

**HEALING OF THE WOMAN WITH THE ISSUE OF BLOOD.**

**MARK 5:24-26.**

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## ABSTRACT

This study is built around Mark 5:24-26 about [an unnamed woman who had been afflicted for twelve years by an issue of bleeding](#). The story according to Saint Mark is particularly captivating, with Mark's characteristic brevity of a travelling evangelist. This study seeks to determine how this particular healing adds up to the entire theme of the book of Mark that "For even the Son of man did not come to be served, but to serve, and give His life a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45). This practical miraculous healing incidence demonstrates that true faith depends not upon mysterious signs, celestial fireworks, or grandiose dispensations from a God who is seen as a rich, benevolent uncle; true faith, as Job understood, rests on the assurance that GOD IS WHO HE IS. The woman in our story must have known "true faith." She rested in the assurance that "God is who He is!" Does that mean she wasn't afraid? Does it mean she didn't have reservations? Remember, she was not just dealing with an illness, but she was also living with the consequences of the diagnosis. She was not only sick, but she was "unclean." Her very presence in "the midst of the crowd" was a huge risk. Had anyone recognized her she could have been immediately stoned to death. Yet she felt the risk was worth it, she believed she would receive healing if she could but touch the hem of His garment. She was a woman of courage, which is not the absence of fear, but the presence of faith. In fact, the only antidote to fear is faith which is a gift of God. We know that God and Christ are in perfect accordance with The Law. This means that they are perfectly obedient to both spiritual *and* physical laws. This means that even miracles *must* obey

the physical and spiritual laws of the earth in order to occur, and so it intrigues me how Christ healed people (of seemingly incurable thing like blindness) by only touching them. It appears that there is a physical process that we don't understand which Christ used to heal her body *completely* through only a touch -- and not even the touch of His hand, merely His clothing. It is also very significant that the daughter of Jairus, whom Christ raised from the dead was 12 years-old (around the age when girls start menstruation) and that this woman who was healed by Jesus had been suffering with her "issue of blood" for 12 years. This is divinely planned Coincidence. We can individually relate to this woman by "touching" Christ in our faith.

## **1.1 INTRODUCTION**

In Mark 5:24-26. V24 "So Jesus went with him, and a large crowd followed and pressed around Him. 25 [And a woman was there who had been afflicted for twelve years by an issue of bleeding.](#) 26 She had suffered greatly under the care of many physicians and had spent all she had, but to no avail. Instead, her condition had only grown worse" The NIV Bible says "The woman had been subject to bleeding for twelve years" while NASB says "A woman who had had a hemorrhage for twelve years"

## **1.2 THESIS STATEMENT**

A lot has been taught and preached on the woman with the issue of blood that is narrated in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke. The story according to Saint Mark is particularly captivating, with Mark's characteristic brevity of a travelling evangelist. This study seeks to determine how this particular healing adds up to the entire theme of the book of mark that "For

even the Son of man did not come to be served, but to serve, and give His life a ransom for many” (Mark 10:45).

### **1.3 RESEARCH QUESTION**

How does healing of the woman with the issue of blood add up to the entire theme of the book of Mark: “For even the Son of man did not come to be served, but to serve, and give His life a ransom for many”?

### **1.4 THE WOMAN WITH THE ISSUE OF BLOOD**

#### **1.4.1 Under the Mosaic Law**

Under the Mosaic Law, a woman with an issue of blood (referring to menstrual or postpartum bleeding) was considered unclean and was “put apart” for 7 days. During this time anything she lay on or sat on was considered “unclean” meaning that if anyone touched one of those things he would have to wash his clothes and bathe in water to become clean again. Also during this time if any man was sexually intimate with her he, was also unclean for 7 days and must adhere to the same sort of “setting apart” as a woman (and actually the guidelines for a man who has an issue of blood, or who was unclean were more strict than for women, Leviticus 15:1-30<sup>[2]</sup>

The Mosaic Law also specified that if a woman had an issue of blood that lasted longer than 7 days that all the days of her issue were considered unclean and she must be treated as such. In Leviticus 15: 25, it is written “Now if a woman has a discharge of her blood many days, not at the period of her menstrual impurity, or if she has a discharge beyond that period, all the days of her impure discharge she shall continue as though in her menstrual impurity; she is unclean”. This means that this woman had probably been unclean for 12 years and that she had to live “put

apart” from others for all that time. If she had been married her husband probably would have divorced her as she would have been unable to care for her children or for others without making them all unclean according to the Mosaic Law. Her unclean status would also have meant that she was probably unable to attend the temple or other worship services in her community.

#### **1.4.2 The Issue of Blood**

This ‘prolonged menstruation’ would probably be diagnosed as menorrhagia, which is abnormally heavy and long menstruation that causes enough cramping and blood loss that it makes normal daily activities impossible. The scriptures are right in calling it a “hemorrhage” because the amount of blood lost is significant—enough to fill a maxi pad at least every hour for several weeks (not to mention 12 years!). The common causes of menorrhagia are, among others: Uterine fibroids, non-cancerous growths of the uterus wall, Endometrial hyperplasia, a thickened endometrium, a bleeding disorder, like Von Willebrand disease, Problems with clotting, Thyroid functioning, Glandular issues, Infection, Ovarian cysts, Uterine polyps and even ovarian cancer. In the scriptures it say that the woman spent all of her living upon physicians who could not help her. Today physicians are usually able to treat or control menorrhagia with hormone pills but in severe cases hysterectomy (removal of the uterus) and endometrial ablation or resection (which permanently destroys the entire lining of the uterus) are used to treat it. It is incredible that Jesus was able to heal this woman with only His touch. <sup>[8]</sup>

The woman's condition, which is not clear in terms of a modern medical diagnosis, is translated as the "issue of blood" in the [King James Version](#) and a "flux of blood" in the [Wycliffe Bible](#) and some other versions. In scholarly language she is often referred to by the original [New Testament Greek](#) term as the *haemorrhissa* ("bleeding woman"). Because of the continual bleeding, the

woman would have been continually regarded in Jewish law as a *niddah* or [menstruating](#) woman, and so ceremonially unclean. In order to be regarded as clean, the flow of blood would need to stop for at least 7 days. Because of the constant bleeding, this woman lived in a continual state of uncleanness which would have brought upon her social and religious isolation.<sup>[9]</sup>

### **1.4.3 In the Synoptic Gospels**

All the synoptic Gospels mention the length of time during which she had been suffering. Eusebius records a tradition that she was a Gentile, a native of Caesarea Philippi. This disease was a chronic hemorrhage, for which she had found no relief from the physicians.<sup>[11]</sup>

In the 'Horae Hebraicae,' a list of the possible remedies applied in such cases is given, which seem quite sufficient to account for St. Mark's statement that she was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse. St. Luke, himself a physician, says that she "had spent all her living upon physicians, and could not be healed of any".<sup>[6]</sup>

This woman was of Caesarea Philippi, where her house was to be seen; where were extant some wonderful monuments of the benefits conferred upon her by Christ; as that at the door of her house was an effigy of a woman in brass, set upon an high stone on her bended knees, and arms stretched out like a supplicant; and opposite to her, another effigy of a man, of the same metal, standing, and decently clothed in a tunic, and his hand stretched out to the woman; at whose feet, upon the pillar, a strange form of a plant arose, reaching up to the border of the brazen tunic, which is a remedy against all diseases; and he says it remained to his times, and was then to be seen: and says, in the times of Julian the apostate it was broke to pieces. But this woman rather seems to be an inhabitant of Capernaum, in the streets of which the after cure was wrought; and therefore what credit is to be given to the above accounts I leave to be judged of. It may be more useful to observe, that this profluvius woman is an emblem of a sinner in a state of nature: as

her disease was in itself an uncleanness, and rendered her unclean by the law, whereby she was unfit for the company and society of others; so the disease of sin, with which all are infected, is a pollution itself, and of a defiling nature; all the members of the body, and all the powers and faculties of the soul are polluted with it, and the whole man is filthy in the sight of God, and is pronounced unclean by the law of God; and such persons are very unfit for the society of saints on earth, and much less to be with those in heaven, nor even to be with moralized persons; for evil communications corrupt good manners: openly profane and impure sinners are infectious, and to be avoided. <sup>[3]</sup>

#### **1.4.4 Jesus and the unnamed woman**

In this captivating incident is another woman without a name. And yet, in the 34th verse, we read Jesus calls her “Daughter.” She is a woman who has suffered much for a very long time! She is not healthy, for we read in verse 25 that she had been hemorrhaging for twelve years. Can you imagine? Some of us can’t bear the thought of seven days, but twelve years! It goes on to say in verse 26 that she had seen many doctors and paid them all she had and still had no relief. We think about the physical effects of this kind of affliction. There would have been fatigue, probably anemia, she was possibly weak and frail. There might even have been some discomfort/pain involved. But for her, it went even deeper than the physical condition. According to Jewish law (Leviticus 12:1-8; 15:19-30), the bleeding woman was unclean. Because they were unclean, they were prohibited from their regular fellowship with others and worship of God. According to the laws of ritual purity, she should not have even ventured out into the crowd. She was probably spent physically, mentally, emotionally and even spiritually. <sup>[12]</sup>

This woman's disease was of long standing, she had it twelve years, and it was become inveterate and stubborn, and not easy to be removed; so such is the disease of sin, and indeed it is much worse; it is what is brought into the world with men, and is as old as themselves; is natural to them, and cannot be removed by any ordinary and natural methods, but requires supernatural power and grace; and it is in such a like case and condition, that the Spirit of God finds His people, when he quickens, sanctifies, and cleanses them: "and when I passed by thee, and saw thee polluted in thine own blood, I said unto thee, when thou wast in thy blood, Live", Ezekiel 16:6. <sup>[4]</sup>

Here she is, banned from human contact and she hears Jesus, the miracle worker, is in town. She has heard so much about him and she knows that if she could just get a glimpse of Him, if she could just touch the hem of his garment, she would be healed. So she ventures into the crowd and presses as close to Him as she can possibly get. Verse 27 tells us that she believed all she needed to do was to touch Him and she would be healed. As He passes her, from behind, she just reaches out and touches the fringe of His robe. "Immediately the bleeding stopped and she could feel that she had been healed." (Vs. 27)

Jesus did not speak any words. She was not given instructions to follow in order to receive healing. That act of faith – just to reach out and touch His garment – was enough to bring her complete healing. Because of Jesus' response to her, we know that her act of faith brought the healing.

In Mark 5:34 read Jesus' response to the woman. Jesus reaction was as immediate as was the healing. He knew that power had left Him and that someone had experienced a miracle. And turning to His disciples He asks, "Who touched me?" I guess that would have seemed like a

strange question coming from a man who was being pressed at all sides. The disciples sure thought so. But Jesus persisted, “Who touched me?” And so, “Then the frightened woman, trembling at the realization of what had happened to her, came and fell at His feet and told Him what she had done.” (Vs. 33) Of course she came trembling, though it is difficult to say exactly what caused this trembling. Her presence in this crowd had broken the purity laws. Perhaps she was fearful of punishment. Or, perhaps the trembling came from the realization that for the first time in twelve years, she was free from the pain and shame that had long held her captive. Whatever the reason, she was truthful and admitted to Jesus that she was the one who had touched Him. Jesus response was gentle and loving. “Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your suffering.” What an amazing story! What amazing faith! This woman with no name has taught us not only the importance of faith, but of the reward that is ours when we exercise our faith.

#### **1.4.5 Implication of this healing today**

In the modern society, a despised message is usually taken where it will be better received. And as such, one of the rulers of a synagogue earnestly besought Christ for a little daughter, about twelve years old, who was dying. Another cure was wrought by the way. We should do well, not only when in the house, but when we walk by the way, Deuteronomy 6:7. It is common with people not to apply to Christ till they have tried in vain all other helpers, and find them, as certainly they will, physicians of no value. Some run to diversions and gay company; others plunge into business, or even into intemperance; others go about to establish their own righteousness, or torment themselves by vain superstitions. Many perish in these ways; but none will ever find rest to the soul by such devices; while those whom Christ heals of the disease of sin, find in themselves an entire change for the better. As secret acts of sin, so secret acts of faith,

are known to the Lord Jesus. The woman told all the truth. It is the will of Christ that his people should be comforted, and He commands comfort to troubled souls. The more simply we depend on Him, and expect great things, the more we shall find in ourselves that he is become our salvation. Those who, by faith, are healed of their spiritual diseases, have reason to go in peace.<sup>[7]</sup> God doesn't necessarily require us to have unshakable, unwavering, moving mountains kind of faith in order to work miracles in our lives. Sometimes, just like the woman with the issue of blood all we need to do is have enough faith to just barely touch the hem of Christ's garment. If we can do that, then He can use His miraculous power on our behalf. As soon as she realized she was healed she tried to hide back into the crowd. She was probably afraid because she had just touched Jesus and made Him ritually unclean, as well as just about everyone else in the crowd. Once they knew she had touched them they would all have to go wash and change their clothes. Yet, she knew that she had been healed and she knew that Jesus knew it. When she saw that she could not hide from the Lord she "*came trembling*", fell at Christ's feet, and bore testimony to the crowd of the miracle that had happened to her.<sup>[5]</sup>

The themes of the audacity of desperate faith amidst fear, purity, family matters, forgiveness with healing out of God's mercy and the fact that healing is indeed "the bread of the sons of God".

## **2.0 CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, this incident reveals that Jesus is indeed the Son of God (Mark 1:1). He stands out as the merciful master who is touched by the feelings of our infirmities no matter what the public opinion of the ignorant masses is. He breaks through all barriers to get to suffering humanity. Though this woman's name did not seem important, the lesson we learned from her encounter

with Jesus is priceless. to give and receive forgiveness, we must exercise faith. It is evident that “By forgiving another, I am trusting that God is a better justice-maker than I am. By forgiving, I release my own right to get even and leave all issues of fairness for God to work out. I leave in God’s hands the scales that must balance justice and mercy.”<sup>[10]</sup>

Yes, “True faith depends not upon mysterious signs, celestial fireworks, or grandiose dispensations from a God who is seen as a rich, benevolent uncle; true faith, as Job understood, rests on the assurance that GOD IS WHO HE IS.”<sup>[11]</sup>

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