

Don't Touch That Dial!

MARK 5:21-34

INTRODUCTION

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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.

Jesus went back over to the “Jewish” side of the Galilee. He is very popular. The crowds are waiting. The goodness of God is very attractive to all people. Everyone likes the idea of healing, kindness, and good teachings. There were large friendly crowds awaiting Jesus almost everywhere He went.

We could ask, “If Jesus was so universally liked, and if the goodness of God is so attractive to people, why did so many end up rejecting Him, both then, and now?” The short answer is “sin within.” The more detailed answer is that people like good things. They like health, happiness, and abundance whenever they can get it. But Jesus pushes people to a point of decision, not about whether they want good things, but about whether they want to give up their lives to Him because He is good. Naturally, all people rebel against the idea of being ruled and of surrendering oneself to another’s control. This is the sin in us.

Nevertheless, Jesus is gaining crowds who are attracted to His goodness on display.

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."

Jairus, as a leader of the synagogue, might be a Pharisee (a priest), or he might be a lay-leader of great importance. In either case, his position would mean that he was well-known, and likely well-respected locally.

The illness of his daughter causes him to throw his dignity to the wind and fall to the ground, begging Jesus for healing. He thinks that Jesus being present with the girl is needed for her to be healed. Perhaps he has seen or heard of how a touch of His hand brings healing.

24 And he went with him. And a great crowd followed him and thronged about him.

Jesus agrees to go with him and answer this call to mercy. A synoguge is a place of prayer and learning the Scriptures. Ironically, the synagogue leader leaves synagogue, and has a face-to-face talk with the God he prays to, though he does not realize it. Jesus, who is

the leader of all things, graciously and quickly responds. Our God is both humble and good! No wonder people loved Him.

The crowd, which had waited on the shore for Him, continued to follow. Many of them wanted healing too. Many of them wanted to see what He would do. Many wanted to hear Him teach. Just because He agreed to go with Jairus, they were going with Him! He was a large moving crowd carrier!

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."

One of the people in the crowd who went to see Jesus was a woman who had some sort of hemorrhage that she had suffered from for twelve years. She didn't just see doctors about it, but she suffered much under many physicians. She worked hard for her own healing. She went to many. I'm not sure how advanced the medicine of the day was, but since leaches and bleeding of the ill would be a standard practice, even up to the 1800's, I'm guessing those doctors caused her great discomfort.

So, she heard that there was a man who was healing people with a touch. Unlike Jairus, she didn't expect Him to touch her. She would try just touching His clothes, as if they were magical.

29 And immediately the flow of blood dried up, and she felt in her body that she was healed of her disease.

It worked! It worked! Now, time to get out of here. She had no interest in a relationship with this guy, nor to put herself on display. She had, without money, just got a free healing from the medicine man! As a Jew with constant bleeding, she knew she was ritually unclean, and didn't really want a bunch of Jews in public knowing that she was out touching people! Time to exit, stage right!

But oh, what joy had overtaken her! She had been sick for 12 years. There was no earthly hope of ever being restored. But now, in an instant, she knew she was well! Life would begin again. It was like being given a second chance.

Although she was experiencing physical healing, we should note at this point, that this Man, whom she did not fully understand, had come not merely to heal mortal bodies, but to heal eternal souls. He would die for the sins of the world, bearing our shame and punishment for the evil we have done. **In the same way that this woman reached out and touched His garment, anyone here today who reaches out to Jesus in faith can have his/her sins and guilt washed away, and can have a second chance, a clean start –be born again!**

What about you? You might not be physically sick, but are you sick with the guilt of your evil deeds? If so, know that God is holy, and He will punish every one of our evil deeds.

No priest or physician on earth can free us from the torment that awaits us, nor heal us of our sins—only Jesus can take away our guilt. Everyone who has reached out to Him in faith has found forgiveness of sins. This can be you, today.

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.

Jesus did not choose to heal this woman. This is remarkable. Did His clothing really have healing power? Absolutely not. They are just clothes. Then how was this woman healed? She was healed in the same way that all who came to Jesus are healed—God the Father chose to heal her. She came believing, seeking to be healed, and because she had come to His Son in faith, the Father healed her.

As Peter pointed out in his sermon in Acts, Jesus was not only God, but a man. As a man, He did not do anything of His own power, but only as His Father instructed Him and worked through Him:

"Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know-- (Act 2:22 ESV)

Jesus is God, but He is also humble and happily submits to the Father. In His divine nature, He is God, and indeed healed the woman. But in His human nature, He did not make this choice—the Father did. (This is another example of the hypostatic union—hard to understand, but important).

The disciples seem a bit impatient with Him. Lots of people are touching Him, but He wanted to see the person who had been healed. So, He looked for her.

This is what Jesus is like. He is not only concerned with blessing us, He is also concerned with knowing us.

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."

The woman was found out. Why was she so frightened? We can guess three possible reasons, and it is likely a combination of all three. First, she was, as already mentioned, a Jewish woman who had been bleeding for 12 years. She was ritually unclean. Priests would not touch her. She would have been ostracized by most people, except for her closest family members. These were not strangers in the crowd; they were fellow townspeople, many of them knowing who she was.

Secondly, and more importantly, she had touched Jesus, who was thought to be holy and from God because of the miracles He did. She made Him unclean by touching His robe. Perhaps He was going to be angry! Maybe He would think she had stolen from Him, getting healed without His permission!

Finally, public speaking is not the favorite activity of most people. She, no doubt, just wanted to leave, change clothes, and get on with life.

But this was not good enough for Jesus. He wanted to know her, to bless her, and to relieve her of all of her fears. So, as she explained to all around what she had done, the crowd was awaiting to see how Jesus would react to this.

How does He react to this?

Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace, and be healed of your disease.

He endearingly calls her “daughter,” and lets her know that she was not healed by a garment. Many people can touch a garment. Rather, she believed. She had faith in Jesus, so the Father graciously rewarded her.

He blessed her with a “Shalom,” –go in peace. The healing would last. The Holy Man, Jesus, was at peace with her. If someone in the crowd was offended by her, either now or in the past, she was not unclean before Jesus. There is no doubt that she left that encounter with the clean tears of joy in her eyes. Her life had been changed because she had met Jesus. She would never be the same.

35 While he was still speaking, there came from the ruler's house some who said, "Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the Teacher any further?"

Oh yes, what about Jairus and his sick daughter? While all this is going on with the woman, Jairus’s daughter remains on death’s door. Should not Jesus be hurrying? The messengers brought the worst news possible: She is dead. Did this delay with the woman result in the death of this girl?

No doubt, Jairus’s heart fell to the floor, but that story does not end here. There is more, but not today. Today, we stop here. We will return to this story next week. For this week, let’s see if we can apply some principles from what we have seen so far.

1. Women are valued by Jesus with as much importance as He values men.

It is no small thing to notice that the two ailing parties in this text are women. Modern feminism has caused many people to have a strange view of how men and women got along through the centuries, constantly painting women as oppressed victims. But nothing is that simple. In this case, the synagogue leader loves his daughter so much that he would humiliate himself in front of everyone, and risk the ire of his fellow Jewish leaders, to bring Jesus to heal her. He loves her dearly. Jesus likewise, does not hesitate. This little girl matters as much to God as any other person there.

The woman with the issue of blood, far from being unclean to Jesus, is His precious daughter. Jairus loved his daughter so much, he ran for Jesus. Jesus loved this woman

even more than that. She matters. Jesus never restricted His teachings to only men, nor did He ever ignore women or treat them as second-class victims. As equal partners in humanity, Jesus treated them as valuable. Indeed, the history of the world and the treatment of women changed after the arrival of Jesus on the earth.

2. Jesus-followers should respond to people with the kindness and generosity that Jesus does.

Authentic believers are to behave as we see our Savior behave. In this case, people in desperate situations approach Him, and He is there for them. Now, we might not be able to heal someone's body, but we often encounter people with needs. When we do, how do we respond? Do we have time to listen? Do we take time to go to their homes? Will we give ourselves and our treasure, as Jesus does?

Jesus followers do what He does. Kindness and generosity should mark every Christian. And, like Jesus, we should be no respecter of persons. In other words, we should do what we can to love those near us, no matter who they are.

3. Jesus is a soul-healer who will not turn you away.

God demonstrates His goodness by healing this woman's body, but she would later die of something. Her body got sick again. The act of healing demonstrates God's love and goodness. Healing also shows that He is a God of the living. When His Kingdom comes to earth at His return, there will be no sickness at all.

But there is no promise that all Christians will be healed every time they are sick. We can ask, but God makes no promises of that in this age. What He does promise is that everyone who comes to Him can be saved from their sins. In other words, they can have their souls healed. That means that when He returns to raise the living and the dead, they will gain eternal health of the body.

Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me will not hunger, and he who believes in Me will never thirst. . . . All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out. . . . "For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him will have eternal life, and I Myself will raise him up on the last day." (Joh 6:35-40 NAU)

There are two kinds of people here today: Those who have already been saved, and those who have not. If you have not yet become a follower of Jesus, you are like the woman with the bleeding. Your soul has a fatal illness, sin. You have gone from place to place, from practice to practice, to try to free your soul, but none have done the trick. In fact, many of the things that you have tried have left you worse off than before.

Do you want to be healed in your soul? Do you want your sins forgiven? Do you want to know God and have eternal life? Do you believe in Him?