

May 23 A SICK WOMAN: *On the Fringe* Pentecost Sunday (switch to red stole!); John assisting (Daniel online)

The third of 4 stories in our “Loving Jesus” series that focuses on women. In Luke 2, he told of the elderly prophetess, Anna, who saw Simeon bless baby Jesus at the Temple. There are 3 more stories about Jesus’ ministry to women in Luke 8. It begins with the story of 3 women “and many others, who provided for them out of their means.” Though men are the headliners, the women paid the bills for Jesus’ ministry. At the end of Luke 8 is the story of two women who are in heart-breaking difficulty. This story interrupts another story about a girl who is 12 who is dying. This story also mentions the #12 – a woman has had an issue of blood for 12 years.

This week’s **sermon journal** intro (New SJ’s available. This info is in your bulletin on your smart device): INTRODUCTION: The story of the woman with a discharge of blood for twelve years is sandwiched between the story of Jairus’ daughter (next week’s text). She didn’t have leprosy, but she was impure according to the Jewish Law (Leviticus 15). Consequences followed. Twelve years is a long time. Her illness became her identity. She spent all her money trying to get well. She had only one hope—maybe something good could happen because Jesus of Nazareth was passing her way. She did not have the courage to talk to Jesus but hoped to sneak up unseen from behind and anonymously touch the hem of his garment. It is amazing Jesus knew something had happened. She exhibited great faith. Her hope was realized. You know she loved Jesus after she met Him. Jesus always saw people as people. She was a person of sacred worth, even though she was “impure” according to the Law. Jesus wanted her to know there is more to life than the Law, and more than just physical healing—she could go “in peace.” Jesus gives His followers peace (see Luke 7:50). Some in the Bible were healed because of their faith. Others were reluctant, hesitant, or doubtful. Others were not healed. Why was Peter miraculously released from prison, but James martyred? Paul prayed without success three times for the thorn in his flesh to be removed. A miracle does not happen for everyone. We need to make sense of suffering, pain, and evil. Even though she was healed, like all of us, she would later die from something. The larger purpose of this miracle was to be another sign of Christ’s identity—the Messiah.

Luke 8:42b-48

As Jesus went, the people pressed around him. ⁴³And there was a woman who had had a discharge of blood for twelve years, and though she had spent all her living on physicians, she could not be healed by anyone. ⁴⁴She came up behind him and touched the fringe of his garment, and immediately her discharge of blood ceased. ⁴⁵And Jesus said, "Who was it that touched me?" When all denied it, Peter said, "Master, the crowds surround you and are pressing in on you!" ⁴⁶But Jesus said, "Someone touched me, for I perceive that power has gone out from me." ⁴⁷And when the woman saw that she was not hidden, she came trembling, and falling down before him declared in the presence of all the people why she had touched him, and how she had been immediately healed. ⁴⁸And he said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace."

As Jesus went, the people pressed around him. People were pressing Jesus – he was like an ambulance driver stuck in traffic on his way to see Jairus’ daughter. Poor Jairus – he’s waiting for Dr. Jesus to show up. The crowd didn’t have ill will – but nobody wanted to miss out on this!

⁴³*And there was a woman who had had a discharge of **blood** for twelve years* This is a woman of childbearing years who had a medical need. Something seriously wrong - her bleeding wouldn’t stop. Her cycle had continued for 12 years. Here’s the rest of the story. Leviticus 15 says when a woman has a cycle, she is ceremonially **unclean**. Because of her issue, she is losing her health AND is being cut off. She is ceremonially unclean. It’s more than not being able to go to the Temple, she is unclean like a leper. She might contaminate you. She must be removed. Her life became a big list of “no’s.” She couldn’t go home, either. No cooking, cleaning, entertaining, socializing. Family life was over, too. She couldn’t touch her husband or her children. No hugs, kisses, affection. No touch – no life. Think of COVID and be isolated for a year. She had 12 COVIDs.

and though she had spent all her living on physicians, she could not be healed by anyone. Nothing stopped her problem. Nobody had an answer. She went to one doctor after another and paid for their services, but they couldn’t help. And she spent all of her money on cures that didn’t work. When her money ran

out, so did the medical attention. Her health was still broken and so was her heart. She was afraid; she needed peace. She was alone; she needed companionship. She was ashamed; she needed grace. She was broke and broken; she needed restored. She had been in a dark place for a long time. She needed light. She had no hope; she needed Jesus.

And then she heard about Jesus. He touched people. He touched unclean people. He even touched a leper.

When he entered the house, the blind men came to him, and Jesus said to them, "Do you believe that I am able to do this?" They said to him, "Yes, Lord." Then he touched their eyes, saying, "According to your faith be it done to you." Matthew 9:28-30

And wherever he came, in villages, cities, or countryside, they laid the sick in the marketplaces and implored him that they might touch even the fringe of his garment. And as many as touched it were made well. Mark 6:56

While he was in one of the cities, there came a man full of leprosy. And when he saw Jesus, he fell on his face and begged him, "Lord, if you will, you can make me clean." And Jesus stretched out his hand and touched him, saying, "I will; be clean." And immediately the leprosy left him. Luke 5:12-14

⁴⁴ *She came up behind him and touched the fringe of his garment, and immediately her discharge of blood ceased. Notes: Mural at Magdala. Her healing was physical, ritual, and relational. She was proactive. She took charge. She did something because she was desperate. She was tired of living like she'd been living. Debilitating. Humiliating. But this was also very risky because she was ceremonially unclean. She would be making Jesus ritually impure, too, by touching Him. She knew the rules of engagement. She knew what she was doing was risky. No wonder she was terrified.*

And Jesus said, "Who was it that touched me?" When all denied it, Peter said, "Master, the crowds surround you and are pressing in on you!"⁴⁶ But Jesus said, "Someone touched me, for I perceive that power has gone out from me." Jesus stopped and everything came to screeching halt. He perceived an actual transfer of energy/power.

⁴⁷ *And when the woman saw that she was not hidden, she came trembling, and falling down before him declared in the presence of all the people why she had touched him, and how she had been immediately healed. Busted. Terrified. Yet...she knew she was healed.*

⁴⁸ *And he said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace." This is the only time Jesus ever called someone "Daughter." What a tender moment.*

Jesus understood **HER** needs. *Now that we know what we have — Jesus, this great High Priest with ready access to God — let's not let it slip through our fingers. We don't have a priest who is out of touch with our reality. He's been through weakness and testing, experienced it all — all but the sin. So let's walk right up to him and get what he is so ready to give. Take the mercy, accept the help. (Hebrews 4:14-16 THE MESSAGE) Jesus was touched by the pain that touches us. He knows what pain is like in the Garden of Gethsemane and at the cross.*

Jesus understands **OUR** needs. If life is in our blood, we will all bleed (suffer from something). We all carry something. We all have our private pain. We bleed for others, too. We bleed for a wounded world. If we didn't bleed, or care, we would be spiritually barren. If we didn't bleed, we'd not be human.

Jesus often works from the **FRINGES**. Simeon, the old man, who finally got to see the Messiah when Jesus was a baby. And Anna, the elderly widow prophetess who watched Simeon and also got to see the Messiah. There was a leper Jesus touched, a paralytic He healed, and last week it was a look at Legion – a man possessed by evil. Next week it's a 12 year old girl. Elderly, young, sick, paralyzed, caught by evil – Jesus was always reaching out to those who were the least, the last, the lonely, the lost. You've heard the saying, "cringe worthy" – some embarrassing thing that makes you cringe. This lady was "cringe worthy" in the eyes of society and the Jewish law, but she was "fringe worthy" in the eyes of Jesus.

"He drew a circle that shut me out- Heretic, rebel, a thing to flout. But love and I had the wit to win: We drew a circle and took him in!" (Edwin Markham) Loving Jesus.

Closing Prayer (Consultation of Methodist Women Ministers – Oxford 1984)

"We all bleed. We bleed for ourselves – we each have our private pain. We bleed for others. We bleed for a wounded world. If we did not bleed for others in some measure, would we not be spiritually barren? Unfit for our calling, incapable of conceiving and nurturing new life, forming relationships and caring communities. But if the pain takes over and the bleeding becomes constant do we not then find that we have lost touch with our Lord? He is obscured by the crowd of our concerns, the crowd of our activities, the crowd of our own words. Jesus, help us to touch you now, to lay before you our own and the world's pain. Help us as we wait in silence to feel your healing hands upon us."