



Thoughts for the Week

Act in Faith

Mark 5:21-43

June 21, 2015

At once Jesus realized that power had gone out from him. He turned around in the crowd and asked, "Who touched my clothes?"

"You see the people crowding against you," his disciples answered, "and yet you can ask, 'Who touched me?'"

But Jesus kept looking around to see who had done it. Then the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came and fell at his feet and, trembling with fear, told him the whole truth.

He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your suffering."

Thought for the Week

The Woman Who Touched Jesus

"If I just touch his clothes, I will be healed". That's what she told herself, this nameless, bleeding woman who'd traveled 30 miles, driven by nothing but faith.

It was a daring plan. According to Mosaic Law, women who were ceremonially unclean weren't allowed to touch anyone, let alone the Son of God. But desperate women do desperate things. For 12 long years blood had flowed from her body, making her physically sick and socially unacceptable.

The physicians of her time were unable to relieve her suffering. She "spent all she had, yet instead of getting better she grew worse". Some of us have been there, dealing with a prolonged illness or a stubborn medical condition. It's frustrating, even embarrassing, to keep going to the doctor, only to return home with an expensive prescription, yet little hope.

The true miracle in this story is what remained healthy: her faith. Her willingness to believe she could be well again, despite all evidence to the contrary. When she heard about a man who'd "healed many who had various diseases", she made up her mind to head for Capernaum.

After a 30-mile journey, most women would have thrown themselves in his path, begging him to help them. Instead this bleeding woman, in her faith, quietly "came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak".

By law, her touch would have made him unclean. By grace, just the opposite happened. "Immediately her bleeding stopped". Without a word, a look, or a touch from Jesus, she was made whole simply by *believing* he could heal her—and daring to act

on that belief.

When her faith was rewarded, she wasn't the only one who noticed. "He turned around in the crowd and asked, 'Who touched my clothes?'" Can you imagine how her heart must have pounded. She'd just stolen a miracle!

When the disciples pointed out that many in the crowded street were touching him, "Jesus kept looking around to see who had done it". He wasn't looking to accuse but to affirm.

The same faith that empowered her to stretch out her hand now gave her the strength to step forward. She "fell at his feet and, trembling with fear, told him the whole truth".

She risked everything—public humiliation, if not punishment—to make her confession of faith, explaining to the crowd "why she had touched him and how she had been instantly healed".

With a single word from Jesus, 12 years of pain and isolation were swept away: "Daughter ... ". In no other gospel account does Jesus use this term of endearment and respect. *Daughter*. She was a member of the family now, restored to her community, setting an example for others who "begged him to let them touch even the edge of his cloak, and all who touched him were healed".

This woman literally put feet to her faith: traveling to Capernaum, reaching out to touch Jesus' garment, and walking forward at his invitation. By faith, we too can go first in our families, in our workplaces, and in our circles of influence, stepping forward to proclaim, "There is a balm in Gilead to make the wounded whole."

Stewardship Thoughts

Scriptures: I Cor. 16:33; II Tim. 2:1, Eph. 6:10; I Thes. 5:13-22; I Peter 2:17

"Go out into the world in peace, have courage, hold on to what is good, return no one evil for evil, strengthen the faint-hearted, support the weak, help the suffering, honor everyone, love and serve God, rejoicing in the power of the Spirit."

Each week we come together to reflect on the many blessings God has showered upon us, and on God's call to us individually and as a Community of Christ. We choose our response to His bountiful grace and pledge to one another our commitment to the life of the church.

God has a purpose for the Community of Christ in Plymouth to be sure. We're about to begin a new era in the life of the church this year. We rejoice in the power of the Spirit working through the ministries, missionary efforts and fellowship of this church. We are blessed.

But there is so much more God is calling us to do. We can do better at what we are already doing - strengthening our current ministries to meet the increased needs of these difficult times; building up our physical space and our worship to shine even more brightly as a beacon of hospitality to the stranger, aid to the needy, hope to those in despair, and to the inquirer the way of Christ. We are being called to pursue important new directions, too - further developing campus ministries, growing our relationship with our brothers and sisters at Detroit Hope, and finding our shared voice for the advocacy of justice and mercy in the Plymouth/Canton/Northville Area.

All of this requires financial resources. Just beyond where our current budget takes us, lie these and other important needs and wonderful opportunities. Each one of us makes a difference! Together, increasing our commitments, we can make a very big difference. Have courage. Trust in the Lord from whom all blessings flow, for the Lord calls us to our challenges as well. Pray that we may become an ever more faithful, ever more vibrant witness to the Gospel in the surrounding communities and the world. Thank you for your support of the church for these many years. This year please consider increasing your financial contributions to the church. If you were not able to contribute much last year, see if you can find a way to do so this year.

Am I moving closer to what God has in mind for me, or farther away? Or am I simply wandering? Let's each of us, use this season to reflect on our personal journey, and to resolve to point our life closer to God. Committing our time, talents, and worldly treasures to God is a powerful way to do so, moving us from mere church membership toward the joy, peace and rewards of living discipleship in the Lord. We establish our priorities, first returning to the Lord what is the Lord's.

We would be delighted to discuss these matters with you or answer any questions you may have. A detailed current year budget of the Church is available to you upon request. May God bless you and your families.