

Christ's Healing Power

United Prayer Meditations

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Bible Text: Mark 5:28

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So I want to focus just briefly here in verse 28,

28 For she said, If I may touch but his clothes, I shall be whole.

Well, this is a famous and a wonderful instance of Christ's healing power of which there are so many in the gospels. This one is recorded three times, one time each in three of the gospels, and it shows the power of Jesus Christ to deal with misery and with sin which is at the root of all misery. What I want to focus on, this is just for a few moments here from the perspective of prayer because this woman shows me the real heart and essence of prayer. She's a picture to me of real persistent and blessing-obtaining prayer and it comes down to this, "For she said, If I may touch but his clothes, I shall be whole," and I want to emphasize this with us today. There's a difference between pressing around Jesus and touching the hem of his garments.

In that day there in Galilee as Jesus was doing his miracles and teaching many things, there was a mob, there was a crowd of people who were interested, they wanted to hear, they wanted to see, and later on Peter, when Jesus asked the question, "Who touched me?" Peter kind of indignantly and ignorantly and foolishly says, "You know, why are you asking that? There's a whole throng of people pressing up against you, Jesus." But here's the point: these people were part of the crowd, there was contact with Jesus but no heartfelt communion, at least in this moment. There was no need in their souls to draw forth from Christ this healing, this strengthening power except in the case of this woman, and this brings me to really a definition, if you will, of this kind of prayer, this heartfelt prayer as I reflected on it. I see prayer in its very essence as the intentional resolute placing of our need, our weakness, our desires, all upon Christ as the surety, as the mediator offered in the gospel, held out to sinners, believing that he is everything that we need and that all that he's said is absolute truth, necessary truth, life-giving truth.

That's what this woman did, she took the need of her soul and body and life and brought it all to the very feet of Jesus, and the Lord had weaned her off of much in her life. She had gone to every physician she could find and she was nothing better, only worse, and God does that in our lives. We look to others, we look around us, we look within us, but

what a blessing it is when God weans us off of all of that in the ultimate sense of the word, when we realize what our soul's deepest need and longing is, is for God, and this woman, in her distress, cried out to God. And she persisted. She faced a lot of obstacles. She faced emotion, spiritual, physical, social obstacles, many barriers around her. She was unclean. She was not supposed to touch people or she would render them unclean. She must have, after 12 years of seclusion, been very depressed and it would be hard to break the boundaries that were all around her.

But this woman persisted and she did it, telling herself, "If I may touch but the hem of his garment, I shall be whole." And actually in the original it gives you this sense she's saying this to herself continually. She said it over and over and over again and it was this spirit with which she left her house. It was this spirit with which she went up to the crowd. It was this spirit with which she persevered and wove her way through the crowd until she was at the feet of Jesus. There was such yearning, such burden, such desire mixed with need in her soul that she kept on preaching the gospel to herself, "If I may but touch the hem of his garment, I'll be whole."

Now as it relates to prayer, Isaiah 64, as you well know, says this, this is God, "there is none that calleth upon thy name, that stirreth up himself to take hold of thee: for thou hast hid thy face from us, and hast consumed us, because of our iniquities." So the prophet on behalf of God is saying no one is stirring themselves to take hold of God. And so what prayer is, it's the stirring of God in the soul to take hold of him, his character, his promises, his gospel.

So there was real faith in this woman's heart. Notice how she says it, "If I may but touch his clothes, I shall be whole." She knows it. She believes it. It's clear to her. It's certain to her. "I will be whole. Healing is in him and if I but touch him, even the extremity of Christ, there's such power, there's such life, there's such strength, I will be whole." So to this woman Jesus was everything. Jesus was life in the midst of her death, Jesus was power in the midst of her weakness and that's really what it was, it was the emptiness of her life like a vacuum that was just driven to Christ who was all and Jesus was there ready for her. And virtue went out of him, power went out of him, life went out of him. He was willing to give himself to this woman in terms of power not only but full salvation, and so he is with every sinner who comes to him, and with every one of his people who comes to him afresh with all our need, all our lack, we press up against him and in faith we draw forth everything we need. "Bless the LORD, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name." He forgives our iniquities. He heals our diseases. He renews our youth as the eagle. He's everything.

But I just want to say in closing just three thoughts briefly. Let whatever need God brings into our life, whatever need we see around us, whatever need we feel in our souls. Don't just sit there. These are calls to prayer. Whenever we have a burden, anxiety, a care, a need, God is inviting us to take that to him. That's what this woman did. And so you ride the wave of the need of your soul and you bring it and you let it drive you and draw you to the Savior. Don't let weakness, even weakness of faith keep you from Christ but let that draw you to find strength in him.

Secondly, let's persist. This woman persisted against all obstacles until she had that hem of Christ's garment firmly in her grasp, and that's actually what the word says, she clutched it, she grabbed it. It wasn't just a brush, it was a real, determined, resolute touch and she felt it and she knew it.

And then lastly, let's not rest until we have his strength in the midst of our weakness. His strength is made perfect in our weakness. Let us wait on the Lord. Let us persist in prayer. Let us do what the prophet encourages us to do and that is to wait unto the Lord until we mount up with wings as eagles, we'll run and not be weary, we'll walk and we won't faint. May God give this to all of you and to many more, and let's not be satisfied until we have his power in the midst of our weakness.

Thank you all.