

From a Wretched Outcast to a Dear Daughter

Mark 5:21-34

Halifax: 4 August 2019

Introduction

As most of you know, I have been preaching through the gospel of Mark in our morning worship services.

- We are presently in the place where Mark presents us with a number of miracles that especially show us the gracious power of Christ.
- We have been singing Psalm 93 each week in connection with this part of Mark because Psalm 93 speaks about His majesty and power.
 - In Mark 4:35-41, Jesus amazed His disciples by calming a violent storm with a mere word. They had been helpless, now they were in awe before their Master.
 - In Mark 5:1-20, we saw how He cast out a whole legion of demons that had taken over a man so that nobody could control him. The demons became beggars before Jesus. He commanded them to depart from the man and they had to obey. All who encountered this were in awe! In their fear, the community begged Jesus to depart, but the man begged Jesus that he might go with him. Jesus told the man to stay in his community and tell everyone what great things the Lord had done for him.
- Today, we come to another desperate case: a woman that has been bleeding for twelve years that no doctor has been able to cure.
 - Today, we will see the mighty power of Christ revealed again when she comes to Him in her unique way for healing.

Listen as I read this passage to you, beginning in Mark 5:21.

- This is the word of God, so please pay careful attention.

Mark 5:21-34: Now when Jesus had crossed over again by boat to the other side, a great multitude gathered to Him; and He was by the sea. ²² And behold, one of the rulers of the synagogue came, Jairus by name. And when he saw Him, he fell at His feet ²³ and begged Him earnestly, saying, “My little daughter lies at the point of death. Come and lay Your hands on her, that she may be healed, and she will live.” ²⁴ So *Jesus* went with him, and a great multitude followed Him and thronged Him. ²⁵ Now a certain woman had a flow of blood for twelve years, ²⁶ and had suffered many things from many physicians. She had spent all that she had and was no better, but rather grew worse. ²⁷ When she heard about Jesus, she came behind *Him* in the crowd and touched His

garment. ²⁸ For she said, “If only I may touch His clothes, I shall be made well.” ²⁹ Immediately the fountain of her blood was dried up, and she felt in *her* body that she was healed of the affliction. ³⁰ And Jesus, immediately knowing in Himself that power had gone out of Him, turned around in the crowd and said, “Who touched My clothes?” ³¹ But His disciples said to Him, “You see the multitude thronging You, and You say, ‘Who touched Me?’ ” ³² And He looked around to see her who had done this thing. ³³ But the woman, fearing and trembling, knowing what had happened to her, came 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 affliction.”

May the LORD add His blessing to the reading of His holy word.

In this account, you see that Jesus is first entreated by an elder in the synagogue, named Jairus, to come and heal his daughter.

- As Jesus makes His way to the house of Jairus, this unnamed woman with the hemorrhage quietly makes her way through the crowd from behind and touches His garment in a way that would ordinarily have been imperceptible to Him.
- Her approach is similar to Jairus in that both of them are in deadly earnest, believing that Jesus was the only one who could help them;
 - but it is quite different in that Jairus came very openly while she comes secretly and touches his garment from behind in an effort to remain concealed.
- We need to understand that this difference in their approach is reflective of their different places in society.
 - Jairus was a well-known, well-respected ruling elder in the synagogue;
 - The woman was an outcast who had been unclean for the past twelve years because of her affliction.

Today, we will look at how Jesus, by His sovereign, gracious power, did more for this woman than she even asked,

- And next week, we will plan to look at Jairus and how Jesus also did more for him than he initially asked.

I want to explain to you how I will proceed today in looking at this woman.

- We will look at her infirmity both as the physical infirmity that it was, and also as a representation of our spiritual infirmity of sin.
 - Preachers have spiritualised Christ's miracles of healing from the beginning and for good reason—God Himself makes such a connection.
 - For example, His people's deliverance from Pharaoh of Egypt is used to represent our deliverance from Satan.
- I will present this sermon to you under four headings...and I will present it to you as it applies to you as those who, apart from Christ, are outcasts, like this woman.
 - First heading: God won't even let you enter His house in your condition.
 - Second: And there is nothing you can do to fix it.
 - Third: But if you come to Jesus in faith, He will fix it.
 - Fourth: Indeed, He will do much more. He will receive you into His very family.

Let's proceed:

I. God won't even let you enter His house in your condition.

A. It is highly offensive to many people and embarrassing to many Christians the way God excluded people from worship in the Old Testament for physical infirmities.

1. This poor woman in our text had a flow of blood for twelve years.

- As we read in Leviticus 15, a person with a bodily discharge like that was unclean, and anybody who came in contact with them had to wash their body and their clothes and remain unclean until evening.
- Even the places where she sat were made unclean by association with her.
- There were similar prohibitions for other infirmities.
 - Leprosy is a well-known example.
 - It was also the case that if you came into contact with a dead body, it made you unclean.

2. This was a major part of the social structure of God's people in the Old Covenant.
 - To be unclean meant that you could not engage in the ceremonies of worship that God had appointed for His people at that time.
 - It also meant that you had to avoid making contact with other people lest you make them unclean, and it meant that they avoided making contact with you.
 - It basically made you an outcast.
- B. But our Lord, who is always very gracious, had good reasons for these prohibitions that seem so offensive to us today.
 1. First, He did it to show us that nothing deformed by the curse will be permitted in His presence.
 - The ritual worship of the Old Testament did not allow that which was associated with death and deformity to enter the temple.
 - Now of course the earthly worship at the temple was symbolic, but the symbols are symbols of eternal realities.
 - And what these prohibitions of uncleanness show us is that when God brings us to glory, there will be no more death, no more sickness, no more curse, no more infirmity.
 - It assures us that we will be delivered from all of these things when we come into God's eternal house. We will be cleaned up as it were.
 - There will be a resurrection to immortality and there will be no more curse. He will not have such things before His face.
 - So you that have physical infirmities, take heart, you will have none of that in glory... that is God's promise to all of us.
 2. Second, our Lord used those with bodily infirmities to be to us a picture of the sin that excludes us all from entering into His house.
 - Even though most people were able to worship at the temple, only the priest could enter the inner sanctuary, and only once per year after all sorts of washings and ceremonies of purification.
 - And the ordinary worshippers could only come to a certain point, and that only after they had many ceremonies of purification and atonement.
 - The whole point was that not one person was fit to come before God apart from His saving work—because they were under God's curse and because of their sin.
 - Sin is a very offensive thing to our holy God.
 - It is reprehensible that we who are made in His image should have ill will toward each other, or rebellion toward our God—that we should tell lies, worship idols, take God's name in vain, commit adultery, live in selfishness and greed, neglect others—all this is reprehensible. . .
 - It defiles us—it ruins us in God's sight—it is entirely unacceptable.
 - You have all had people sin against you and you know what an ugly defiling thing it can be—but because we are *all* unclean, we are desensitised... and so not nearly as offended by sin as our holy Maker is.
 - We are spiritual lepers. We are defiled by all that comes out of heart and mouth. Everything we do comes short of the glory of God and makes us unfit.

3. My friends, you have not seen things in the right way until you see that *you* are offensive to God.
 - Sin and all that is associated with sin is not acceptable in His sight.
 - You cannot come before God in your condition any more than this bleeding woman could come to the ritual worship at the temple.
 - Like this woman, you are not fit to enter the house of God or to have communion with Him.
 - I hope that the Holy Spirit has worked in you so that you can see that.
 - I hope that you are humble in spirit and that you mourn over your sin and over the condition of death and suffering to which sin has brought this world.

TRANS> The Lord will not let you enter His house in your condition...

II. And there is nothing you can do to fix yourself—to rectify your condition.

A. You can see that with this poor woman as she is presented to us.

1. She had tried.
 - Verse 26 tells us of her efforts and of the outcome of her efforts—
 - from verse 25 we read: **Now a certain woman had a flow of blood for twelve years, 26 and had suffered many things from many physicians. She had spent all that she had and was no better, but rather grew worse.**
2. There is no doubt that some of the methods that were employed would have been very unpleasant—she suffered many things from many physicians.
 - You know even in our day of modern medicine the terrible effects of chemotherapy or long term use of certain medications...
 - And you know how many who are treated are made worse, not better.
 - Over and over what was thought to be good practice is recalled when the stats start to come in.
 - It is not always so—often our doctors do wonders.
 - But in the case of this woman, there was no improvement, only more misery... to illustrate how helpless we are in our sin.
 - And to add to it all, she had spent all that she had on these worthless remedies.

TRANS> Someone will say (as they did to me this very week), “Where is God in all of this?”

- And I tell you, our Lord was right in the middle of it all.
 - By His gracious hand of providence, He brought this woman to this place where she saw that there was nothing she could do.
 - He did it for her sake and He does for all those He reconciles to Himself.
 - This woman needed to see how desperate her condition was, and so do you.

B. What a picture she is of all of us...

1. Try as we might, there is no remedy for many of our infirmities.
 - What suffering there is in the earth because of these infirmities!
 - Above all, there is death—in OT law even contact with a dead body made you unclean.
 - Yet, try as we might, we have no remedy for death.
 - Sin has brought God’s curse and God’s curse has made us mortal.
 - There is nothing we can do about it.

2. But even more vexing... here we have a picture of sin in our society.
 - Social reformers in the late 1800s and the early 1900s dreamed of a utopian society, especially through government education.
 - Herculean efforts have been made—fortunes have been spent—but who would say that we have brought forth such a utopia?
 - Each generation seems to have less self-control, less willingness to actually sacrifice for others, less ability to get along in marriage...
 - But worst of all, our efforts have filled us with pride so that we are a people who try to get along without God.
 - We deny Him as our creator, we reject Him as our lawmaker and judge, and we see no need of Him as our redeemer.
 - Our condition is deplorable.
3. But our ruined estate strikes us the hardest, when the Holy Spirit begins to show us our own personal sin.
 - It is them that you realise that there is nothing you can do to rectify it.
 - As soon as you begin to see what you are before God, you realise how desperate your case really is.
 - Like Isaiah, one of the holiest of men, when you see the glory of God you cry out, “Woe is me, for I am undone! I am a man of unclean lips!”
 - Like the aged godly apostle John, you see the Lord in His glory and you fall down at His feet as dead.
 - What atonement can you offer for our sin?
 - What sacrifice can you make?
 - What method can you enact to change your heart?

TRANS> Truly, there is nothing you can do to rectify your wretched condition.

III. But if you come to Jesus in faith, He will fix it... He will fix your condition.

A. This woman is a splendid example of the kind of faith that saves.

1. There is much faith that doesn't save.
 - Faith does not save when it is in the wrong object.
 - There are many who trust in their own works or their own goodness or some idol they made up to make them acceptable to God.
 - Such faith might make them feel better for now, but in the end it will be their ruin.
 - We have faith in bridges that we cross, but that does not keep the bridge from falling. Our faith is only good if the bridge is good.
2. The faith of this woman was effective because her faith was in Jesus.
 - He is the only one who was able to deliver her.
 - She had trusted in the physicians, but they were not able to deliver her.
 - To have faith in Jesus is to have faith in the right object—in the only one who can save you.

B. Let's take a look at her faith.

1. First, you see that it began when she *heard* about Jesus.
 - Look at verse 27: **When she heard about Jesus, she came...**

- Perhaps she heard of Jesus from people in her own community.
 - Perhaps she heard Jairus, the synagogue ruler, come before Jesus and say, **“My little daughter lies at the point of death. Come and lay Your hands on her, that she may be healed, and she will live,”** and thought,
 - “If he can heal a girl at the point of death, He can heal me.”
 - Perhaps her encouragement grew all the stronger when she saw Jesus go with Jairus, showing that He would heal this young woman.
 - But however she heard, her hearing caused her to come with faith to Jesus.
2. And that is the next thing—she not only came, but she came believing that Jesus could heal her.
- Her conviction that He can heal her is seen in verse 28: **For she said, “If only I may touch His clothes, I shall be made well.”**
 - It is not so much that she necessarily had perfect confidence—but it was that she looked to the right remedy—that is what made the difference.
 - So true, isn’t it?
 - At last, here was someone who could heal her.
3. But that is not all. She is also persistent, else she would not have come to Him.
- a. This woman is a fantastic example of faith in that she will not be stopped.
 - She was not supposed to go through the crowd. She would make everyone she touched unclean.
 - She was not supposed to touch Jesus without His permission.
 - b. But she had to get to Him and nothing could stop her.
 - She presses through the crowd until she gets to Him and she touches Him and she is healed.
- C. I must tell you that this is a distinctive mark of true faith.
1. Once you realise that you are a wretched sinner, that you cannot save yourself, and that only Jesus can save you,
- nothing can stop you from coming to Him.
 - Your pride that says, “I have to work out my own problems” cannot stop you—it doesn’t matter anymore. You must get to Jesus.
 - Your family can oppose you—they can even cast you out... but you must go to Jesus.
 - Your friends can smile at you in a condescending way and think you are quite silly, but you must go to Jesus.
 - The governing authorities can make it illegal for you to go to Jesus, they can threaten you with penalties, with torture, even with death, but none of that matters to you... you must go to Jesus.
2. And so you work out a way to get to Him.
- Whatever cost, whatever sacrifice, whatever crowds you must press through—you press through.
 - He is the only one who can save you, so like this wonderful woman, you come to Him...
- D. Look at the wonderful result.
1. There was no delay.

- Verse 29 says: **Immediately the fountain of her blood was dried up, and she felt in her body that she was healed of the affliction.**
 - She knew that He had done it.
 - The bleeding had stopped and she could feel that things had been put right.
- 2. So it is for all who come to Jesus for the forgiveness of sin.
 - Once you trust in Him as the one who died to pay for your sins, the forgiveness is complete and you are on your way to glory.
 - You are not yet free of sin in that you still commit it—that freedom is not promised until Jesus returns—
 - but you are delivered from sin’s dominion so that you will continue in service to God, and you are *completely* freed from its penalty.
 - If Jesus has suffered the pains of hell in your place, you will most certainly not have to suffer those pains yourself... ever!
 - And if you have come to Him in faith, forgiveness is yours from then until all eternity.
- 3. And children, let me say something to you here.
 - When you were born, your parents, if they know Jesus, brought you to Him for cleansing and forgiveness of your sin.
 - They presented you for baptism, showing that they were looking to Jesus for your cleansing from sin just they look to Him for their own cleansing.
 - You were unable to understand that you needed to be cleansed and that Jesus was the one to do the cleansing.
 - But now as you are growing up and maturing, the time is coming for you to be able to see that you need to be cleansed and to look to Him for yourself.
 - His Spirit is at work in you to help you see your sin and your need of Him.
 - And the day will come when it will be your responsibility to profess with your mouth that He is your Lord and to believe in your heart that God accepted Him as an acceptable sacrifice for your sin.
 - When you do, you will profess your faith and you will be received to the Lord’s Supper.
 - With your baptism, you were brought by your parents to Jesus for cleansing.
 - But with the Lord’s Supper, you come because you are looking to Him for cleansing for yourself.
 - For many of you, your profession will grow up in you as you mature just the way your body grows—one day, you are full grown.

TRANS> What a grand thing it is to have Jesus as our Saviour.

- Now you, who could not even enter His house on account of your condition have been delivered through faith in Jesus.
 - If you come to Jesus in faith with your ruined condition, He will fix it!

IV. Indeed, He will do much more. He will receive you into His very family.

- A. Though we have admired this woman’s faith, there was a defect in it that Jesus corrects. It is a defect that we all have to some extent.

1. She came to Jesus to be healed of her infirmity, which was good, but she came to Him as if He were a miracle dispensary.
 - He will not allow her to treat Him as a mere miracle dispensary.
 - This is a great problem with many.
 - They hear that in Jesus there is forgiveness of sins.
 - They see that they are a sinner.
 - They come to Him in faith and they receive forgiveness.
 - But Jesus will not let anyone stop there!
2. This woman wanted healing, but Jesus wanted relationship.
 - She earnestly pursued Him, but now He just as earnestly pursued her.
 - She wanted to receive the benefit and remain aloof but He will not have it.
 - Look at how He comes after her!
 - Verse 30-33: **And Jesus, immediately knowing in Himself that power had gone out of Him, turned around in the crowd and said, “Who touched My clothes?”** ³¹ **But His disciples said to Him, “You see the multitude thronging You, and You say, ‘Who touched Me?’ ”**
 - This is rather humorous—this was an intense moment—Jesus was going to heal a dying girl. No one noticed what this woman did. People were all around Jesus, jostling Him as He went along.
 - And suddenly in the middle of all this, He stops and says “Who touched Me?”
 - The disciples seem to be even a bit annoyed—“Lots of people touched You in this crowd. Why would You stop and ask this?”
 - Of course it was because there was one in the crowd whose touch was a touch of faith, looking to Him for healing.
 - Jesus knew that He had healed her.
 - And so the pursuit of her continues... vs. 32:
 - ³² **And He looked around to see her who had done this thing.** ³³ **But the woman, fearing and trembling, knowing what had happened to her, came and fell down before Him and told Him the whole truth.**
 - You see that He is looking for her!
 - Perhaps she had avoided coming to Him in a public way because of the embarrassing nature of her condition—perhaps she was just a shy person—perhaps she was used to being an outcast...
 - But now He has called her and she must come before Him and so she comes with fear and trembling and she tells all.
 - Jesus has forced her to come out of hiding and tell everyone what He had done for her.

B. Jesus does this for everyone’s sake. He has us profess our faith for good reasons.

1. He does it for His own sake.
 - He has done a marvellous work for this woman and it ought to be known so that He might be honoured and glorified as that one who has power to save.
 - So that all might see His power to heal her when no one else could and His grace to receive her though she was unclean.

2. He does it for the sake of others...
 - So that we, by seeing His reception of her, might be encouraged to come to Him too, following her example.
 - No one would know what He had done if He had not called her forth.
 - When He saves us from our sins, He wants us to declare it, to be baptised, to profess our faith, to unite with His church, to testify of what great things He has done for us, to confess with our mouth in the assembly.
3. He does it for the woman's sake...
 - It was hard for her—He often does things that are hard for us.
 - Her infirmity for twelve years had been hard too.
 - Israel's slavery in Egypt for generations was hard.
 - Coming forward like this before these people was hard... but it was necessary for her own sake.
 - He does not want her to go away healed, but a stranger.
 - He does not want sinners to be merely forgiven.
 - He insists that we become His friends—yea, even His family!
 - Every disciple is called to profess his faith and to walk with Him as our Lord and Saviour, growing in our relationship with Him by the means of grace.

C. See here the beautiful kindness of Jesus to this woman who was unfit to even enter His presence.

1. He calls her, "Daughter."
 - Verse 34 begins, **And He said to her, "Daughter..."**
 - This could be taken as a mere form of address that was sometimes used, but I think not on the lips of Jesus—not in this case.
 - Here is this trembling woman, and Jesus, who measures His words, says "daughter" to assure her that she is His.
 - Surely it was meant to be a treasured encouragement that she is no longer an outcast, but family.
 - She is not only worthy to come into God's presence—to enter His house—but she is now one of His children... a beloved daughter.
2. And then He assures her... **"Daughter, your faith has made you well."**
 - She already knew that she was well... but for Jesus to declare it made it all the more certain— she had believed in Him and that He had healed her.
 - He uses a more general word than our translation suggests... ninety percent of the time it is translated "save," so that here we could say, "Your faith has saved you."
 - Yes, it saved her from her physical infirmity, but from much more.
3. And now He sends her off with great encouragement—with the blessing of peace, saying: **"Go in peace, and be healed of your affliction."**
 - Go with the wholeness of life that comes from God's blessing—with the fullness of acceptance with Him—as His own daughter.
 - Such assurance He speaks to all who come to Him.
 - He speaks it over the years as He continually draws us into relationship with Himself more and more over the years as we commune with Him day by day.

Conclusion:

You see what He has done.

- We come to Him for *something*—to be healed, for forgiveness, for cleansing, for deliverance of some kind...
 - And we go away as His friends—even as His sons and daughters.
 - We pursue Him for our needs, and He pursues us for friendship and adoption.
- He orchestrated this whole affair... from the twelve years of suffering without relief... to the secret approach of desperate faith... to the tender embrace of her as His daughter.
 - The whole process of our struggle under sin and its curse; and our deliverance through faith; is all carefully designed to bring us to rich union with our Lord...
 - that we might know Him and that we might love Him forever being loved by Him as His sons and daughters.
 - See that you walk with Him in growing communion with Him by His grace until the day comes that you enter His house in glory.
 - This is eternal life, the you might know the Father and Jesus Christ whom He has sent.