

## **Sermon Matthew 9:18-38**

***May the words of my mouth, and the meditations of our hearts,  
be acceptable in Thy sight, O Lord, our Rock and our  
Redeemer. Amen.***

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**Today's Gospel tells us of a woman who struggled with feelings of hopelessness, and the faith she displayed to overcome this obstacle. We are told of a woman who labored with illness for twelve years, and how she fought through the crowds, touched the robe of Jesus, and was healed.**

**The woman in the story was in a hopeless situation. For twelve years she had fought with bleeding that could not be controlled. Levitical law considered a woman who was bleeding to be unclean. Not only her person, but much of what she touched as well. A married woman would not be able to sleep next to her husband. What she touched would have to be ceremonially washed and sanctified. Because of this, no one wanted her to touch anything and spread her "dirtiness." In the eyes of the Jewish people, she was an outcast.**

**The law required her to be scorned by society, excluded from her family and even barred from her husband. In a world where she was only allowed to socialize with Jews, she was denied conversations with friends, lest they also become unclean. She couldn't receive a hug to make her feel better. She couldn't touch the ones she loved. She was barred from church and not allowed to participate in temple activities, because a person had to be clean before going to prayer. Instead, she was condemned to a life of loneliness, segregated to the wayside and scorned by society. Repeatedly she was reminded that she was unclean, dirty, cut-off from society, excluded from family, barred from temple, and unworthy to take part in any activity with others.**

**With this bleak situation, there was no hope of finding a cure. Unacceptable and lonely, it is certain that she was severely depressed. Her self-esteem was low. She was nothing. She was un-important. No family. No friends. No church. No hope. She was alone and lonely in a world that rejected her.**

**She was not allowed to be near people. She took a chance by going against Levitical law and making the crowd unclean. She humbled herself and fought to get to Jesus. He was her only hope. Just imagine what she must have been thinking.**

**“If only I can reach Him, I will be healed. If I can just touch His robe, my illness will leave me. He has the answer to my prayers. Only through Him will my problems of loneliness and grief be removed. Only through Him can I hope to be cured.”**

**This poor woman needed healing: physical, mental and emotional. She needed to be restored and strengthened. She needed a cure and she knew that Jesus could give her that cure.**

**Like that woman, each of us, in our own way, requires something to complete us. We have desires. We have goals. Our needs might not be as extreme as those of the woman in the Gospel, but they can be as pressing on our mind and as devastating emotionally.**

**Some of us might be struggling with loneliness as we endure separation from our loved ones. Some of us might be struggling with relationship issues that are bearing heavy on our hearts. Some of us might be struggling with habits and addictions that might be causing other issues in our lives. Medical problems, financial problems, work related problems, loneliness and despair. Many of you may have experienced some of these at some time in your life. Some may be dealing with such problems now. Some of these problems may be**

caused by other people or even our environment. At times, it is difficult to see our way out of the situation.

Sometimes people that we encounter can become barriers between us and Jesus. At times, we have to refuse to do what others do and be the example others may look toward.

Situations may occur that seem difficult or impossible to deal with. They may seem too big for you to handle. Turn your needs over to Jesus. Ask Him for help, and help will come when you least expect it.

Jesus has told us how to behave, how to act, how to walk the path that many don't travel. The woman from the Gospel fought through the crowds to get to Jesus. Similarly, we need to fight the crowds and reach Jesus ourselves. We need to do the right thing in every situation and be the example for others to follow. We need to be the shining light in a sea of darkness. Like that woman, we also have our own internal struggles. That woman was unclean and considered herself unworthy to approach Jesus. She was barred from approaching others because of her "dirty" condition.

Occasionally, we too can struggle with a similar type of issue. We too may be sinners and unclean in the eyes of God. We may have been disobedient or defiant. We know the difference between what is right and what is wrong, yet we may still

**stumble and do the wrong thing at the wrong time. The Apostle Paul said it best when he said “I do the things I ought not to do and do not do the things I ought to do.” Paul struggled with sin. No-one is above sin. We all were born into an unclean world.**

**But, like the woman, we shouldn't let sin stop us from coming to God and approaching him. If we confined the church to only the non-sinners, this church would be empty. Instead, Jesus has invited us to come to accept the gift of forgiveness. He has asked us to come to Him, repent and start a new life. Just as you are, reach out to Jesus. Because He is always there for you.**

**All it takes is a humble heart; faith that we can depend on; the guidance and strength of God our Father; and the saving grace and love of the sacrifice of His Son Jesus Christ.**

**That woman humbled herself and reached out to Jesus. She reached out for help with her problem. She conceded that she was powerless to overcome it, but she knew that Jesus was the source of power who could heal her.**

**It doesn't matter what our situation is as we approach God and ask for help. Approach Him and ask for his mercy. When we find ourselves in a hole and see no way out, that is when we need His helping hand to lift us out of the pit.**

**When we are struggling internally with problems we can not reveal to anyone, that is when we should be turning to Jesus and asking for His help.**

**When we are down, that is when we need His help to be lifted up.**

**Reach out to Jesus.**

**He is there to help you in your time of need.**

**Trust Jesus, He will comfort you. He will grant you rest from your burdens.**

**Jesus is always there waiting for us to reach out and touch His cloak. Through faith in Jesus, we can be healed.**

**Praise be to God.**

**Amen**

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