

FROM DESPERATION TO LIBERATION

Mark 5:25-34

On this Mother's Day I'd like us to consider one of the many women of faith, found in scripture. Her name is unknown to us, but her story is *quite* familiar. We only know her as ***the woman with the issue of blood***. Her story takes place at the intersection of desperation and devastation. *Mothers often find themselves in such a place, because by nature they love much, and as a result, are often wounded deeply.* However, as we will see, this woman's faith in Christ would bring her to a place of *everlasting* liberation. My *hope* is this message will be one of encouragement, not only for mothers, but all who *may* find themselves at the intersection of desperation and devastation today.

The ***primary*** step in moving beyond *desperation* is to **draw near to God. (v.22-26)** This was not a perfect time to approach Jesus. He had received an earlier request to heal the daughter of Jairus, the ruler of the local synagogue. He was *a chief official, a prominent leader in the community*. She could have said, "*Why bother Jesus, He's preoccupied with someone else; someone far more important than me!*" Given her situation, she could have easily thrown a pity party for herself.

She'd been *hemorrhaging* for "twelve years," probably suffering from a condition known as ***menorrhea*** (*men-or-rhe-a*); ***a continuous flow of blood from the uterus***. She had "*suffered many things from many physicians.*" ***Therapeutics of ancient Jewish physicians in reference to hemorrhages, especially of the kind with which this woman was afflicted, were horrific. A second century rabbi, Rabbi Jochanan, describes some of the remedies prescribed at the time for this woman's malady. He write: "Take of gum of Alexandria, of alum, and of crocus hortensis (medicinal plant), the weight of a zuzee each; let them be bruised together, and given in wine to the woman that hath an issue of blood. But if this fail; Take of Persian onions nine logs, boil them in wine, and give it to her to drink: and say,***

Arise from thy flux. But should this fail; Set her in a place where two ways meet, and let her hold a cup of wine in her hand; and let somebody come behind and affright her, and say, Arise from thy flux. But should this do no good; etc. "She is also financially bankrupt," probably friendless, because no one likes to hang out with broke people! In addition to that, the Law of Moses declared a woman "unclean" during her menstrual cycle (Lev. 12:7); for 12 years, her continual flow of blood barred her from corporate worship in the court of the temple. But what the Law had condemned, grace would revive! She "heard" Jesus was passing by! (v.27-28).

But notice: She not only "heard," she "came." We can hear sermon after sermon, but until we make a move toward Christ, nothing will change. (James 2:26) "...faith without works is dead..." (Psalm 34:8) Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good; Blessed is the man who trusts in Him! *Desperate people must taste for themselves. She declared, (v.28) "If only I may touch His clothes, I shall be made well." This was not an act of superstition, but "faith" in Christ as her Messiah.* Luke 8 says she touched the "border" (hem) of His garment. Dr. John D. Garr, in his book entitled: **The Hem of His Garment** explains that in keeping with the Law of Moses, Jesus would have worn an outer four cornered *rectangular* garment, like a tunic with tassels (or "tzitzits"), on each corner of His tunic, in accordance with **Numbers 15:38-41**. **These tassels served as a reminder to the Jews of God's commandments.** *More than likely, she touched a tassel hanging at the bottom of Christ's tunic. Thus, she was actually was touching the "Word of God!" Her "faith" in God's word caused her flow to stop and Jesus to stop, also.*

(v.29-31). Jesus said, "**Who touched My clothes?**" We may sing, "He touched me," but the greater testimony is that a *wretched sinner, like me*, can **touch Him! By the grace of God found in Christ we can touch that which is altogether pure and holy!** She touches Him in humility, stooping low, *sneaking up behind Jesus; like many today she was only looking for a piece of Jesus.* She touched the hem - a small strand of His garment - not His flesh. But the *weakest* expression of faith on earth is a shout

in heaven! (Luke 8:46) "Somebody touched Me, for I perceived power going out from Me." Jesus wasn't repulsed by her touch; He just wanted to know "who" touched Him. As today, back then many were bumping into Jesus, but only a few *actually* touched Him! (Matthew 7:14) "...narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it." Are we merely bumping into Jesus, or believing, *trusting, in Jesus?*

As a result of drawing near to God, **we no longer have to live in the shadows.** *The shadows of fear and condemnation (v.32-34).* Some may wonder: "**Why would the Lord ask the question? He's God, omniscient (all knowing)?**" If don't believe He asked because He didn't know, but to give her a chance to make public her faith! Jesus will call us out, that He might exalt the humble and glorify His name. The Lord's inquiry *here* debunks the *notion* of a "private faith." If we *truly* encounter His "power" of deliverance, we cannot stay hidden: We must tell the world!

The Lord *paves* her intersection of desperation and devastation with His *everlasting peace, acknowledging she is now family, by virtue of the fact she has placed her faith in Him. "Daughter" (v.34).* She came forth "trembling," and "fearful," expecting judgment, but finding grace! **Not only was she healed physically, but she now has "peace" with God.** The "flow" her malady gave her placed her in the life-giving flow of Christ's blood on Calvary, *which would forever silence the flow of "condemnation" against her.* (Romans 8:1) "There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus..."

CONCLUSION: Today is a day of liberation. (James 4:8a) "Draw near to God and He will draw near to you." As believers, we are not exempt from finding ourselves at the intersection of desperation and devastation; however, in such times, we need to remember we serve an anytime God! (Hebrews 4:16) **Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.** This is where a "Happy" Mother's Day begins and ends: at His throne, where we find an everlasting flow of God's mercy and grace!

