

Unnamed but Not Unimportant

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[0 : 0 0] If you turn in your Bible, it's that passage we read in Mark's Gospel. Mark chapter 5. Mark chapter 5.

And we'll read from verse 24, the middle of verse 24. Mark 5, from the middle of verse 24. A great crowd followed Jesus and thronged about him. And there was a woman who had had a discharge of blood for 12 years and who had suffered much under many physicians and had spent all that she had and was no better but rather grew worse. She had heard the reports about Jesus, came up behind him in the crowd, touched his garment, for she said, if I touch even his garments I will be made well.

And immediately the flow of blood dried up and she felt in her body that she was healed of her disease. And Jesus perceiving in himself that power had gone out from him, immediately turned about in the crowd and said, who touched my garments? And his disciples said to him, you see the crowd pressing around you and yet you see who touched me? And he looked around to see who had done it. But the woman knowing what had happened to her came in fear and trembling and fell down before him and told him the whole truth. And he said to her daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace and be healed of your disease.

Having a name is very important. I mean, one of the first things that we do when a child is born is to name that child because, I mean, imagine a child without a name would be a bit weird going through life.

What's your name? Oh, my name is no name. It's a bit strange and it always baffles me, to be frank, where people have babies and then they take weeks to decide on a name. I just can never get my head around that.

[2 : 0 1] I mean, you've had a good bit of time to decide on a name. Sometimes people look and they'll say, oh yeah, yeah, but it doesn't look like a colon. I mean, who wouldn't look like a colon? I think it's a wonderful name. But everybody gets a name.

And in the Bible, names are very important as well, particularly in the Bible because names in the Bible mean something. Names in the Bible communicate something. Adam is called Adam because he's the father of mankind. Eve is named Eve because she's the mother of living. Jacob was named Jacob because figuratively grasps the heel. He's a deceiver, which is what he was.

Jesus. Jesus. Jesus is called Jesus. Why? Listen, why? Because he will save. That's what he came to do. He came to save his people from their sins. So names communicate something and names are very, very important. But sometimes names, people in the Bible are not named.

And so whilst I'm saying that names are important, sometimes people in the Bible are not named. Like this woman. We don't know her name. She's unnamed, but she's certainly not unimportant. And let's always remember that. There's lots of unnamed people in the Bible whom the Lord uses to teach us wonderful lessons. Unnamed people in the Bible whom the Lord gives to us, shows us, He saves in order to give us encouragement and hope. And so today this woman, I'm going to look at this woman, this woman with the issue of blood as we know her, this bleeding woman who's unnamed and yet not unimportant. I want to give a wee background to what this woman was like.

Because she was not just unnamed, but she was very unfortunate in much of her life. She was socially isolated. She had this bleeding problem, this issue of blood. And so according to Leviticus chapter 15, everything she touched would become unclean. She could not or should not touch anything and anyone she touched would become unclean. So you can just imagine nobody wanted to go near her. She was unclean like a leper, unclean, unclean. She couldn't hug anybody. She couldn't or shouldn't go to gatherings or mix freely. Twelve years she had been socially isolated. She was religiously excluded.

[4 : 35] She couldn't go to church, synagogue or temple. Synagogue was basically, synagogue was more like a community center that was also used for worship services. Temple was more kind of religious.

But she couldn't go to these places or shouldn't go to these places because she was unclean. So she was cut off from people, but cut off most importantly from the life of God's people. She wasn't a church goer.

Socially isolated, religiously excluded, financially exhausted. We read in verse 26 that she had spent all her money on physicians, suffered much under many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was no better, but rather grew worse. She had no money. She spent all her money on the doctors, and the doctors took her money, and they also, though, took her hope and her energy, and left her feeling worse. So here's this woman. She's lonely. She's unclean. She's broke. She's tired.

She's exhausted. She's hopeless. But that's the kind of person Jesus came to meet. That's the kind of person Jesus still comes to meet today. Do you feel like that?

Do you feel in some way unclean, excluded, hopeless, helpless, exhausted, weary? Jesus comes for you. And we have that made very clear by this woman whose name we don't even know, but whose life was touched and transformed by the Savior that we do know. And if he can do it for her, my friends, he can do it for you. And so there's three things I want us to think about today as we think of this unnamed but not unimportant woman. The first is this. There's timing.

[6 : 34] There's the timing of Jesus coming into her life. Not just her life, but the timing of Jesus coming into Jairus' daughter's life as well. So it begins in verse 21, the passage, with Jairus coming to see Jesus. His daughter of 12 years of age is very, very sick. And in verse 22, he sees Jesus. He falls at his feet and he implores him. That's a pleading word. He's desperate. Who wouldn't be desperate?

If your child was sick to death? Who wouldn't be? So he comes and he's imploring him, Lord, please, my little daughter's at the point of death. Come and lay your hands on her. So he makes his way to see this daughter. And then the woman gets in the way and stops Jesus from going to see Jairus' daughter. The woman stops him, interrupts her sword looks, and then he heals the woman.

I wonder, do you know what it's like to be impatient about something? Are you ever impatient? I'm sure many of us are impatient. How often have we said, you're late? I mean, sometimes we say, you're early.

That's equally annoying to me, to be honest. I like people to be on time. But we're all kind of impatient in one way or another. We're impatient with people. Maybe we're impatient with things.

Have you ever ordered on Amazon, or there are other places you can buy goods from, and they'll tell you it's going to be here in 48 hours. And I don't know, do they think 48 hours means 10 days? Maybe in another world it means that. It gets very frustrating. Makes me, in a way, very impatient.

[8 : 26] Well, I think there may have been a great deal of impatience with Jairus, and maybe even this woman. From Jairus' point of view, here's his daughter who's desperately unwell, and this woman steps in, and Jairus may have been thinking, what are you doing, Lord? Why are you stopping? Did you not hear what I said? My daughter's dying. Why are you stopping on the way? Why are you standing around? And when Jesus stands around and he says, who touched me? The verbs in that passage say he would not let it go. He kept on saying, who touched me? Who touched me? I can imagine Jairus being very impatient. Do you not realize my daughter is going to die? What's happening here? From Jairus' point of view, there was a bad timing. But from heaven's point of view, this has been ordained.

This has been scheduled. This is the way it was always meant to be. Maybe even the woman. The woman, 12 years she had suffered. That's a long period of time. 12 years. Maybe she was thinking, why did Jesus take so long to come this way? Where was he? Where was he when I needed him? Why did he allow me to suffer for 12 years? From her point of view, perhaps, there was a level of impatience. But from Jesus' point of view, it was, this was the appointed time. This is the ordained time. And Psalm 139 is, the main message of Psalm 139 is, all our days ordained for us were written in your book before one of them came to be. Everything is according to the appointed time of God. He's never too late.

He's never too early. He's always on time. So there are no, with God, delays or disruptions or cancellations. It's just his appointed time. And we see that very clearly here in this passage today.

There are many things that we see about Jesus and notice about Jesus and I think are amazing about Jesus. But have you ever thought of this one thing? Jesus was never in a hurry. No matter what he had to do, no matter where he had to go, he was never in a hurry. No matter how desperate a situation, in fact, sometimes the more desperate a situation, he would actually hold back. Think of Lazarus and maybe others.

Why? Why was he never in a hurry? Because his timing is sovereign and his timing is certain and his timing is perfect. You know what, friends? Maybe today we need to slow down a bit.

[11 : 25] Maybe we need to synchronize our timing. So in March and in October, we change our watches, don't we? Spring forward and fall back. Everybody does it or else you'll be out of time with everybody else around you and all the best with that. Why don't we? Maybe today is the time, the day to synchronize our watches, the watch of our lives, according to Jesus' time, according to the Lord's timing.

Change our timing, how we view life, talk to him, walk with him, time our lives by him, which means giving our lives to him and say, the time piece of my life, dear Jesus, is in your hands.

So there's timing. The second thing is this. There's a touch. That's a big feature in this passage, of course. There's a touch the woman. Jesus is coming to him. Jesus is passing by. And she said in verse 29, if I touch even his garments, I will be made well. And immediately the flow of blood dried up and she felt in her body that she was healed of her disease. A touch, a simple, slight, but saving touch transformed this woman's life. Touch in the Bible is often used. The Bible uses lots of pictures to describe what faith is. And touch is one of them. Touch. When the apostle Paul was in Athens, in Acts chapter 17. Do you remember that passage where he goes to Athens and he's looking around the city in Acts chapter 17 and he reasoned with them and he saw how they were so religious and he wanted to show them. He says, I see you even have an altar to an unknown God. I want to show you who this unknown God is. And this is what he says when he's proclaiming to the Athenians, the God who made the world and everything in it, the Lord of heaven and earth doesn't live in temples made by hands, nor is he served by human hands as though he needed anything since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything. He made all men to live on all the face of the earth, wherever they are, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place.

Why? That they should seek God in the hope that they might feel their way towards him and find him. So Paul is saying to the Athenians, God puts people everywhere, wherever they are in the world. Why?

So that they might reach out and touch him. That's what he's saying. That they might just reach out and touch because he's never far away. The Lord is never actually far away from us, as he goes on to say, because he is everywhere present. So I think that the image of touch, the picture of touch is a great picture for us to get an idea of what faith in Jesus means. It's a touch.

[14 : 35] It's a touch. It's a touch. And there's three things I want to say. First is this. It's a simple touch. It was only a touch. She doesn't come, this woman doesn't come with a speech and she doesn't make a scene and she doesn't ask for an audience. She doesn't create a drama. I mean, her problem was massive and she might have thought there needs to be something huge here in order for me to be healed and saved like Naaman the Syrian. You remember Naaman in 2 Kings 5, you had this terrible problem with leprosy. And when he went to Elisha and Elisha said, basically, dip yourself seven times in the Jordan. He says, it must be more complicated than that. There must be more to it than that.

And Elisha said, no, it's not. It's simple, not dramatic. It doesn't need to be dramatic. And that woman or this woman got this. She realized, all I do, all I need to do is touch.

A simple touch. If I touch, she says in verse 28. If I touch. See, faith does not need to be complicated. I think we think faith needs to be complicated. Sometimes I think we think faith needs to be complex, but it doesn't. If I just touch him and that touch reveal the power and release the power of Christ to change her life. A simple touch. Faith in Jesus is, it's about knowing him. It's about a head knowledge. Faith in Jesus is also about a heart knowledge as well. We need to know him in our hearts.

But faith in Jesus is also the hands. Faith in Jesus, true faith in Jesus, simple faith in Jesus, must involve the hands. It must involve action. The apostle James, or James in the book of James, says, faith without works is dead. See, we can say we believe in God. I trust that everybody here today believes in God. But James says, you believe in God, so does the devil. The devil doesn't reach out to touch Jesus. The devil doesn't reach out and say, Lord, save me and Lord, heal me. Believing is one thing, but believing that response and action is another. And that's the saving faith that this woman had.

She reached out simply to touch him. And that simple touch transformed her. Do you have that belief today? Do you have that faith today? You believe in God, yes. You believe even in Jesus, yes. But have you reached out with a simple touch? There's a simple touch. Secondly, there's a slight touch. It's just his garments. It's not even himself. In verse 28, it's not even himself. It's touched his garment. I think in some version it says, touched the hem of his garment. The word there means the tassels, the edges. It's not the whole garment even.

[17 : 55] It's just the very edge of his garment. So not only is it a simple touch, it's a slight touch. She doesn't grab his arm. She doesn't hold on to him like Mary Magdalene or doesn't wash his feet like the immoral woman in Luke who washed Jesus' feet and wet his feet with her tears and her hair. She didn't do any of that like Mary Magdalene grabs Jesus and holds on to him. She just touched the fringe of his garment of his cloak. The very hem, the very tassel, the very edge.

The smallest possible contact with the greatest possible Savior. That's what this woman had. It's the minimum of faith which receives the maximum of grace. Just a slight touch. Do you know that slight touch today? Do you know that ability, that desire just to even touch the hem of his garment?

You might say, but I don't know much theology. I don't know much about the shorter catechism or the Westminster Confession of Faith or maybe even my Bible. Or I haven't gone through a ritual or I've not had any powerful experience. That does not matter, friends. That does not matter. That'll come in time. But I'm asking, do you have that sense? I need Jesus and I'm willing even to touch just the hem of his garment.

That's what's needed. In fact, all she knows or all we know she knows is that she needed to be made clean and she believed that Jesus could and would do it.

And that was it. That's it simply. We sang in Psalm 109, I am poor and needy. Do you know that you're poor and needy? Do you recognize that?

[19 : 49] And willing to simply and slightly even reach out and touch this Jesus? Do you know if you have a bare wire that's connected to a power station you don't have to grab that wire in order to feel its power?

Am I right? And I trust you would tell your children don't even touch that because if you just touch a bare wire or touch something that's exposed that is powerful even the slightest touch is enough to show you its power.

And so it is with Jesus. You do not need to know everything. But do you know enough? I need him and he can and he will heal me restore me save me.

A touch a touch which was simple and which was slight and which was saving. Verse 29 we read that immediately the blood flow of blood dried up and she felt in her body that she was healed of her disease.

And verse 34 Jesus says daughter your faith has made you well and that word made you well is the word to be saved. It's a Greek verb to be saved used in different contexts but when Jesus says your faith has made you well go in peace she was saved.

[21 : 15] Being justified by faith we have peace with God. She was saved and healed. Her life was utterly transformed and turned around. And how? By a simple touch.

By a saving touch. And it happened immediately 12 years of suffering ended immediately not progressively not after a while but right away through a touch on the garment of Jesus.

And that's what Jesus does friends. When Jesus heals or Jesus saves he does so fully and finally and forever. He really does. The wonderful hymn to God be the glory.

The second verse one of the lines in the second verse is this the vilest offender who truly believes that what's the word? Moment from Jesus a pardon receives.

Not gradually or eventually but that moment from Jesus a pardon receives. Immediately the woman's blood the issue of blood was dried up. That's what he does because his power is such that he can work immediately.

[22 : 26] That is why Jesus is so different from every other medicine or offer of help we might get. If you take something like an antibiotic you've got to take it over time or maybe something like a prophylactic medicine you've got to take to keep a disease away.

It's something that's ongoing and progressive. Being saved by Jesus is something that happens immediately right away. Right away. for all who will reach out and touch even the very hem of his garment right here right now.

Can I ask you this morning it still is morning can I ask you how would you describe yourself before God today?

How would you describe yourself before Christ today? A leper an outcast an offender shamed broken abused sinner think of how you would coming into the presence of God describe yourself that definition or description that is keeping you away from God I can't come to God because I am one of these and maybe a multiplicity of these things you know one simple touch and one slight touch upon the Lord Jesus Christ will completely change your standing before him to the broken we become healed sinners become saints that just means set apart for Christ the guilty become forgiven the lepers are cleansed the outsiders we become insiders in other words everything that keeps us from God everything that keeps us from Christ everything that keeps us from the fellowship of belonging to the family of God immediately the Lord

Jesus deals with it so do not hold back do not stand back simple faith reach out faith reach out and touch faith will utterly and completely transform your life if you will reach out and touch him today and so there's the timing and there's the touch and then very briefly there's the transformation and this woman's life was transformed and Jesus friends I mean hallelujah Jesus always transforms lives isn't that great news he utterly transformed this woman's life in so many ways but you know one of the amazing things I think in this passage that stands out for me is this look at verse 34 he said to her this is the woman who was known as excluded and don't go near her and all of these things he calls her what he calls her daughter she hadn't heard that term for decades and decades but now the son of God says daughter what an amazing thing to hear from the mouth of Jesus she's his daughter family language and that's what he does for all of us she comes to him in verse 33 in fear and trembling and fell down before him and this to me is it's concerning and it's interesting because maybe today maybe you are afraid of God and maybe the fear of God has been drummed into you and maybe that is what's keeping you away from God also and I'm not saying today that the fear of

[26 : 18] God is wrong but the correct fear of God is right but not a fear of God that draws us to God and to Christ is very good a fear of God that drives us away let me tell you that is not a true fear of God there's something wrong with that John the apostle says perfect love drives out fear and he's using that in the sense of I'm afraid like she was and maybe today you are afraid you're full of fear and you're full of trembling and you think I can't come to him but the Lord is waiting for you to reach out and touch him and the Lord is waiting to restore and to redesignate your life as daughter as son as child as loved one don't be afraid in fact he says that to Jairus later on when his daughter was dead don't be afraid somebody said it said somewhere that the phrase God's phrase don't be afraid appears 365 times in the

Bible do you believe that it's actually not true it sounds great you know it's a lovely thing one for every day but the fact is the truth is that God does say throughout the scripture again and again and again and again and again and again do not be afraid he wants to draw us he doesn't want to drive us away God so loved the world that he gave his one and only son not to drive us from him but that whosoever would believe in him whosoever would reach out and simply seemingly slightly touch him even the hem of his garment would be saved that to me speaks very clearly of a God of love and grace who wants to draw us and not to drive us to bring us from outcasts to family from sinners to be saved and that is what he calls you today this woman unseen unnamed unknown unfortunate worn down many many long years on the edge of hope but this story says you may be unnamed in this world you may be unfortunate in so many ways in this world but you are never unimportant to Jesus never ever his timing is perfect his power is present and his touch still saves and his grace will turn you into a son and a daughter

I'm going to close now with a poem that I read it's in William Hendrickson's commentary on Mark actually I remember reading it years and years ago and I remember it came back to me when I was preparing for today for this morning and it's a wonderful poem that a woman who heard a minister preaching on this passage sent to the minister and it says who touched me t'was the voice of the master and the woman's heart beat faster and faster trembling she came and bowed her head I touched you Lord was what she said the master answered go thy way thy faith has made thee whole this day have you touched me I heard it t'was the voice of the master and oh my heart beat faster and faster you came with a throng to God's house today but I felt not your touch as you went on your way I was ashamed and bowed my head reach out a bit further the next time he said hear Jesus calling you reach out a bit further today our father we thank you for the power of the gospel for the love of

Jesus and we pray that we might every one of us here in this building today know what it is to reach out and touch to reach out and to be transformed to reach out and receive forgiveness and healing and new standing through Christ with you we ask these things in Jesus name amen we're going to sing our final psalm from psalm 34 page 247 psalm 34 from page 247 we're singing verses 8 to 11 oh taste and see that God is good and the psalmist there David is saying he's not asking us to enjoy the whole meal he's just saying taste and see that God is good you know when you taste something gives you a taste of what is to come and that is what this woman did she touched and she would much better taste and see that

God is good who trusts in him is blessed psalm 34 verses 8 to 11 we stand to praise God oh taste and see that God is good who trusts in him is blessed fear!

[31 : 44] God is good to be with what oppressed God is good and may be and he be and they may lack their food food but they that truly seek the Lord shall not lack any food O children hither do ye come and unto me give hear I shall you teach to understand how ye the

Lord choose hear and may grace and mercy and peace from Father Son and Holy Spirit be with you all Amen take a seat folks just before you make your way out just like I said at the start just to come back to one of the items in the bulletin sheet I wanted to leave it to the end and hope that it wouldn't be too much of a distraction during the preaching and that is the matter of the future of the seminary it's on your bulletin sheet and there's a note there that there will be a congregational meeting on Wednesday the 28th of January at 7.30 p.m.

that will be in the seminary and the meeting is being called with regards to addressing the future of the seminary and especially the proposed sale of it it's not an easy matter of course and it has had much prayer and still requires much prayer from us all and today so prior to the meeting today there is a sheet going to be distributed as you go out which contains more information about the process that's been followed and just various bits and pieces about how we're looking at things and on the evening itself there will be a more detailed presentation given where they go into more detail about the items mentioned on that summary sheet that you get today and there'll be an opportunity for questions on the evening as well and I want to encourage as many of you as possible to come along on the evening to be involved in this whole process and to be able to give any questions that you would wish to ask on the evening so you'll get this sheet as you go out read it before the meeting and then you can come maybe more prepared and more informed about the process so thank you for your patience thank you for making this a matter of prayer and do keep praying about it

Colin will go to the main door now and I'll go to the door to my left here if you just give us a moment for that as Thank you.