

Prayer Meeting Address
given at
Old Baptist Chapel, Chippenham
by **Mr. G. D. Buss**
on **Wednesday evening, 6th November, 2013**

Text: *“For she said, If I may touch but His clothes, I shall be whole.”*
Mark 5, verse 28.

We have before us this evening the inestimable value of a touch, contact, between a poor sinner and a rich Saviour; between a weak sinner and a strong Saviour; an unworthy sinner and an infinitely worthy Saviour. When those two come together, by way of this sweet touch, something is sure to be done. God is in the doing of it, working at both ends of the matter. “All that the Father giveth Me shall come to Me; and him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out.”

This woman’s case has many precious features about it that I would bring before you this evening in our few moments of meditation.

The first thing we will notice is the long standing pressure this woman had been under. We are told that for twelve years she had suffered this debilitating condition: loss of blood. That is not only a weakening condition, but, in a natural sense, it is often a depressing condition. I am sure there was that aspect of it in her case, especially as she went from this physician and to that physician. We are told she had “suffered many things of many physicians,” all thinking they knew a cure. But, all her sufferings were of no avail. She only grew worse and worse. In the end, she came to bankruptcy. There is a wonderful word in Isaiah 55; it is a word for the bankrupt: “He that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat.” There may be some poor, bankrupt souls here tonight. Perhaps in your soul’s exercises concerning salvation, or maybe in the path you are in, you have come to bankruptcy. You have no resources left whatsoever. Whichever way you look, there seems to be nothing to meet the deep need in which you are found. This is what this woman’s case was. One further thing (which is often overlooked),

is that her very condition made her unwelcome in the Temple. No one was supposed to go into the Temple with such a condition as she had.

So, here was a very poignant, pressing case – one of the most pressing cases that we read of in the Word of God. But, we now read of something else: she “heard of Jesus.” What had she heard of Him? No doubt she had heard that He had dealt with other cases. Perhaps she heard that no case had come to Him which He had not dealt with. When she considered that the eyes of the blind were opened, the ears of the deaf were unstopped, the lame walked, withered hands were restored and lepers were cleansed, perhaps a “who can tell” rose up in her breast. ‘Who can tell, but He might even deal with my case. After all, I have nowhere else to go. I cannot pay any more physicians, and they do not know how to help, anyway. This is really my last resort; the last door I can go to and go through. I will venture.’ And so she ventured.

But, there were three things that were hindering her. Although her faith was strong in one sense (we will notice that in a moment), I would suggest that there may have been some questions in her mind about the matter. Why did she come behind? Why did she not approach the dear Saviour from before His dear face, and plead her case? She comes behind. I wonder what the reason was for that. I think there may be more than one reason. One was, perhaps she thought that her unclean condition would be a hindrance. Perhaps she had this thought: ‘I know He is able, but, is He willing?’ That is a question, isn’t it? It may be where you are, tonight. You may say, ‘I know His ability, but, is He willing to deal with *my* case?’ That is something that may have hindered this poor woman.

Then, of course, there was a physical difficulty. There was a vast crowd around the Saviour, jostling and thronging Him. However was she actually going to reach the Saviour with her case? She was literally a weak woman. But she had a strong and pressing case. These were the hindrances she was facing. Perhaps you have similar hindrances tonight. Many things seem to be thronging the throne of grace, and you just cannot get through them: unbelief, temptation, doubts, fears,

weakness, even despair. Well, the Lord knows what is surrounding His throne in your case, tonight.

There was one other thing. According to some, it must have appeared a most inconvenient time for her to come. Our Lord was engaged with the business of healing another – a young maid at the point of death – of whom we are told later, that she actually died. He is on His way to attend to Jairus’s case. This seems a most inconvenient moment to approach the Saviour. And perhaps the devil has told you just that. But, dear friends, there is *no* inconvenient moment to approach the Saviour. The door of mercy is *always* open. The throne of grace is *never* vacant. The eye of the Lord is *always* upon them that fear Him. His ear is *always* ready to hear their cry. His “hand is *not* shortened, that it cannot save,” and, as we read in Psalm 46: “God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved: God shall help her, and that right early.” God’s timing is perfect. But, I tell you, dear friend, there is no inconvenient time to bring your case to the Saviour. The dying thief found that, did he not? To approach the Saviour in the midst of His deep agonies and sorrows and overwhelming path of tribulation; to intrude into that, with his request! But, it was life or death, was it not? It was heaven or hell. So come he must, and come he did! “Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom.” And he received a most blessed answer.

Well, this dear woman ventures. I like the language: it was the language which struck me: “If I *may* touch but His clothes, I shall be whole.” Here is great faith, and here is persistent faith. But, it was the privilege of it. ‘If I may be permitted; if a poor, sinful, unclean, bankrupt woman like me, might be permitted to touch but His clothes, I shall be whole.’ What faith! And what a privilege! What a wonderful privilege is faith! What a wonderful privilege that the vilest, blackest, filthiest sinner may come (like this dear woman did with her case) and touch this dear Saviour! We read in another place that He is “touched with the feeling of our infirmities.” He is *touched* with them. We cannot physically touch Him now, as, in His holy humanity, He is

sitting on the right hand of His heavenly Father. But, dear friends, we do touch Him as we come, in faith, to the throne of grace.

“Touched with a sympathy within,
He knows our feeble frame;
He knows what sore temptations mean,
For He has felt the same.”

I. Watts

“If I may touch but His clothes, I shall be whole.” We see here a blessed confidence. Not that she felt there was anything, as it were, about His clothes that were particularly special, (they were pure and holy, do not mistake me) but it was He who wore them; it was *Him* she was touching. It was His Godhead. It was His humanity. It was His glorious Person that she was coming to. And she felt that He would heal: that was her faith; “If I may touch but His clothes, I shall be whole.” Some of the godly scholars have noted that in another gospel it says “the hem of His garment.” Every Jew wore a garment as the law specifically commanded. It has been commented that this garment was significant of the obedience of Christ to God’s holy Law. This poor woman touched the hem of it. Friends, we need to touch His righteousness to cover our unrighteousness. We need to touch that precious, atoning blood to wash away our guilt. Oh, how we need that touch! “If I may touch but His clothes, I shall be whole.” “And straightway” – *immediately* the virtue of Emmanuel flowed out to this touch, and she was healed. And she knew it. “She felt in her body that she was healed of that plague.” The haemorrhage had dried up. She was a healed woman; a whole woman, in that sense as the Word of God uses it – a delivered woman; a woman who had gained an answer to her petition. She came, almost furtively, but she came.

Now, look at the other end of the matter. Was the dear Saviour unaware of this coming sinner? He, who “made heaven, and earth, the sea, and all that therein is”; He, of whom we sometimes sing:

“No thought can fly, nor thing can move,
Unknown to Him that sits above.”

B. Beddome

Could it be possible that He was not aware of her coming? No. He knew her case, He knew her fears, He knew her exercises and He knew her weakness. Friends, He knew her case better than she knew herself. And when she reviewed the matter years later, I am sure she looked back and said: ‘He was in my coming.’ In what way? Well, who gave her the desire? Who gave her the faith? Who opened her eyes to see that He alone could attend to her case? She would trace it all back to:

“Sovereign grace o’er sin abounding!
Ransomed souls, the tidings swell.”

J. Kent

But, dear friends, the Lord Jesus Christ would not let this woman retain her deliverance as a secret. And so, He asks that question, we read it in Luke’s Gospel, (I like the way it is put there). “Somebody hath touched Me.” He could have mentioned her name; He *knew* her name. But, He just refers to her as ‘somebody.’ Hundreds were thronging Him, but, they were not touching Him like this woman was. Many people may come to worship God in His house (and that is good, right and proper), but, there might be very few who are touching Him by faith. Have you ever touched Him by faith in the House of God? Have you become an inner court worshipper, rather than an outer court worshipper? That was this woman’s faith. “Somebody hath touched Me.” The disciples looked around. They could not even understand Him asking the question. It seemed obvious that He was being touched. But, “virtue is gone out of Me.” This woman was arrested. Paul speaks of being “apprehended.” That is a strong word; it means ‘arrested.’ And that question arrested this woman. There was divine power in it. She could not escape; she could not flee from it. And, when God speaks like that, sinner, you will not flee, either. You will not! There will be such a power in it, that you will prove this word: “Thy people shall be willing in the day of Thy power.”

So, this dear woman now comes to the dear Saviour, and falls at His feet. Again, I do like what it says: she “told Him *all* the truth.” Friends, grace makes a man honest. What would she have told Him?

She would have told Him how long she had been afflicted. She would have told Him what a grief it was to her that, by her affliction, she was debarred from the House of God. She would have told Him what she had suffered by all those physicians who did not understand her case and who only wanted her money. She would have told Him that she was bankrupt, and could not pay Him a penny for what she obtained from Him. She would have told Him how weak she was, and she would have told Him of that ‘yet “who can tell” ’ which had risen up within her. ‘If I could but touch Thy clothes,’ she would have said, ‘I knew I would be whole.’ He turns with His lovely face: there must have been a smile on it, (I would not be fanciful). But it must have been a welcoming look, must it not? “Daughter, be of good comfort: thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace.” He did not reprove her for coming. He gave her a sweet, welcoming ‘kiss’. “Daughter,” – one of the family, embraced in the covenant of grace. “Daughter, be of good comfort: thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace,” ‘peace in your heart over this matter; this is something God has done for you. And, not only that, “go in peace:” reconciled to this great God through our Lord Jesus Christ.’ “Go in peace.” In another case He said: “Thy faith hath saved thee.”

Yes, it was that little spark of faith in this woman that caused her to think of what Jesus could do. It was that little spark of faith in her that made her come, despite all the hindrances, and press on, though it was tough going, as we might say, in common language. Friends, it was blessed faith that touched Him. With what trembling she must have put forth her hand to touch the dear Saviour’s clothes! What joy there must have been in her heart when she realised her prayer had been immediately answered!

There is nothing more sweet to a wrestling child of God than when their prayer is answered. It is a wonderful moment. ‘He has heard *my* prayer! He has heard *my* cry! He has come to *my* aid! He has attended to *my* wants! Wonder of wonders!’ “Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace.” This woman had to make (we may speak of it in those terms) a public profession of what He had done for her. Yes, it

had been a secret work. But, “first the blade,” that appears above the surface; “then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear” *then* the harvest comes. She told, before that assembled multitude, what this dear Saviour had done for her.

But, what must Jairus have thought? His was another pressing case: his dying daughter. In one sense, every moment must have seemed to him to be a wasted moment. But there are no wasted moments in God’s time! Of that you can be sure. But then came that discouraging, unbelieving word: “Thy daughter is dead; trouble not the Master.” Has the Lord Jesus Christ ever set out on an errand that He has never completed? Never. After He was born in Bethlehem’s manger He went on, and on, and on until Calvary’s cross, where He cried: “It is finished.” He there made His dying, triumphal cry. Dear friends, He has never yet gone with any poor sinner, in a matter of mercy, without fulfilling what that sinner needed. “The LORD will perfect that which concerneth me.”

What did the Lord Jesus Christ say to dear Jairus? “Believe only.” ‘Look on Me, as that One who is able and willing to save to the uttermost.’ And the Saviour went with him, and we know the wonderful happenings within that home, as that little girl was restored. What a chapter! What a scene! The great point is that this dear Jesus still lives. He is as willing and ready and able to deal with such cases tonight as He ever has been. He is as sympathetic as He ever has been, and He waits to be gracious.

“Then let our humble faith address
His mercy and His power;
We shall obtain delivering grace,
In the distressing hour.”

I. Watts

May God add His blessing.

Amen