

INTRODUCTION

Life is so full of bad news. Read your daily newspaper, or turn on CNN Headline News and you can get bad news 24 hours a day now. It’s easy to get tired of all this bad news. I heard about a man who came home from work after a long, tiring day. He could tell that his wife was exhausted and he could just see in her countenance that she was about to deliver some bad news. He held up his hand and said, “I’ve had a rough day at work. Nothing went right and I can tell you have some bad news. Whatever you do—*don’t* tell me any bad news. Give me some good news.” His worn out wife looked at him and said, “Okay. Well, you have three children and today *two* of your children didn’t fall out of a tree and break their legs.”

That’s why I love to study and teach the Bible. In a world full of bad news, it is full of good news! Three weeks ago, we saw Jesus has the power to calm meteorological storms. He commanded a thunderstorm to settle down and there was instant tranquility. Last week we saw how Jesus spoke to a demon-controlled man and calmed the storm raging in his mind. He has power over disturbances and demons. Today, we are going to see how Jesus has power over disease and next week we’ll see His power over death, as well. If Jesus can handle disturbances, demons, disease, and death, He can handle any need you have in your life!

Luke 8:40-48: Now when Jesus returned, a crowd welcomed him, for they were all expecting him. Then a man named Jairus, a ruler of the synagogue, came and fell at Jesus’ feet, pleading with him to come to his house because his only daughter, a girl of about twelve, was dying.

As Jesus was on his way, the crowds almost crushed him. And a woman was there who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years, but no one could heal her. She came up behind him and touched the edge of his cloak, and immediately her bleeding stopped. “Who touched me?” Jesus asked.

When they all denied it, Peter said, “Master, the people are crowding and pressing against you.”

But Jesus said, “Someone touched me; I know that power has gone out from me.” Then the woman seeing that she could not go unnoticed, came trembling and fell at his feet. In the presence of all the people, she told why she had touched him and how she had been instantly healed. Then he said to her, “Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace.”

I’ve said it many times before: There is a miracle in every parable of Jesus—and there is a parable (a teaching lesson) in every miracle of Jesus. As Jesus made his way to help Jairus’ sick daughter, he had a brief encounter with a needy woman. It’s a beautiful miracle and I want us to dig below the surface and discover four personal lessons that apply to our lives.

1. SUFFERING IS A PART OF LIFE —BUT JESUS GIVES US HOPE

This unnamed woman was suffering in many ways; perhaps you can relate to one of them. First, she was suffering physically with a blood disorder. It’s a creative miracle of God that your blood flows as a liquid through your veins and arteries but when it leaves the body, it clots, or coagulates. At least that’s what is supposed to happen. The WebMD medical web site reports coagulation is a complex process in which as many as twenty plasma proteins form a substance

called fibrin to stop bleeding. When certain of these proteins are missing or deficient, a person can suffer from mild to severe bleeding disorders. For twelve years this woman suffered with this physical problem, and it led to other complications. She probably stayed weak and anemic because of this constant blood loss. Some of you can relate to the suffering of this woman because you are living with some kind of a chronic medical problem.

She was also suffering financially. In this same story, Mark tells us something Dr. Luke omits. Mark reports this woman spent all her money on doctors and they hadn't helped her, in fact she had gotten worse. Dr. Luke simply observes in verse 43, "and no one could help her." Twenty centuries ago, physicians didn't have to be trained or licensed and there was a lot of medical ignorance. The Jewish Talmud lists eleven remedies for blood disorders and most of them sound like superstitious spells. For instance, one remedy required cracking open a large duck egg, burning the contents and the shell, and then carrying the ashes in a linen pouch under your garment. This woman had probably tried this duck-egg remedy. No wonder they called those doctors quacks!

She was frustrated and broke because she spent all her money on these ineffective cures. Some of you can relate to this sister in suffering because your most sensitive nerve right now is in the area of financial need. Financial problems and frustration are Siamese twins of suffering that seem to always be attached to each other.

This woman was also suffering emotionally. She was considered an outcast. According to Leviticus 15, her bleeding disorder made her ceremonially unclean—continually. Any chair or bed she sat on became unclean. She really wasn't even supposed to be out in this crowd. Any people who came within the slightest contact with her had to wash their clothes and bathe themselves to be ceremonially cleansed. She was required to walk down the road warning people, "Unclean! Unclean!" Some of you feel the same sense of loneliness and isolation. You aren't ceremonially unclean but you feel like you are some kind of an outcast.

This woman is a perfect model for those of us who suffer—that's all of us. In spite of twelve years of this suffering, she still had not given in or given up. She heard Jesus was passing through her village and once again her hope was rekindled. She thought, "Maybe Jesus can help me!"

Suffering *is* a part of living and like this woman Jesus is our *only* source of hope today as well. When we suffer, we often waste a lot of time and energy asking "WHY? Why me, Lord?" An old song asks, "Why is everybody always pickin' on me?" We add to it, "and God, Why are YOU picking on me?" When you are suffering, the right question to ask is not why? but *what* is God trying to teach me in the midst of my suffering? He is trying to teach you that He loves you and He wants you to depend on Him. Sometimes He chooses to remove our suffering and at other times, He gives us the grace to live through the suffering. The Apostle Paul had some problem he called a "thorn in the flesh." He begged God three times to take it away but the Lord didn't remove it. Sometimes God doesn't remove your suffering, and when that is the case, we must have the same spirit-filled attitude of Paul who wrote: But he [the Lord] said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all

the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me. (2 Corinthians 12:9)

God knows suffering makes us stronger, and it makes us depend on God. I’ve often said the name of God’s college is the University of Affliction, and although the tuition is steep, the classes and the degrees we receive are priceless. Some of you are enrolled right now in the University of Affliction.

Do you know why modern golf balls have dimples? The first golf balls had smooth surfaces. It would seem that a smooth surface would allow the ball to fly farther. However, golfers soon discovered when the balls got scratched and roughed up, they flew straighter and farther, because of some aerodynamic principle. So the old golfers used to rough up the smooth balls or cut grooves in them. So eventually golf balls were manufactured with dimples instead of smooth surfaces. God knows you and I are the same; we will go farther with a few rough places on the exterior of our lives. That’s why He allows us to go through suffering. Here’s the second lesson:

2. CASUAL CONTACT WITH CHRIST ISN’T THE SAME AS A DESPERATE REACH OF FAITH

Try to picture the scene: Jairus is leading Jesus toward his home and they pass through an area where a mob is pressing against Jesus. The streets and alleyways of the little villages were only a few feet wide. It didn’t take many persons to cause a people traffic jam. It’s like it was in our old building with a couple of thousand people trying to get down those narrow halls.

There is something a little scary about being in a mob of people with others pressed up against you. Most of us like to maintain an area of “space” around us and we don’t want anyone invading our space without us inviting them to. In a mob where everyone is pressed together, you can forget your personal space. I recall on one of our mission trips to the Ukraine we flew through Moscow. We flew out of the little domestic airport to get to Simferopol in the Crimea. The airport terminal was an old, dark, small building. About 400 people were trying to get seats on the Aeroflot flight. In airports in America, people line up to get boarding passes and check luggage. There are even ropes and stands to help passengers line up. These folks didn’t believe in lining up, so about 400 of us were mobbed together trying to slowly pass through a single door. We had about 40 in our group with luggage, a sound system, and medical supplies. People were pushing and shoving. Believe me I got to literally rub shoulder and other body parts with a lot of strangers that day! I don’t really like mobs.

It was a pushing and shoving mob that crowded around Jesus that day. The scripture says He was almost crushed by the crowd. In the midst of this mob where everyone was elbowing each other, a desperate woman slipped between and beneath and beside people until finally she was close enough to touch the prayer shawl every Jewish man wore. Instantly, she was healed. Jesus stopped and said, “Who touched me?” I can just see Simon Peter rolling his eyes and saying, “What kind of foolish question is that? Everybody is touching you!” That was true. Many people were crowding around Him with elbows of curiosity, but only one *really* touched Him with fingers of faith. But there are different ways to touch Jesus. Jesus used a word for “touch,” which doesn’t mean to accidentally touch—it meant to “grab onto.” It was a word that meant “to fasten

oneself to.” It meant to “put a death-grip onto.” Growing up in South Alabama, I used to hear that if an old snapping turtle ever bit you, it wouldn’t let go until it thundered. That’s the meaning here. This woman didn’t just delicately reach out one finger and gingerly touch Jesus’ prayer shawl. She *grabbed* it for dear life like a drowning person grabs onto a life-ring. That kind of touch always gets Jesus’ attention.

Perhaps this was the only time He would visit this village. This woman had a narrow window of opportunity, one chance, and she grabbed it. Was she the only suffering person in the crowd? Of course not but she was the only one who grabbed hold of Jesus in faith. 2,000 years ago, Jesus could only be in one place at a time but today, He can be everywhere. He is here today and you are suffering and need His power. Sadly, most of you are going to crowd around Jesus today but are you really going to reach out and grab hold of His power in faith? When you do that, you get the attention of Jesus. He stands in our midst today asking, “WHO TOUCHED ME?” I could say, “Lord, there are a couple of thousand people here today who are touching you with their songs and prayers.” But He responds, “No, I mean who *really* is grabbing hold of my power because they are desperate?”

Our problem is we aren’t *desperate* enough. Like the demon controlled man and like Jairus, she was at the P.O.T.D. She was “potd,” if that’s a word. She was at the Point of Total Desperation. You aren’t really touching Jesus because you aren’t potd yet! Listen to what God says, “You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.” (Jeremiah 29:13) If you show up and seek the Lord in some half-hearted attempt, is it any wonder you miss Him? In *The Secret of Christian Joy*, Vance Havner wrote: “Mind you, this woman was shy and timid. She was not in habit of elbowing her way through the crowds, but when we are desperate enough, we’ll do anything to get through to God. Our Lord said, “*if any man thirst, let him come to me and drink.*” Thirst is not casually wanting a drink of water. When we really thirst, water must be had and we will drive through any obstacle to get it. Christians do not drink of the Living Water because there is no burning, feverish, consuming thirst after God. The situation is desperate but the saints are not.

In the crowd that day, there were two groups of people. The large crowd pressing in on Jesus were basically in the Lord’s way but Jairus and this woman were on the way to Jesus. Most in the crowd were spectators but at least two were seekers. This morning, we have the same two groups. Which are you—A spectator or a seeker? Several thousand people will crowd around Christ today in this place but will you be the *one* who really reaches out and touches Jesus and receives what He has for you? Jesus is here—how desperate are you?

3. THERE IS A PERSONAL COST TO JESUS IN EVERY SPIRITUAL TRANSACTION

A spiritual truth is hidden in this beautiful that shines like a diamond set on a piece of black satin. When Peter observes everyone is touching Jesus, the Lord explains how He knew among the crowd *one* person touched Him with expectant faith. Look again at His statement in verse 46. Jesus said, “Someone touched me; I know that power has gone out from me.” The word for “power” is *dunamis*, from which we get our word dynamo, or dynamite. It was as if Jesus is saying, “I felt healing, restoring power flow out of my body into hers.” We have many miracles of Jesus recorded in the four gospels, and we know what happened to the people who were

healed but this is the only place where we are allowed to know what happened to Jesus whenever He healed someone. It took something out of him to heal that woman or anyone else.

Spiritual service of any kind takes something out of a person. Dr. Hershel Hobbs, long-time pastor of First Baptist Church, Oklahoma City, said his doctor told him preaching one sermon drained a man as much as working an eight-hour shift in a factory. Anyone who preaches or teaches realizes it is mentally and spiritually exhausting to give oneself away like that. Cindy can tell you on most Sunday nights I’m so drained and flat, you can slide me underneath a door without opening it. But I think what Jesus is talking about here goes much deeper than that. The scriptures reveal the blessings Jesus has to offer *always* costs Him a huge price. No wonder we read Jesus was often tired. I’m not surprised we find Him sleeping in the boat in the middle of a storm—He was always giving so much of Himself away.

The ultimate spiritual transaction was when Jesus laid down His life on the cross. Our salvation is a free gift only because Jesus paid it all. The prophet Isaiah was led by the Holy Spirit to convey just what our salvation would cost Jesus. As we look at this wonderful verse, notice what Jesus paid for our salvation. In Isaiah 53:5 we read: “but he was **PIERCED** for our transgressions ...” That means Jesus allowed the Roman soldiers to drive nails into His hands and feet, all because of my transgressions, my sins. “...he was **CRUSHED** for our iniquities;” That means Jesus bore my sins in His body on the tree and He was literally crushed beneath the weight of all our iniquities; “... the **PUNISHMENT** that brought us peace was upon him; ...” A Holy God has to judge sin and what is the punishment for sin? Hell. Jesus experienced the hell of separation from God. That’s why He cried, “My God, my God why have you forsaken me?” He suffered the torment, the darkness at mid-day, the pain—why? So we could have *peace* with God. “...and by his **WOUNDS** we are healed.” That’s what it costs Jesus to heal that woman or to heal us of our sin sickness; by his stripes, or His wounds, we are healed. That’s what it costs Him. What a price! What a price! What a Savior!

The movie, *The Green Mile* is about death row inmates. One of the main characters is a huge prisoner who has the power to take others’ sickness away. Tom Hanks plays a prison guard with a painful bladder infection. Out of compassion, this big prisoner reaches through the bars and takes away his infection. He literally takes it within his body and then he coughs out what appears to be a swarm of ugly insects. Then he is so tired he has to lie down. Although the movie was pure fiction, when I saw that I thought immediately, “That’s exactly what Jesus did whenever he healed someone.” He took their sins, or their sickness, or their suffering into His life. However, He didn’t cough it out like a swarm of insects—He carried it to the cross. When Jesus used His power to change someone, He took that person’s infirmities and sins upon Himself.

4. JESUS EXPECTS US TO OPENLY CONFESS OUR FAITH ... WHY?

I really pondered over which word to use. Is our public confession something Jesus *demand*s or *require*s? I think “expects” is a good word, you may also say Jesus “invites” us to openly confess our faith. In our story, the newly healed woman would have been content to slip away into the crowd but Jesus wouldn’t let her. She didn’t just sneak up and “steal” a measure of Jesus’ power; it was something Jesus willingly surrendered to her when He felt her touch of faith. When Jesus

asked, “Who touched me?” He wasn’t asking for information— He already knew. Out of compassion for this woman, He was giving her a chance to publicly confess Jesus was the source of her miracle. The same is true today. There is no such thing as a “secret agent” or “closet” Christian. Jesus invites us, He requires us and He expects us to openly confess our faith in Him. Why? There are at least three good reasons why Jesus expects us to openly identify with Him. First, it is

(4.1) FOR OUR OWN SAKE

What would have happened to the woman if she had slipped back into the crowd and refused to confess Jesus had healed her? Do you think she would have lost her healing? I don’t believe so, because God doesn’t recall His blessings. But if she had not openly confessed Jesus she would have missed out on a tremendous blessing.

In verse 48, Jesus said, “Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace.” If she hadn’t come back and confessed Jesus, she would have missed the blessing of being called “daughter.” She was a nobody but Jesus honored her by calling her one of His own. There was Jairus standing there, tapping his foot, looking at the sundial on his wrist—*he* was the V.I.P., the leader of the synagogue—But Jesus took time to get to know this poor, obscure woman. Because of her confession, she had a personal relationship with Jesus. She would have missed that if she hadn’t publicly confessed He had healed her.

In verse 47, the woman spoke of how she had touched Jesus’ garment and been instantly *healed* (*iatha*- a medical word). But in verse 48, Jesus says, “your faith has *saved* you (*sozo*). She came seeking a physical healing but she found more when she confessed her faith in Jesus. She had a broken heart, bitterness, frustration, questions, confusion, and dark memories that had lasted for twelve years. Somebody needed to heal those as well, not just the physical malady. Jesus was saying, “Because of your faith, and your confession, you are a whole person, now, go in peace.”

We are invited and expected by Jesus to publicly confess Him as well. In Romans 10:9-10 we read:

If you confess with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved [same word Jesus used with the woman]. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.

You must confess with your mouth, too. Often people say, “I believe that my religion is purely personal, I don’t have to talk about it.” Well, read Romans 10 again. Your relationship with God *is* personal, but your *responsibility* is to confess Him publicly.

A public confession is also expected

(4.2) FOR THE SAKE OF OTHERS

Her testimony served to let others know Jesus was powerful enough to save and to change. The Bible teaches the best way to first confess your faith is by baptism. When someone stands in the baptistry and says, “Jesus is my Lord” he is confessing with his mouth because he believes in his heart. Your willingness to confess Jesus by believer’s baptism will help others make the same confession. I’ve had many memorable baptisms through the years but I’ll never forget standing on a beach at the Black Sea near Yalta in the Crimea. There were about 300 sunbathers and swimmers standing around in their swimsuits. I preached the gospel over a portable sound system and then we baptized 20-30 new converts in the Black Sea. The people watching the baptism were fascinated and some of them started attending the little church nearby where Pavel was pastor. Your confession will encourage others.

But I believe the main reason we should publicly confess Jesus is

(4.3) FOR JESUS’ SAKE (it gives HIM the credit)

Sometimes people say, “I’m just going to *live* the Christian life. I don’t think you have to tell anyone you are a Christian.” In that case, who gets the credit? *You do*. If you try to live demonstrating kindness, honesty and compassion; people will look at you and say, “He/she is a kind, honest and compassionate person; they are really wonderful.” You get all the honor. But if you live with kindness, honesty and compassion and every chance you get you tell people you are that way because Jesus Christ has changed your life—He gets the credit. If that woman had merely slipped away into the crowd, stealing a healing, people would not have given Jesus the credit and honor for His miracle.

Have you publicly confessed Jesus? Have you followed Christ in baptism since you were saved? Are you constantly using your mouth to tell people Jesus has changed your life? Or are you trying to slip out into your world without confessing Jesus? He’s waiting.

CONCLUSION

Which part of the crowd describes your life today? Are you part of the mob rubbing shoulders with Jesus, or are you reaching out in desperation for the power of Jesus? Some of you may be thinking, “Well, I don’t really need anything from Jesus today.” My friend, if that’s your attitude you don’t know just how needy you are. How many times have you come to church and been in the *presence* of Jesus, but missed His *power*? Are you in the way of Jesus, or on the way?

Years ago, a wealthy Scottish man was one of the first in his village to install electricity in his home. The Scots have a reputation for being frugal but he paid to have his entire house wired and connected. However, after several months, the electric company came to investigate. They were sure the power meter was wrong, because it showed he was only using a tiny amount of electricity each month. The company official asked him about it and the Scottish man said, “Oh, I only turn on the lights each night just long enough to light the candles, then I turn them off.” How funny—he had access to the power but he hardly used it. He hadn’t changed his way of living. He was connected to the power but he wasn’t *changed*. It sounds exactly like thousands of Christians. You have access to the power of Jesus but you hardly utilize it. You are *connected* but not *changed*.

I seldom read prayers aloud, but I came across one this past week that expressed my desires exactly. Maybe it expresses your feelings, too. In *Intimate Moments with the Savior*, Ken Gire prayed:

God, I know that only those who suffered greatly reached out to grasp you. They were the needy people in the streets with outstretched arms and empty hands. People who had nothing to offer but the faith that you could make them whole. I confess, O Lord, how often I have followed in the crowd pressed around you. Yet how few times have those brushes with you changed my life? I have touched you, but only in the rush hour of religious activity. Sunday after Sunday I take my part in the crowd as I sit through the service. I sing the hymns and hear the sermon. I read my Bible, say my prayers, give my money. How could I be so close your presence yet so far from your power? Could it be that my arms are folded? Could it be that my hands are full? I pray that if my arms are complacent, you would unfold them in outstretched longing for you. And if my hands are full, I pray that you would empty them so that I might cling only to you.

Aren't you tired of being part of the crowd that presses around Jesus? Are you ready to be like that brave woman who overcame the obstacles and reached out to Jesus? He is here today. He can change you, help you, save you and forgive you. Will you reach out to Him right now?

OUTLINE

1. SUFFERING IS A PART OF LIFE—BUT JESUS GIVES US HOPE

But he (the LORD) said to me, "my grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. *2 Corinthians 12:9*

2. CASUAL CONTACT WITH CHRIST ISN'T THE SAME AS A DESPERATE REACH OF FAITH

"You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart." *Jeremiah 29:13*

3. THERE IS A PERSONAL COST TO JESUS IN EVERY SPIRITUAL TRANSACTION

But he was PIERCED for our transgressions, he was CRUSHED for our iniquities; the PUNISHMENT that brought us peace was upon him; and by his WOUNDS we are healed. *Isaiah 53:5*

4. JESUS EXPECTS US TO OPENLY CONFESS OUR FAITH ... WHY?

4.1 For our own sake

If you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved. *Romans 10:9-10*

4.2 For the sake of others

4.3 For Jesus' sake (it gives HIM the credit)



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To put it in Texas terms, “You’re mighty welcome to use any and all of my ingredients; just make your own chili!”

For the Joy...
Pastor David Dykes