

Connect360: The Power of a Desperate Faith

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- *Lesson 7 in the Connect360 unit “The reMARKable Journey Continues: The Gospel of Urgency” focuses on Mark 5:21-34.*

The desperate woman faced her impending death, with no other options for treatment and no money to pay for more medical care. But everything changed for her when she “heard about Jesus” (Mark 5:27). Literally, she heard “the things about Jesus”—the reports concerning his miracles. Just from hearing what Jesus had done for others, she believed he could do the same for her.

However, she had a problem: Jesus was a holy man of God, and she would transmit her uncleanness to him if He touched her. So, she initiated her surreptitious approach from behind to touch his cloak (Mark 5:28). Likely, her idea was inspired by the ancient superstition that someone’s power transferred to their clothes (cf. Acts 19:11-12). The crowds certainly circulated this idea about Jesus’ clothes in their reports of his healings (Mark 3:10; 6:56).

The wording of verse 28 could mean that the woman thought, “If I just touch his clothes,” or “If I touch just his clothes.” Was her scheme about getting through the crowd merely to touch him, or was it about touching only the small part she could reach? Either way, the woman reckoned that she would be healed (Mark 5:28b).

Like Jairus’ faith in Jesus’ healing, the woman believed Jesus would both physically restore and spiritually deliver her. Considering the extent of her religious exclusion, salvation was equally as appealing as healing for the

desperate woman.

Immediately after touching his cloak, her bleeding stopped. In one moment, 12 years of agony ceased. Her body felt sound, so she knew she had been freed from her suffering (Mark 5:29). While that freedom took place in one moment, it would have continuing effects on her state of being in the future.

The word for suffering used here (*mastix*) signified great torment. In other contexts, it referred to a scourge or plague sent from God. While this sense was not necessarily intended in this case, the word choice does remind us that this woman's suffering caused separation from God. The figurative effect of her disease was like a scourge. Becoming free from this suffering then involved repairing the breach that contamination had wrought and making her clean once more.

The story of the desperate woman flies in the face of what some call armchair Christianity. It was not enough for her simply to hear about what Jesus had done. She sought him out to experience his healing for herself. She knew her life was not sustainable the way it was. So, she desperately reached for the new life only Jesus could supply.

For us today, casual contact with Jesus will never satisfy the earnest desires of our hearts, and it will never relieve the heavy weight of suffering. Only when we are desperate enough to grasp for deliverance will we see God's power truly at work in our lives.

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