

## *Reaching Out for Jesus Lesson*



*“Daughter, be of good comfort: thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace.”*

*Jesus Christ- Luke 8:48*

### *Reading from -The Woman who touched Jesus- Luke 8:40-48*

With social distancing taking such a spotlight in the news today, the ways we are staying “*in touch*” with some of our own family, church family, friends, co-workers or anyone in our everyday community have certainly changed in the last few weeks. Because we all have a responsibility to reduce the spread of this virus, church doors have closed and pews are empty. Though we have wonderful ways of social media worship, it is just not the same as seeing each other face to face and the feeling of handshakes, greetings, and hugs that take place when we had the privilege of being “*there*”. We can FaceTime and group chat with each other. Thank goodness we are in a day where “*reaching out*” can be done instantly at our fingertips. Yet we still miss those we love and cannot be with.

Thus one of my favorite women in the Bible has upgraded from my sympathy to a level of more empathy. Though I don’t share in her physical affliction, I feel for the isolation it caused her... A woman the Bible does not even name, yet most of us know of her despite the fact she wanted to be unnoticed.

*What do we know of this woman?*

vs. 40-43

We know that people were very receiving of Jesus that day and had been waiting for him. A man named Jairus, official of the synagogue asked him to go to his home for his daughter of about twelve years was very sick. Jairus, Jesus and Peter and the others among them were walking as crowds were pressing in on Jesus... Then there was this woman who had been hemorrhaging for twelve years. No one had been able to heal her, not even the physicians in whom she had spent all of her living.

No social distancing going on in the streets. Jesus was on a mission for a little sick girl who was born about the same time this woman's affliction of bleeding had started! For the girl, twelve was so young and her life lay in the balance. However for this woman twelve years was a very long time of affliction. She was ritually isolated from the Temple (Leviticus 25) and was considered unclean because of her bleeding, so getting through the gates to the women's court was a "no go" for her. She was also socially isolated because anyone she touched or who touched her or her linens would also be tainted and had to go through cleansing rituals. (Leviticus 26-27.) *For 12 years?* We miss our church gatherings with others from *weeks* of distancing and sheltering in place; I can't even imagine her heartbreak! She was living in a time period that would not even afford her the technology of communicating that we enjoy today. Social distancing and loneliness even in a crowd was just the way of her existence.

*But then Jesus was passing by...*

vs. 44-47

Then the woman thinking to herself if only I could touch his robe I will be healed, suddenly reached out from behind him and did so... and immediately felt her flow of blood stop.

Then Jesus stopped and turned around and asked, "Who touched me?" When no one answered, it would be Peter of course, who filled the awkward silence questioning Jesus as to why he would ask this in such a crowd. Jesus then conveyed he felt the power go out from him. The woman knowing then she was not hidden came forth trembling with fear and told those in the crowd why she had touched him and how she had been instantly healed.

Poor woman, I am sure this was hard for her. This One she had come to, was he calling her out in disgust and shaming her? But then from her bowed down position she looked up at compassionate eyes as he spoke to her in public (which was looked down upon at that time) and she hears the beautiful words Jesus said to her...

*Daughter, be of good comfort: thy faith hath made thee whole, go in peace.*

vs. 48

He called her *Daughter*. *She was a daughter* of Abraham and God, *his Sister* and he spoke of her *faith*, *which* allowed her wholeness. (Spiritual, physical and emotional healing.)

He lavished her with *comfort and peace*.

I am in awe of this moment. Jesus and this woman, with such an audience, are locked in a moment of feeling from such a great power released and received between only them.

Did the crowd back away from her when she turned to go? (For by law she would still have seven days of washing once her bleeding had stopped to be considered clean.) Did they understand that Jesus deemed her clean right there? Did many who thought they may have been exposed to her go home and wash and cleanse by the law, just in case she contaminated them? Did she know that many that were pressing in on Jesus that day would turn on him later?

Had she heard in the temple that this One she bowed down to would die on a tree, suffering. But did she realize that his robe would be ripped from him to endure a public whipping and the shedding of his blood for all to see? Not to mention that he was cruelly mocked and ridiculed for his rightful claim as Son of God, having enduring a horrific thorn of crowns embedded on his head. Yet we were still on his mind. Did she ever know God raised him from the dead and through his life we all have hope of eternal life someday when he returns?

Did she know Jesus, who was born of a woman through her bleeding (just like all of us), would offer cleansing water through Baptism that would cleanse all our unrighteousness making us reborn through his precious and righteous blood, so we can be called sons and daughters and heirs to God's Kingdom?

This dear sweet Jesus who looked upon her would suffer so much, yet he stopped on such a busy day to give her his comfort and his peace. We don't know what she knew or would come to know....but we do know she reached out in great faith because she knew Jesus would be in the mist of it all in a very busy and pressing time. I have drawn from her strength so many times in my own life. So what can be gleaned in this time of uncertainty... a Pandemic crisis?

*With church doors closed to us... there are so many ways to reach out.*

Staying in touch with God through Jesus can transcend through any door. Thank Jesus for all that he has done for us. We can reach out with our prayers and needs and know that Jesus mediates them to the very throne of God. We can grow in knowledge through online teachings and virtual services and we can all open our Bibles and study his word.

We know that Jesus healed many with the authority and power God had given him during his earthly ministry, but he did not heal everyone. God still does not remove all of our afflictions today, but He does help us through them. There are many who have not been able to attend church due to illness, aging, etc. There are also many of our church family members throughout the world who do not have a church. Many with churches have seen church pews becoming more and more vacant. Many are not in safe areas to attend openly in a church. Many live in an area where there are no churches of like faith to attend. For those of us who have always had a church at our doorsteps, our sympathy can take a step closer to empathy at this time. We can pray for them. Give to the many ministries for them and pray for those dear precious people who are trying to help them, provide them with ministry materials and meet

their needs. Right now, many have lost their “living” thus giving us more opportunity to share the love of Christ and try to help. We can also find many ways to reach out; for the harvest is plenty, but the workers are few...We should also pray for our pastors, Churches and Conference leaders who are leading in such a hard time.

Like this woman who had such a private affliction, we have so many that may have graced our church for so long who carry pain, loneliness even in our midst. They carry burdens we cannot see. We can pray that God shows us ways we can openly show them the love of Jesus and acceptance. We can also pray that many will turn to or return to Him during such a time of crisis, and seek opportunity to help them through.

We can always be thankful for those who have fought for America and our rights of religious freedoms; many making the ultimate sacrifice. We can reflect on church history showing us that through persecution many have carried on the good news of the gospel in creative ways even when they could not meet in safety. Paul wrote letters from prison. Christians marked their homes with fish signs. So much we so readily have available for us today has been at the sacrifice of others who have ran the race, kept the faith and passed the torch down to us. Now it is our turn.

*Most of Jesus ministry was not in the Temple or Synagogues, but among the people and in everyday life.*

So it is for us today. While the buildings are our places of worship together, God’s people are to be a shining light and open arms to the communities and where ever we may go. This gives us great opportunities in such a dark world and an uncertain time. While many of us can’t be “out there” as much during this time, God gives us so many opportunities to spread good seed (Matt. 13) and hope in all of this. We must also be supportive and grateful for those that are on the essential and front lines with Covid-19. When someone does things for others even out of their pain and sorrow, that touch is felt so much deeper.

*In all of this...* Many Wonderful Things are going on “out there” today and hope is not lost. God is still in control and Jesus promised to never leave us or forsake us.

*And so we remember this woman who lived so long ago...*

It was her faith that overcame the circumstance she faced. Faith had strengthened her to reach out though she felt great fear. Her faith tapped into healing power that day.

For where there is *faith* there is *hope*; where there is *hope* there is *comfort* and where there is *comfort* there is *peace*.

*What I love most of all was her touch of faith made Jesus notice her.*

I want so much to be like her. For in such a precarious time with so many needs pressing in around Jesus, wouldn’t it be wonderful to know that whether I reached out for him for myself

or others that Jesus would stop and turn around in all the chaos and take notice? It is like I can close my eyes and feel the power of prayer and hear him whisper so dearly... *“Now that was a touch daughter, I felt that!”*

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## Questions

1. *In this story there were several people with Jesus traveling to Jairus' House. The woman, the crowd, the messengers, etc. intersect. Lets consider their experiences and how we should interact with Jesus.*

This story is told in Matthew 9:18-22, Luke 8:40-56 and Mark 5:22-35

A. Jairus the synagogue ruler had pleaded with Jesus to come to his home because his daughter lay at the point of death. The account of Mark 5:35 explains that people came from the house of Jairus and told him that his daughter had died. What do you think went through Jairus' mind when Jesus had stopped their hasty travel to his daughter to seek out this woman on the street?

Have you ever pleaded with Jesus for God to answer urgent prayer and found your answer delayed?

B. Peter spoke up and challenged Jesus' question of who touched him. Do you sometimes find yourself questioning Jesus or God when things are not going like you think they should?

C. The young girl in this story was born about the same time this woman's affliction started. Both were healed on the same day. Can you think of someone you know (who may be older or younger than you) that has gone through some of the same experiences in life that you have? Have those experiences shared in your relationship of faith ministered to both of you and brought you closer?

D. Luke's account tells us that she could no longer go unnoticed. She was no longer hidden in the crowd. In the presence of all the people, she told why she had touched Jesus and how she had been instantly healed. Do you struggle with telling others about Jesus though we are called out to be his witnesses?

2. *In the time of sheltering in place ...*

- a. How has it affected your faith?
- b. What are ways of reaching out that you or others have done that have touched your heart?
- c. What ways do you think you have grown toward a feeling of empathy rather than sympathy for those around you?