

A Woman's Deliverance -- Mark 5:25-34

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Today we are continuing our journey through the book of Mark. As we begin I invite you to bow your heads with me for prayer:

Lord, we thank You for Your Word today. We thank You for the stories that Mark has written down for us. We thank You that the same Spirit that inspired Mark as he wrote his gospel account is here with us today. May we all experience Your transforming power as we enter into the experience of today's story. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Today's story is sandwiched in between another story, which we have already covered. In this story Jesus raised a 12 year old girl from the dead. She was the daughter of Jairus, who was a ruler of the synagogue there in Capernaum. In raising this girl from the dead, Jesus revealed His authority over death itself. In our story today Jesus calls attention to complete healing and wholeness.

Let's now consider a summary of this story in Mark 5:25-34:

While Jesus was on His way to Jairus' house, a woman in the crowd was trying to reach Him in order to be healed. As He passed by she touched His clothes and was immediately made well. Jesus, realizing what had happened, stopped and called for her to reveal herself. Filled with fear, she fell down at His feet and told Him everything. Jesus affirmed her faith and sent her away with His blessing.

We will now look at this story in more detail by asking the question, "What did Jesus experience in this story?" And first of all, Jesus experienced being crowded. In Mark 5:24, the verse immediately preceding today's story, it says "a great multitude followed Him and thronged Him". The word translated "thronged" means "to press on all sides". So our story begins with Jesus being followed by a large crowd of people as He tries to make His way to Jairus' house. And this crowd is making His way difficult. They are pressing Him in on all sides.

Second, Jesus experienced a touch of faith. While Jesus was being pushed and bumped into by the crowd, He experienced a touch that was accompanied by faith. Mark 5:25-28 describes a woman who is desperate for healing. For twelve years she has been bleeding. In verse 26 it says she "suffered many things from many physicians". She had gone from doctor to doctor trying to find help. But instead of finding relief, Mark says her condition was actually growing worse. Her reaching out and touching Jesus was one last desperate attempt. Her touch, unlike the crowd's, carried with it all the faith she had. Jesus noticed this distinctive touch of faith. Mark 5:30 describes another significant part of this touch: "And Jesus, immediately knowing in Himself that power had gone out of Him, turned around in the crowd." The word translated "power" is the Greek word "dunamis" from which we get the word dynamite. According to Luke 4:14 this power was none other than that of the Holy Spirit. As soon as this woman touched Jesus, this power flowed from Him to the woman. And Mark says in verse 29 that her blood was immediately dried up.

Third, Jesus experienced publicizing a great deliverance. The healing that this woman desired is described in Mark 5:28 as being "made well". The word actually means "to be saved". It's the same word Jairus used to describe what he wanted for his daughter in Mark 5:23 – to "be healed". So, in Mark 5:30-33 it describes how Jesus took the time to call attention to this great "salvation" or "deliverance". In verse 30 it says Jesus "turned around" in the crowd. After recognizing the touch of faith, Jesus stopped. That was a brave move. He's

surrounded by people. If a large crowd is moving and one person stops, what happens? You get the domino effect, right? One person stops and the person behind them bumps into them, and so it goes all the way back through the crowd. But Jesus stopped and turned around. Then He asked a question, which must have seemed strange: "Who touched My clothes?" His disciples, quite naturally, think He's being ridiculous. In verse 31 they say to Jesus, "You see the multitude thronging You, and You say, 'Who touched Me?'" "Come on! You can't be serious!" Well verse 32 says Jesus "looked around to see her". He ignores the disciples question and continues looking through the crowd for this woman. Meanwhile it dawns on this woman that nobody's going to move until Jesus finds her. So, she comes forward in verse 33 and "told Him the whole truth". Everyone got to hear what had happened. This great deliverance, which had before been a secret, is now publicized.

Last of all, Jesus experienced speaking a blessing. In Mark 5:34 Jesus speaks to this woman words that are full of meaning. He addressed her as "Daughter". There is a significant implication here. This term connects this woman with the daughter in the surrounding story. We realize that these two ladies were both loved as daughters. Jesus wanted this woman to know that her healing came as a result of a close relationship, not a careless act of chance. She didn't just happen to be in the same place as He was. The power that transferred from Him to her was nothing mechanical. He had healed her because He cared about her like His own daughter. Jesus then told this woman, "Your faith has made you well." She was not healed by some magic in Jesus' clothes. Neither was it simply coincidence or because the stars were lined up just right. The reason she had been healed was because she believed that Jesus could heal her. Next Jesus told this woman to "Go in peace". These are very significant words to the Hebrew. Jesus often spoke words similar to this such as, "Peace be to you." In Hebrew the word is "shalom". It was a word of blessing, a prayer for someone to be safe, complete, healthy, and prosperous. Every time Jews would greet one another or say a farewell they would say, "Shalom". What a powerful blessing this would have brought in every day interaction. Although Jesus most likely spoke in Aramaic, He was a Jew. And so His words, "Go in peace", would have been the equivalent to saying, "Shalom". The last part of Jesus words of blessing are "be healed of your affliction". A more literal translation would be, "be healthy away from your torment". "May you always remain healthy. May this affliction never come back.

This is what Jesus experienced in our story today. But there is more. When Mark wrote this gospel, he wasn't just writing a story book. When he wrote, he was inspired by the Holy Spirit. This is a God-breathed story. This sets it apart from Chicken Soup for the Soul or Uncle Arthur's Bedtime Stories. This is more than a story that happened close to 2000 years ago. It has been preserved so that we might experience transformation. It's so that we might know what it means to be a healthy and dangerous Christian. Jesus is revealed in this story as our example of a healthy and dangerous Christian in that He did not sidestep the woman. He could have come up with many reasons to do so. He was being delayed on an urgent mission. Jairus' daughter was very sick and at the point of death. He could have avoided her for the sake of urgency if not for expediency. Luke adds an interesting detail to the story in his account found in Luke 8:44. He records that the woman touched "the border of His garment". Mark says that she came from behind Jesus and touched His garment. It gives us quite a picture. As Jesus moved through the crowd, He came near the woman. With all her effort she struggled to push her way towards Him. And just as He moved by, she reached out her hand and barely caught the tip of His outer garment. Jesus could have avoided her. But He was never in a hurry. He was never too busy to help someone who came to Him for help.

He reveals that a healthy and dangerous Christian is someone who is always on call for God. Many of those in the who are in the medical field have to take their turn being on call. On occasion we have had to call our children's pediatricians office after hours for medical advice. We leave a message on the answering service and usually within an hour a doctor will call us back. They are not at the office but they are on call. They are

available should someone be in need. We live in a very fast-paced society. Every minute of every day is spoken for. We leave no room in our schedules for the unexpected. We get frustrated when the unforeseen happens. But Jesus reveals in our story that a healthy and dangerous Christian is someone who is connected to God at all times. It's someone who realizes that life is about more than just me and my plans. Being a healthy Christian is about making a difference in someone else's life. It doesn't mean I sit around so I can answer every phone call. It doesn't mean I put food in every mouth or money in every hand. But it does mean I am always available. Sometimes when I just want to get in and get out, I find myself avoiding places where people are. If there's a crowd of people out front, then I'll go in the back door, do what I need to do, and get out. Jesus didn't do that. He didn't try to find the back alley to Jairus' house. He went where the people were, where the woman was who was desperate for healing.

Jesus also reveals in this story what a healthy and dangerous Christian looks like in that He pronounced a blessing on the woman. This makes this a unique story so far in the book of Mark. This is the first time He is recorded as doing this. In our society people hear lots of curses, but very few blessings (except if they sneeze). This is in contrast with the Hebrew culture, where a blessing was given every time they greeted each other. Our culture often operates by the saying, "no news is good news". If the boss is happy with my work, he is cordial. But if he is unhappy with my performance, he will not hesitate to let me know in very clear and passionate language. But Jesus reveals that a healthy and dangerous Christian is someone who is intentional about speaking blessings on people. One great opportunity for parents is to bless their children. I do this regularly with ours. Scripture is filled with blessings to pray over our children. Those who are older and experienced have the opportunity to bless those just starting out. Those who are healthier and more mature Christians have the opportunity to bless those who are still weak in the faith. How few boys hear words of blessing from the men in their lives. They long to hear, "You have what it takes. I believe in you. You can do it." How many young ladies are longing to hear from those they trust, "You're beautiful. You don't have to cover yourself in makeup and jewelry. You don't have to dress or act provocatively. You don't have to be just like everyone else. You're beautiful just the way you are." Jesus was intentional. And a healthy and dangerous Christian is someone who is intentional about speaking blessings on the people in their lives.

I would like to take the last few minutes here today for those here who are like the woman in our story. Jesus' words to the woman are for us today. His blessing on her is for us as well. And in His blessing He addressed four needs in the woman's heart, that most likely are needs in our hearts as well. The expression "Daughter" addresses those of us who don't feel loved. It crosses gender lines. It's for those who think, "Everybody is too busy to notice or care. They all have their own lives. And if they are nice to me it's not because they really value me." Jesus' address to this woman as "daughter" silences such thoughts. He does care. He cares about you like His own son or daughter. Jesus' words, "Your faith has made you well" are words of blessing as well. It addresses those of us who feel out of control. It speaks to those who believe that everything in life is based on chance or destiny. "If something good happens to me, it was simply coincidence. It wasn't because of my faith." Or perhaps another line of thought - "What will be will be. If it happens to you it's just your destiny." Jesus silences these thoughts when He says, "Your faith has made you well." "The reason you were healed is because you believed. You have control of your own life. You can believe what I say, and it will completely change the direction of your life." Jesus' words, "Go in peace" are for those who long for words of affirmation, words that satisfy the deep, inner longings of the heart: "Someone believes in me. Someone is praying for me. Someone is calling a blessing into my life." And last of all, the words, "be healed of your affliction" are for those of us who worry about the future, who worry that this great experience won't last: "When I go back to my usual routine, everything will go back to the way it was before. This isn't reality." Jesus silences these thoughts by saying, "Remain this way for the rest of your life. This is reality. The life you had before Me was a deception. Your old, meaningless, depressing life will never come back. Your deliverance is for eternity."

I'm going to invite those of you who identify with this woman to come forward. She came to Jesus "fearing and trembling". For some of you coming forward in church might bring similar feelings. But there is a significance to coming forward. It's not magic. There was no magic in Jesus' clothes. And there is not more of the Holy Spirit in the front of the church than there is in the back. But it is symbolic. It's like you're coming to where Jesus is. You're acting out your faith in what He can do for you. So, as we sing our closing hymn, I invite you to come forward.

(Closing Prayer) "Lord, we all need You. We're all dysfunctional in our own ways. We're all partially healed at best. And so we need Your blessing as much as the woman in our story did. On behalf of those who have come forward I call upon You who are able to keep them from losing their Christian experience. I call upon You who are able to present them without fault before Your own presence of glory with exceeding joy. May every person standing here make it to Your throne of glory, completely whole, completely safe, completely healthy. In Jesus' name, amen."