus interacted with the woman at this point, but I picture Him kneeling down and lifting her face with His hand under her chin as He looked her in the eye

with tenderness, compassion and love and said, “Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace and be healed of your affliction.”

What an amazing story. Like so many Bible stories, I am afraid we have become so accustomed to it that its truly powerful nature has been lost. We simply see the miracle of Jesus and wonder why He doesn't perform such a “miracle” for us. We need to remember these stories are not really about the physical healing. They are recorded to introduce us to Jesus and learn how to receive the blessings He offers. This story is here to help us answer the question, “Does Jesus care?” Does He care that we are sick? Does He care when we are struggling financially? Does He care when we are struggling spiritually? Does He have time to care for us when the world's masses are vying for His attention? Does He care about us when there are so many more important people wanting His help? Does He care about us even though we are so unclean? If so, why doesn't He do something about our struggles like He did for this woman? If He cares, what must we do to receive His blessing? Consider seven brief lessons we can see in this story to help us answer one of our main questions—“Does Jesus Care?”

Discussion:

- I. *The worldly physicians will not help you.* We have no idea when the woman first started seeking the help of doctors. They gave her all kinds of advice. They put her through grueling experiences, causing her to endure and suffer much. They sucked her dry, but they did not help. We need to learn from this woman's experience. The worldly “physicians” cannot help us. Please, understand I am not speaking about issues of physical sickness. Rather, this story is a parallel for us not regarding physical healing, but spiritual, mental and emotional healing. The guys in the locker room and the girls around the water fountain will not benefit us. The advice of popular culture and the worldly wise, will not provide the blessing we crave. “Chicken Soup for the Soul” may make us feel warm inside, but it will provide no lasting satisfaction. Drugs, alcohol, pleasure, worldly wisdom, etc. will all fall short of making us find wholeness, healing and blessing. There is only one we can truly call the “Great Physician.” **Proverbs 14:12** explains the ways seeming right to men lead to death. Jesus, however, has the words of eternal life (**John 6:68**). We must put our faith in Him.
- II. *The crowds will not distract Jesus from you.* We watch the news and learn about floods, hurricanes, tsunamis, wars, terrorist attacks and issues of worldwide importance. We know there are thousands and thousands of Christians worldwide all letting their cares be known to God. As we wallow in our struggles day after day, week after week, month after month and even year after year, sometimes we stop praying either consciously or subconsciously determining that God must not have time for us. After all, we are only one person in the midst of millions. Our struggles must be trivial in His sight compared to sustaining the world and the millions in it. Yet, this one woman, blending into the crowd stood out to Jesus. The crowd did not distract Jesus from this woman and the masses do not distract Jesus from you. **I Peter 5:7** says we may cast our anxieties on God, because God “cares for you.” God does not just generically care for the general “mass of you,” He cares very specifically for you. The crowds have not distracted God from you. We must put our faith in Him.
- III. *The officials do not supersede you.* Far too often we come to the assembly and look at everyone dressed up in their Sunday best, wearing their smiles and think these are the important servants of God. They do not struggle like we do. In fact, we are afraid they might see us for what we really are. Further, we are convinced if Jesus is going to listen to anyone, it will be them. They are the ones He is interested in blessing. We hope we can blend in to the woodwork. **Romans 2:11** reveals there is no partiality with God. There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free man, male nor female; we are all one in Christ Jesus (**Galatians 3:28**). He cares for us; the officials do not supersede us in that. We must put our faith in Him.
- IV. *Your uncleanness will not stop Jesus from healing you.* I recognize the woman's uncleanness was not of a sinful nature but of a ceremonial nature. Such ceremonial uncleanness, however, was used under the Old Law to demonstrate how impossible it is to approach God on our own merits. In similar fashion, our sins have separated us from God (**Isaiah 59:1-2**). God sent Jesus into the world to bridge that gap. Yet, too often we forget that. When we have been struggling, especially with temptation and sin, we begin to believe Jesus doesn't want us. He knows we are unclean, certainly His

people in the assembly are starting to pick up on that. We know they don't want to touch us lest our uncleanness rub off on them. We begin to move through the crowd trying not to touch them. We don't spend time with Christians outside of the assembly. We arrive late and leave quickly. Eventually, we begin to avoid it all together. Do you remember how Jesus responded when the Pharisees questioned Him about spending time with the unclean sinners and tax collectors in **Mark 2:15-17**. "It is not those who are healthy who need a physician, but those who are sick; I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners." Jesus did not come into the world to rub elbows with the righteous, but to touch the unclean sinners and bring them to righteousness. What you have done does not change Jesus' mind about you. He died so you could be made whole? He wants to touch your life. We must put our faith in Him.

- V. *Jesus wants you to be healed, whole and heading for heaven.* From our perspective, we wonder why the woman came to Jesus with fear and trembling after she had been healed. But keep in mind she had been trained that she was not supposed to be there by 12 years of being shunned. Here was a Man that was more holy and powerful than the Pharisees, Sadducees, priests and rulers. If those men looked down upon her, ritually washing if she even so much as looked at them, how much more would this powerful One despise her and bring down wrath upon her for what she had done. Yet that is not Jesus. Jesus is the tender and compassionate Shepherd, who loves and cares for His sheep. He wanted this woman to be whole and healed. He wanted her to go in peace and no longer suffer from her affliction. Jesus wants the same for us spiritually, mentally and emotionally. **II Peter 3:9** explains that the Lord is waiting patiently to bring in judgment because He wants us all to repent and head for heaven. He wants us to be healed and whole. We must put our faith in Him.
- VI. *Jesus has His reasons for blessing us on His timetable.* I have no idea what it must have been like for this woman to endure 12 years of this weakening condition. I can imagine how many times she cried to God wondering why He wouldn't do something about her condition. Jesus had been on the scene between one and two years. She had suffered for 12. Why did God wait so long to provide this blessing for her? I can't say for certain. Perhaps it was because this means of blessing her most glorified God by demonstrating the power of Jesus. Whatever the case, we must remember God's wisdom is far above our own (**Isaiah 55:8-9**). Therefore, we must wait on the Lord with patience and faith. He will give us the blessings we need on His timetable (**Psalms 27:11-14**). We must put our faith in Him.
- VII. *Jesus expects us to act on our faith.* This is perhaps the lesson most overlooked by modern religion. God knew this woman. Just as Jesus was aware of Nathanael while he was under the fig tree in **John 1:47-48**, Jesus saw this woman in her home, saw her walk to the crowd, saw her walk through the crowd. Yet, He did not wait to heal her until the moment He knew this woman had faith. He waited until she acted on her faith and reached out to Him. As **James 2:14-26** demonstrates, faith alone accomplishes nothing, it must be accompanied with action resting on that faith. That is true of the initial moment of salvation, being baptized based on our faith in the working of God (**Colossians 2:12**). However, it is also true regarding every blessing of God. We must act upon our faith to receive the blessings God promises. Therefore, we must keep our faith in Him.

Conclusion:

If you have ever wondered whether Jesus really cares about you, look to this woman. Do not just look at her moment of healing, but remember her 12 years of endurance capped off with faith in God. Believe me, the worldly physicians to whom you are tempted to turn do not care about you, but Jesus does. The crowds do not distract Jesus from you, the officials do not supersede you and your uncleanness does not deter Him. He wants you to be healed, whole and heading for heaven. If you haven't received the blessing you were looking for yet, God has His reasons. You must simply keep your faith in Him and act on that faith. He does care for you and at the proper time will exalt you (**I Peter 5:6**). May we ever keep our faith in Him, no matter what we face or endure.