

Preaching text: Mark 5:21-43

In our Bible reading for today Jesus had already attained celebrity status. People were coming from all over to hear him teach and heal. Remember, this was before the modern miracles of medicine that are available today. There were no reliable doctors. No MRIs. No CAT scans. Not even x-rays. No diagnostic tools of any kind. Their healing came from prayer and herbs and doctors with only the most primitive skill and knowledge.

So, it's no wonder why people rushed to Jesus. He had this miraculous power to heal. They reached out to him, and he responded. Many were healed. And because of that many more came. There were crushing crowds all around him.

In the middle of one of these crowds was a woman who had been hemorrhaging for 12 years. This was more than uncomfortable. It was humiliating. Leviticus 15 says such a woman is "unclean." No one was supposed to touch her as long as she was bleeding. It would have kept her from getting married or from going into the temple. She was despised and all alone.

No one could help her. The Bible says, "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." Oh, the doctors took her money. But they couldn't do anything. So here she is, almost without hope.

What do you do when the doctors have done all they can do and you don't get any better? It happens, doesn't it? Even today it happens.

This woman comes to Jesus. She is in a delicate situation. She can't talk to him. People would probably start yelling, "Unclean! Unclean!" So, she maneuvers around, gets close enough

to touch him, just the hem of his garment. She thinks this might heal her. She thinks Jesus won't even know he was touched.

But Jesus did know. Jesus always knows. If you've got a problem, if you've got a need, Jesus already knows about it. When you kneel at your bed and say your prayers, Jesus knows. When we open our hearts to God, Jesus knows. This woman came up behind Jesus and touched his cloak. Immediately she was healed. And Jesus knew. He turned around and asked, "Who touched my clothes?" The woman is mortified. She thought she could hide in the crowd but she can't. She's been found out. Exposed. Mark tells us, "Then the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came and fell at his feet, and, trembling with fear, told him the whole truth."

Jesus speaks to her. "Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your suffering." She was free! Free physically, free socially, free spiritually!

What a beautiful and important story. I bet there is someone here today who is feeling hopeless about some situation in your life. Maybe you've even kept it a secret from your family and friends. But Jesus knows. Maybe it has to do with your health ... or your marriage ... or your family ... maybe you are concerned about your son or daughter ... or your business. Or maybe there is a secret sin that has you. And you think, if only there was something I could do about it. Well, our story offers help for that.

First of all, Jesus already knows about your problems. That is undeniable. Jesus is God. God knows everything.

Second, you don't have to carry that burden alone. Is there a trusted friend or counselor who you can talk to? You can talk to me about it. And yes, you can talk to Jesus ... but it sometimes is helpful to have a human being to whom we can talk.

Is there someone you can turn to? Someone who will not break your confidence? Someone who will listen sympathetically without judging? Jesus knows about your situation but sometimes it's good to talk about it with someone else too.

And be sure you don't forget your faith. It's never too late to come to God. One of my favorite musicians is Johnny Cash. His life was one that was way out of control until he turned it over to Jesus. He admitted his background of alcoholism and drug abuse. He said he had virtually destroyed his marriage and wrecked his life. But he openly said he had found Jesus. He spoke of a hope for the future.

No doctor could have done that for Johnny Cash. Only Jesus could do that. Only Jesus can deliver us from sin. The truth is, we need our professionals. We get help from marriage counselors, credit counselors, addiction programs, doctors of all kinds and other people who can help us. But when the doctors tell you there is nothing more they can do, don't forget about your faith. Jesus knows. And Jesus cares. He can speak these words to you, "Your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your suffering." Be freed through faith in Him!

AMEN.