

Bleeding Woman Encounters Jesus “Faith in Jesus is Rewarded”



The Story: Matthew 9:18-22; Mark 5:21-34; Luke 8:40-48

Background (mostly adapted from Gotquestions.org)

The story of this woman takes place within a larger story. Jesus is on his way to a synagogue leader's (Jairus) house to heal his dying daughter when an unnamed woman causes an interruption to His journey.

What we know about the woman is, first, she had a bleeding condition, and the issue had continued for twelve years. That's a very long time! Second, she had spent all her money on treatments from many doctors, and nothing had helped; in fact, the blood issue had only grown worse. We also know that Jewish Law declared her to be ceremonially unclean due to her bleeding issue (Leviticus 15:19-33). This meant that she would not have been permitted to enter the temple for Jewish religious ceremonies. According to the Law, anything or anyone she touched became unclean as well. The fact that she was in the crowd pressing around Jesus means that each person who bumped into her would have become unclean, too—including Jesus. But, after twelve years of suffering, she was obviously desperate for a miracle (can you blame her?). “When she heard about Jesus, she came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak, because she thought, ‘If I just touch his clothes, I will be healed’”.

As soon as the woman touches Jesus, her bleeding stops and she knows she's been healed. In an instant, Jesus does what no doctor in twelve years had been able to. This proves the power of Christ, of course, but it also illustrates an important point about Jesus and the Law. In Leviticus 15:31 God says, “You must keep the Israelites separate from things that make them unclean, so they will not die in their uncleanness for defiling my dwelling place, which is among them.” In the Old Testament, the temple was where God dwelt among the Israelites, but in the New Testament, God dwelt among men in the

person of Jesus Christ (see John 1:14). Through Jesus the penalties of the Law are reversed, and the contamination of this world had no effect on Christ. The woman did not make Jesus (God's dwelling) unclean—He made her clean!

Jesus immediately responds to the woman who touched His clothing and was healed. People were pushing and pressing into Him from all over. Yet He stops, turns, and asks, "Who touched my clothes?". The disciples were incredulous, but Jesus knew that healing power had gone out of Him. We can't "steal" a miracle from God. After the woman comes forward and explains herself, Jesus clears up any misconceptions about her healing, saying, "Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your suffering". God is moved to action by our faith, even when He's in the middle of doing something else!

Jesus could have healed the woman and kept on walking to His original destination. Only He and the woman would have known what had taken place. But He didn't do that. Jesus stopped what He was doing and acknowledged the result of this woman's faith: her complete and instantaneous healing.

The Rest of the Story? (Legend)

The early church referred to this woman as Veronica from Caesarea Philippi. It is said she walked with Jesus as He went to His cross, and that seeing His blood and sweat, she drew out her handkerchief and wiped His brow. Later on, as she reverently caressed the piece of linen, she found the image of the blood-stained face of Jesus imprinted on it. Face cloths for the Roman catacombs alleged to hold the impress of Jesus' features were called Veronicas. About A.D. 320 Eusebius, Bishop of Caesarea and a dependable historian, records that when he visited Caesarea Philippi, he heard the woman out of gratitude for her cure had erected two brazen figures at the gate of her house, one representing a woman bending on her knee in humility—the other a likeness of Jesus, holding out His hand to help her. Eusebius wrote, "They were in existence even in our day and we saw them with our own eyes when we stayed in the city."

Life Lessons for Us Today

- 1) Nothing is impossible for Jesus (God), including healings that human doctors cannot do!
- 2) God is moved to action by our faith!
- 3) Our faith matters, and the object of our faith is crucial.
- 4) Through Jesus the penalties of the Law are reversed, and the contamination of this world had no effect on Christ.
- 5) Jesus came to live with us humans and be one of us, and He is truly the Son of Man who loves and cares for us!
- 6) Being task oriented has its place, but we need to make room for people that "interrupt" us.
- 7) Other?