

Your Faith Has Healed You

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[0 : 0 0] Mark 5 verses 24 through 34. Some people say that Christianity is very much a patriarchal religion where women are treated as second class citizens. They consider Christianity to be terribly misogynistic with its gender inequality belonging firmly in the dark ages and not to the modern world.

But you know I wonder whether those who say these things have ever really read from the Bible and met the extraordinary woman we find there. From Eve the mother of us all to Deborah female judge of Israel. From Mary the mother of our Lord to Mary Magdalene whose testimony to the resurrection of Jesus was the single most powerful message ever proclaimed.

Female heroes fill the pages of scripture. Likewise although regrettably they were not always treated equally Christ's gospel message equalizes our status before God as saved by faith saved by grace rather through faith in Christ.

In Christ's kingdom there is neither male nor female but Christ is all and Christ is in all. Well one of the greatest examples of a female hero in the Bible is the woman who came to Jesus here in Mark 5.

She is the outstanding example of saving faith in the scriptures. Saving faith.

[2 : 1 0] You hear about what faith really is. You hear about it all the time from this pulpit. And you've heard time after time that salvation is by faith alone.

And that's all very well but you say what is saving faith? You've seen it in the lives of others. Perhaps even you want it for yourself.

And yet you don't really know what it is such that you can have it for yourself. Let this remarkable woman be your guide in what saving faith really is.

Faith in the Christ who saves to the uttermost. Let me suggest from these verses that we can understand the process by which this lady came to saving faith in Jesus Christ in three stages.

First of all she was someone with a past. Then she was someone with a plan. And then she was someone with a peace. And you know the greatest irony is we don't even know this lady's name.

[3 : 1 8] But she goes down in history as being an outstanding believer in Christ. And someone who we all want to imitate.

First of all she's someone with a past. She's someone with a past. All of us, even the youngest of us, have a past.

Now I assume that we all understand what we're talking about when we talk about us having a past. We've got things in our lives which embarrass us. Make us ashamed. Things which hurt us when we think about them.

Our past may not be our fault. It may contain things that were done to us as opposed to things we did. But nevertheless it's our past and try as hard as we might we can't leave it behind.

Perhaps we were bullied in school. Or abused at home. Or at some stage in our lives we struggled with mental illness. Perhaps our heart was broken by a relationship that just simply was not meant to be.

[4 : 25] Our past may be our fault. The guilt of which we feel only too keenly. And I don't want to speak about that kind of past. The kind that was our fault.

I want to speak about the other kind of past. The kind that wasn't our fault. I want to speak about that kind of past. Because that's the kind of past this woman had.

She's just a normal person. And yet she's contracted this deeply embarrassing physical condition. It's not profitable to go into the pathology of her illness.

Sufficient to say that for any woman it was deeply embarrassing and very painful. She would have been significantly weakened by the continual loss of blood.

And not able to work to her full ability. Under the laws of the Old Testament she was unclean. And therefore she could not enter into the temple precincts to worship God.

[5 : 29] People who knew her considered her unclean. Gods cursed that person. They wouldn't have pitied her as much as they would have despised her.

In his old age my grandfather would tell me about medical treatment. Particularly dentistry.

In his young years in the small Highland village in which he and I were brought up. The village in which we catch the haggis for you. Once every few months the dentist would roll into town.

And he'd set up a big tent in the playing fields. And local people would pay for their teeth to be removed. For dental work to be done.

And for pain to be inflicted. Thing is. When he came to town the dentist. The first thing the dentist would do would be to employ a local man. And that local man's job was to sit outside that tent.

[6 : 32] Banging on a big drum. And making a huge din. The reason the dentist wanted the drum clattered continuously. Was that no one in the village would hear the screams of the poor patient.

Having their wisdom teeth removed. I've never made any secret of my suspicion of dentists. But today at least we have anaesthesia.

You know the doctors of this woman's day. Were about as basic and crude as the dentists of my grandfather's early years. There was no NHS in Israel.

So you had to pay for the privilege of having some quack inflict pain upon you. So severe and chronic were this woman's experiences with the doctors.

That our text tells us in verse 26. She had suffered a great deal under the care of many doctors. And she'd spent all she had. But despite all her sufferings.

[7 : 31] It wasn't better she was getting. It was worse she was getting. The condition was becoming more debilitating. More embarrassing. More painful. Here's a woman with a past.

Not her fault. Not at all. Sometimes our past is our fault. But not always. The point is whatever your past is.

You can take it to Jesus. It is difficult to overestimate. The pain this woman was enduring. Physically. Socially. Mentally. Many people I've met.

Have used their past. As a weapon against God. They entirely blame him. For what they've had to endure. And they turn away.

But we're not going to do that. Are we? Because the same Jesus who dealt with this woman's past. Can deal with ours also. Right? In truth.

[8 : 34] This woman's condition. Though not being her fault. In any way. Was hers as a function of living in this broken sinful world. It was never meant to be this way. Because God created a perfect world.

It was the entrance of defiant sin. Along with which. All sin's miseries came. One of which being human illness. When Adam ate from that forbidden fruit in Genesis 3.

It was as if he had opened Pandora's box of miseries. You can trace this woman's illness back to that basic human condition. A condition we all share.

Each of us here. Has a past. Whether that past is our direct fault or not.

We can take it to Jesus. Because only he is able to deal with it. And so once again I ask the question. What's your past? Today.

[9 : 33] I would guess that at least half of us do not have this person's precise physical disability. It's something different. Right? But whatever it is.

You've been trying for many years to deal with it. Yourself. But you're getting nowhere. And slowly and surely. You're losing hope that you'll ever deal with your past.

Maybe no one else knows your story. Not even your nearest and dearest. But whatever it is. It's embarrassing to you. It's shameful to you. You want rid of it.

There's only one place you can take it. To the same place this saving hero of the faith took her past. To Jesus.

Secondly. This lady was someone with a plan. Someone with a plan. All of us here have a past. But few of us have any meaningful plans. For how we're going to deal with our past.

[10 : 35] But this remarkable woman did. This heroine of the faith. Joined with this great crowd thronging Jesus. And she touched the hem of his garment. And in so doing she was healed.

Her plan consisted of four brief stages. She heard. She thought. She touched. And she professed. According to verse 27.

First of all. She heard about Jesus. How she heard about him. We don't precisely know. But she heard. That's the important point. The first step to her being at peace.

Came through her ears. Through what she heard. Who she heard it from. In what context. We do not know. The important point is. She heard.

Jesus himself. Often used to say. He who has ears to hear. Let him hear. The first step. To new life. Is new listening to Jesus.

[11 : 37] To who Jesus is. To what Jesus has done. To what Jesus can do. How important it is. That we.

Hear of Jesus. If we are to have genuine. Saving faith in him. The apostle Paul. Issues a stream of questions. In Romans 10. Designed.

To emphasize the point. That everyone who calls. On the name of the Lord. Will be saved. Paul asks. How can they call. On the one. Of whom they have not heard.

And how can they believe. In the one. In whom they have not heard. And how can they hear. Without someone. Preaching to them. That's it.

Is it not. The preaching of the word. Points the way. To the door. To salvation. In all. That evangelism. We must be.

[12 : 34] Scripture. Heavy. And gospel. Full. For it is in the. Hearing. We take our first step. To saving faith. Are you.

Listening. To Jesus. Really. Listening. Really. Applying yourself. To hearing. And understanding. Who he is.

And what he can do. For you. Then in verse 28. In the second instance. She thought. She thought.

Some people think that. Faith is a leap into the darkness. That's the way it's often portrayed. In. In modern books. And films. Anyway. A jump. From the known. Into the unknown.

A leap. From logic. But that's not true. It never has. Been. When it comes to saving faith. In Jesus Christ.

[13 : 33] Having heard. About Jesus. We are to think. About Jesus. And we're to ask ourselves. Questions about him. Such as. Who is this Jesus?

Why do I need. This Jesus? What can Jesus do for me? Others cannot. Do for me. Saving faith. Saving faith. Saving faith. May begin. By hearing the word.

About Jesus. But it continues. By thinking through. That word. About Jesus. Perhaps.

Perhaps. The lack of. Evident. Saving faith. We see. In our society. Today. Is a sign. That in general. We think. A lot less. Than we used to.

That rather than. Thinking for ourselves. Work tent. To let others. Especially social media. Do the thinking. For us. And scripture says.

[14 : 29] Use your brain. Employ your. Grey matter. Think of why. Jesus. Came. Think of why.

He died. On the cross. Think of the power. Involved. In his being raised. From the dead. On the third day. If we should become.

Christians. Someone might say to us. Have you completely. Lost your mind. To which. In view of this. Thinking. We can honestly say.

No. For the first time. In my life. I'm beginning. To think. Clearly. And just in case. Anyone here. Should think. That logic.

And science. Are enemies. To faith. And trust. In Jesus Christ. Let's remember. That if you take. Into account. All the faculties. In a university. The faculties.

[15 : 26] In which you'll find. The most believing. Christians. Are science. And medicine. This remarkable woman.

Thought. Third. Verse 27. She came. And she touched. The same action. Really. Coming near to Jesus. Touching the hem.

Of his garment. She did not allow. What she had heard. About Jesus. To remain in her ear. Nor did she allow it. To stagnate. In her mind. She took action. She reached forth.

Her hand. To touch. The Lord Jesus. The only way. In which. Faith becomes. Genuine. Saving faith. Is that it. Acts upon. What it knows.

And has. Thought. This woman. Has heard all. About Jesus. And she. Thought. About what Jesus. Could do for her. And so she came.

[16 : 22] And she touched him. She fought her way. Through the crowds. And she touched him. Sometimes. We'll have to fight. Our way past. Obstacles.

If we want. To touch Jesus. Our obstacles. Will be different. From hers. Perhaps. You've got. Family members. Or friends. Who are. Deeply hostile.

To the thought. Of you becoming. A Christian. Or maybe. There are lifestyle. Choices. You know. Are inconsistent. With being. A Christian. And these are.

Obstacles. And their challenges. To you. And yet. If you are to have. True. Saving faith. In Christ. If you are to. Imitate.

This remarkable. Hero of the faith. You must. Press on. Beyond your obstacles. And you must. Touch Jesus. But then you ask.

- [17 : 16] And rightly so. How may I touch. Jesus. Because he's no longer. With us. In the flesh. That's a very good question. Goes to the very. Essence of saving faith.
- To be sure. Of course. Jesus. Is not with us. In the flesh. We don't intend. Making. A statue of him. And placing it. Here. Which if you touch. Is enough for you.
- To be saved. The touch. Is one of. Faith. And trust. It is transferring. All that you have.
- Your past. And your present. And your future. All the pain. And the suffering. All the sin. And the guilt. All the loneliness. And the shame. And the confusion. It is transferring. All you have.
- From yourself. To Jesus. It is saying. I can't carry the weight. Of all this. Around. Me anymore. Lord Jesus.
- [18 : 13] You take it. I give it. Into your hands. Because. I believe. That you can deal. With all that's wrong. In my life. And I trust in you.
- And then. Fourthly. Although she had not planned. For this to happen. She publicly. Professed. Her faith. In Jesus. Christ. Having.
- Felt power. Go out from him. Jesus. Asks the crowd. The question. Who touched my clothes. It's a mad question. If ever there was one. Because by the very nature. Of there being a crowd. Lots of people.
- Were touching him. But he knew. That someone. Had touched him. With saving intent. And he called her out. And in verse 33. We read. Then the woman.
- Knowing what had happened. To her. Came and fell at his feet. And trembling with fear. Told him. The whole truth. How vital.
- [19 : 14] This step. Of saving faith. That the faith. Which saves. Is a faith. Which professes. A faith. Which is willing.
- Though it's afraid. And trembling. At the prospect. To publicly. Acknowledge itself. There were. Throughout Jesus.
- Lifetime. At least. Two secret disciples. The Pharisee. Nicodemus. And Joseph. Of Arimathea. Both. Both believed. In secret. Because they were afraid. Of what others. Would say about them.
- But this woman. Was a true hero. Of the faith. Because she. Despite her fear. And trembling. Professed. Her faith. In public. In the past.
- It was almost. It was almost. Considered. A virtue. In our tradition. For genuine believers. In Christ. Not to profess.
- [20 : 11] Their faith. Not to openly. Admit. That they had come. To a saving faith. In Jesus Christ. In the light. Of what this woman.
- Did in Mark 5. How ridiculous. A position. That ever was. It was not. A mark. Of virtue. For true believers. To be secret believers. It was saying.
- If you have become. A believer. In Christ Jesus. If you have a saving. Faith in him. You must. Profess it publicly. Else. You cannot be sure.
- It's. Saving faith. In Jesus Christ. You've ever had. This woman. Heard. The ear. This woman. Thought. The mind.
- This woman. Touched. The hand. This woman. Professed. The mouth. Everything about her. Was involved. In this encounter. With Jesus. And that's what makes her.
- [21 : 08] Such a hero. And what must make us. So eager. To imitate her faith. She was someone. With a plan. And then thirdly.
- And very briefly. She was someone. With a piece. I'm hoping. That by this stage. In the argument. We've managed.

To destroy. The argument. That Christianity. Is a. Patriarchal religion. Where women. Are treated. As second class. Citizens. I hope. Also. We have. Managed. To describe. The nature.

Of saving. Faith. As opposed. To that form. Of airy fairy. Indefinable belief. Which some. Call faith. And yet. Of course. We say. The proof. Of the pudding. Is in the eating.

Was this remarkable. Woman's faith. In Christ. Warranted. Or was she destined. Once again. To be disappointed. After all.

[22 : 02] She'd been disappointed. So many times. Before. By people. Who had promised. To heal her. Would this happen again. When it came to Jesus. Not at all.

For having touched. The hem of his garments. In verse 29. We read. Immediately. Her bleeding. Stopped. And she felt. In her body. She was freed. From her suffering.

Never mind. The beating. Of the dentist's. Drum. Or the din. Of the crowd. Around her. Silently. But immediately.

The bleeding. Within her. Stopped. And she was healed. It had not come. From her. It had come. From Jesus. It was not. Her saving faith.

It was his. His saving touch. And then. In verse 34. Having called out. To her. Jesus. Say his daughter. Your faith. Has healed you. Go in peace.

[22 : 59] Be freed. From yourself. It's not. It's not. Strong faith. Faith. Which saves. It is. Weak faith. In a very strong.

Savior. Which saves. Peace. And for the first time. In many. Many years. The social. Mental. And physiological. Misery. She had endured.

Was gone. And she was free. Jesus had given her. Both relief. And peace of heart. He had saved her. From her past. You know. We often say.

Of someone. Who has. Endured. A long illness. And then. Passed away. That at least. Now. They are at peace. But you know. The peace. That Jesus.

Brings. Can be ours. Before. We die. It can be ours. Now. The power of Christ.

[23 : 55] Can bring. Us peace. If we will. But hear. Think. Touch. And profess. Our faith in him. Is this not.

What we all want. Here today. To follow. This remarkable. Women's footsteps. And experience. For ourselves. The healing touch. Of Jesus. In our hearts. And the peace. That passes. All understanding.

That peace. Only he can give us. Our past. Our story. Where we've come from. And what we've been. It enslaves us. It beats us down. Keeps us in this.

Self-fulfilling. Loop of. Self-recrimination. And. Suffering. And Jesus says. I can break that cycle. Right here. Right now.

The Jesus. Who healed this woman. From the blood. She was shedding. Saved her. By himself. Shedding his own blood. On a Roman cross.

[24 : 54] He died. To take her sins away. He's died. To make us new people. He's died. To free us. From our sin. And the misery. Of our sin. And he's risen. To give us.

A peace. That passes. All understanding. Which the world. Knows nothing of. We don't know.

This woman's name. We don't know. Anything about her. Really. But I'm pretty sure. That for the rest. Of her life. She. She continued. In her faith. In Jesus. And when people.

Asked her. Tell me your story. She would tell them. About how. When she had been. Most desperate. She came to Jesus. And his powerful love.

Changed her. Forever. The gospel writer. Mark. Wrote these. Stories. 25 years. After. They had taken place.

[25 : 47] In all likelihood. This woman. Was still alive. When Mark. Wrote about her. Who knows. Perhaps. Mark. Knew her by name. And perhaps. Her testimony.

Of the healing touch. Of Jesus. Had been instrumental. In Mark's. Coming to faith. Also. Don't you go. Believe in the lie. That Christianity.

Is a patriarchal religion. Where women are pressed down. And their rights ignored. The greatest. Hero. Of saving faith. In the Bible. Is this. Woman.

Whose faith. We want to imitate. Today. Well not just today. But right now. All of us. Have a past.

But do any of us. Have a plan. All of us. Have ears. But are we really. Listening to the good news. About a Jesus. Who invites us. To reach out. And touch him. And then to publicly.

[26 : 43] Profess that we're his people. I've met. Many. Tough guys. In my time. Who.

When it. Came to becoming. A Christian. Were the biggest. Cowards. In the whole. World. By contrast. I've met.

Many. Trembling. Children. Who are afraid. Of their own. Reflection. And afraid of the dark. But have reached. Forth their hand. And touched.

Jesus. By faith. Which of these two. Are you. I'll be in my office. For ten minutes. After the service.

If anyone wants to speak to me. And commit themselves. To Christ. Will you come. To Jesus now. There's no. Banging drum. In this place. There's no.

[27 : 36] Crowd. In this place. There's just you. And Jesus. And your past. What do you want.

To say to Jesus. Let us pray. Lord. We thank you. That the same Jesus. Who healed this.

Woman. And met her. At the extremity. Of her desperation. Is the Jesus. Who is. With us today. The Jesus.

Who promises. That anyone. With a past. Can find peace. In him. In Jesus name. Amen.

Amen.