

## MARK 5:24b-34

## PUBLIC DESPERATION

*A large crowd followed and pressed around him.<sup>25</sup> And a woman was there who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years.<sup>26</sup> She had suffered a great deal under the care of many doctors and had spent all she had, yet instead of getting better she grew worse.<sup>27</sup> When she heard about Jesus, she came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak,<sup>28</sup> because she thought, "If I just touch his clothes, I will be healed."<sup>29</sup> Immediately her bleeding stopped and she felt in her body that she was freed from her suffering.<sup>30</sup> At once Jesus realized that power had gone out from him. He turned around in the crowd and asked, "Who touched my clothes?"<sup>31</sup> "You see the people crowding against you," his disciples answered, "and yet you can ask, 'Who touched me?'"<sup>32</sup> But Jesus kept looking around to see who had done it.<sup>33</sup> Then the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came and fell at his feet and, trembling with fear, told him the whole truth.<sup>34</sup> He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your suffering."*

It is God's nature to heal. No matter if you are the ruler of the synagogue and rich or the woman made ritually unclean and destitute by her hemorrhage, God's healing is available to you. The key is a costly and public trust in Jesus. It is costly because it is not the way of the world and there will be certain social consequences. You may be criticized by the religious community for being too zealous or not functioning within established institutional guidelines. On the other hand, society may reject you as a religious fanatic who might upset the finely balanced status quo and threaten our cherished idea of human autonomy. It is public because divine healing is primarily a sign or demonstration of the power of God to intervene in this world for our salvation. In Scripture, the same word is used for healed and saved, and the message is that the ultimate healing is the forgiveness of sin and restoration of our relationship with the source of life, God.

The woman very much wanted to slink in, touch Jesus, be healed and be gone without anyone noticing. Perhaps her motives were based on her religious confinement as one who was ritually unclean, the equivalent of a leper. Another motive might have been that she didn't want to risk public rejection by her last hope. Mark does not engage in psychoanalysis, but leaves her motives at the level of her desperate need. The important point is not her motives, but her healing; not how she wanted things to happen, but how Jesus heals. Therefore, we learn from the woman's healing, not what is to motivate us to seek healing, but rather how we are to seek that healing. First, we must seek Jesus as the only one who can heal us. Second, we must be willing to demonstrate that trust publically. If we are truly desperate about our sin-sick nature and want to be healed, we need to focus our lives on Jesus and proclaim him our Lord and Savior.

**Jesus, I am a sinner in desperate need of your healing touch. Draw me close enough to you that I might be bold enough to reach out for you, and be touched by you. Give me the courage not to merely send you spiritual e-mails about my need, but to come to you and seek your touch. Likewise, give me the courage to acknowledge your healing touch with my life in this world. Amen.**