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INTERRUPT YOUR STORY!

Greetings, victorious church!

We hope that you are getting a good start to the new year and are experiencing the goodness of God in the land of the living!

I encourage you that if you want to have your best year yet, then determine to do two these two things:

1. Endeavor to get into His presence every day- spending time praising Him, worshipping Him, praying in the Spirit and simply communing with Him.
2. Determine to become even more of an extravagant giver than you've been already!

These are two of the wisest choices you could make, and they always yield Canaan Land quality fruit!

In this month's edition of the Living Logos, I felt led to encourage you with a familiar story from the Bible. It is a very popular story and one that you likely have heard many sermons about. It is the account of Jesus' healing of the woman with the issue of blood. You can find this account of healing in three out of the four Gospels- Matthew chapter 9, Mark chapter 5 and Luke chapter 8.

Now, as it is with all of the various accounts of healing found in the Gospels, there is a reason that this particular healing from Jesus' ministry is recorded in the Bible; and I can assure you that reason is not just to give us a history lesson. No, in my estimation, these things are recorded for you and I to discover three things: Yes, they are to show us who Jesus is (i.e. how He is the Son of God and why we should believe on Him).

But contrary to popular opinion, that is not the only reason. They are also recorded to show us how we can be more like Jesus ourselves. In other words, Jesus' healings are for us to learn how to do the same works that He did- bringing God's healing and delivering power into our generation. Lastly, these healings are to show us how we can receive our healing just like these individuals did 2,000 years ago if we happen to be the one who is sick or infirmed.

So, I encourage you that as we go through this particular account of healing to learn these things, follow along in your Bible and let your eyes rest on the life-transforming Word of God. His Words are health to all our flesh. Amen!

THE ISSUE OF BLOOD

Now as we begin looking at this story, let's first look a little deeper into what this woman's "issue" was:

In Mark 5:25, we are told that she had a "flow of blood." Now this woman's condition is not completely clear in terms of a modern medical diagnosis, but here are some other translation's renderings:

1. The Today's English Version puts it this way: "severe bleeding"
2. The New International Version says that she was "subject to bleeding"
3. The Living Bible (as well as many others) describe this woman's condition as a "hemorrhage." Therefore, she was hemorrhaging from a female issue.

Now according to Leviticus chapter fifteen, a woman who had a discharge of blood from her body was considered unclean. And in order for her to be regarded as clean, the bleeding would need to stop for at least seven days. Therefore, because of her condition of continually bleeding, the woman would have lived in a constant state of uncleanness according to the Law. On top of that, anyone who touched her and anything she touched would have been considered unclean and those who came into contact with these things had to wash themselves, their clothes and be unclean themselves until evening (see verses 19-27).

In fact, Mark 5:25 tell us that she had this hemorrhaging “for twelve years.” So, picture what was going on in this woman’s life: Since she would have been considered unclean for twelve years it stands to reason that she did not have any physical contact at all for twelve years. Consider that for a moment: Can you imagine what it might be like to have no physical contact with another human being for twelve long years? Not a hug, not a handshake and not even a pat on the back? I am sure that this created a lot of mental and emotional suffering on top of the physical suffering she endured. Amen?

WHAT ABOUT DOCTORS AND MEDICINE?

Then, in Mark 5:26, we see that she suffered even more than that. It says that she “suffered many things from many physicians.” Other versions of the Bible translate this phrase this way:

1. The Jerusalem Bible says, “after long and painful treatment under various doctors.”
2. The Contemporary English Version says, “She had gone to many doctors, and they had not done anything except cause her a lot of pain.”
3. The Message Bible says that “a long succession of physicians had treated her.”

Now I want to first say this: Thank God for doctors! They are on our side; we are on the same team! Many of us would not be here if it weren’t for doctors and medicine. So, we are not against them at all. But while we are certainly not against doctors or medicine, we should never put our trust in them either. We need to always remember: Doctors are just “practicing.” We might like to think they are the experts, but the truth is the only true expert is God, not a man or a woman! Therefore, we ought to put our trust in God alone!

In fact, Luke’s Gospel said that she “could not be healed by any” (Luke 8:43) ... You see, a problem with some doctors is many of them overstep their boundaries. Some will say things like, “You cannot be healed.” No, what they should say is- “I do not know how to get you healed.” Others will say, “You just have to accept this.” No! What they should say is- “You don’t have to accept my professional opinion.” Amen.

Again, this does not mean that we do not ever go to a doctor or take medicine. We are just to do these things *in the name of Jesus*- meaning, we only do what we believe that the Lord is leading us to do. And if He leads us to take a certain medicine, then we take it in Jesus’ name- putting our focus on Him to help us and not putting our trust in the medicine itself. Therefore, if a doctor tells you that you need to have a procedure done, don’t just automatically agree to do it. Pray about it first. See if the Lord has an alternate route, finding out what the Lord would lead you to do. Likewise, if the world tells you that you need to take a certain medication, that doesn’t mean you need to. Never forget: the only thing you ever need to do is what God tells you that you need to do.

Let me give you an example from our life: there was a time several years ago when Shannon went in for her annual exam and they found a small growth on her breast. So, of course, they immediately wanted to schedule her for a biopsy. However, we never had a peace about her even going to have the biopsy done. So, guess what she did (or rather, what she didn’t do)? She didn’t have the biopsy! And to make a long story short, the next time she was examined the following year, they could not locate the same lump. Glory to God!

But here is a good lesson: I believe that the devil likes to go fishing and dangle symptoms, pains and other natural things in front of us like a fisherman likes to dangle bait in front of fish. He does this to see how we will respond and if we respond in fear and take the bait, then he knows he’s got us hooked. And here is why he does it: us taking the bait yields the fruit of that thing we feared. Even Job said that the thing he greatly feared came upon him, right? (Job 3:25)

SPENDING ALL WE HAVE

Now when it came to this woman, “she had spent all that she had” (Mark 5:26). Luke 8:43 says, “she spent all of her livelihood” trying to get healed of her affliction.

You know, it can be expensive to be sick. Just think about it: If we lived like the Bible tells us that we can (i.e.

walking in health and healing, staying married etc.) and like the Bible tells us we should (i.e. not partying, drinking, smoking etc.), we would certainly have more financial flexibility. You know what that tells me? Things associated with the kingdom of darkness always take you further than you want to go, keep you longer than you want to stay and cost you more than you want to pay.

But sometimes it is a good place to be when you have exhausted all your options because then you are put in the position of turning completely to God. This lady was in a desperate situation because she had no more money to pay the physicians. Undoubtedly, this was a catalyst for this miracle...

I think it is interesting that Matthew 9:20 says that when this woman approached Jesus that she "came from behind." Now, of course, this could have been the only way which she could get to Jesus- for as Jesus' disciples said, the multitudes were thronging Him (Mark 5:31). But it could also have been because she was sneaking up on Him to take what she needed. I believe that this latter option was likely. Why? Because when Jesus asked who touched Him, she didn't immediately fess up, but rather was "fearing and trembling" (Mark 5:33).

Now I am getting ahead of myself here, but this shows us that receiving from God is not always going to be in the way people would consider appropriate or even ethical. Remember, this woman was not even supposed to be out in public- for she was unclean according to the Law. And we need to realize how dangerous this was for her.

Again, this woman was considered to be continually unclean, and whoever touched her or she touched- whether through physical contact or simply her clothing brushing up against something or someone- would be considered unclean. So, for her to pass through this crowd- probably bumping into and touching many different people from the crowd that was thronging Jesus- was a crime punishable by death. On top of that, but Jairus, one of the rulers of the synagogue, was present there and he had the authority to have her stoned. So, this woman was running a great risk by doing what she did here! Can you see that?

HOW FAITH COMES AND WHAT FAITH DOES

In Mark 5:27, we are told where this woman's faith to take such a risk came from. It says, "when she heard about Jesus"! And isn't this how faith comes, by hearing? Faith does not come by "seeing, feeling, or experiencing;" faith only comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God (Romans 10:17).

However, notice that this Scripture does not say that she heard from Jesus (i.e. heard His Word); this Scripture says that she heard *about* Him. This proves that faith comes not just from hearing the Bible or the truths contained in it. No, faith also comes by simply hearing about what Jesus has done in other people's lives. This is the power of testimonies, my friends! They too can produce faith in people like reading and hearing Scriptural examples can produce faith.

But what was she hearing about Jesus that produced faith in her? We can safely assume that she was hearing what she had faith for. Which was what? That if only she could touch His clothes (Mark 5:28) or touch His garment (Matthew 9:21). So, what she was evidently hearing was that people who touched His clothes, His garment or the hem of His garment (as Luke puts it) were getting healed! Amen!

You see, what we hear is important- for this is how faith comes. So, if we are predominantly hearing the news of this world, then our heart will be more inclined to those things rather than spiritual things. But if we turn off all of the world's voice and primarily listen to the truth of God's Word, our hearts will become more inclined to the Good News. Amen! (See Mark 4:24)

And guess what happens when our hearts truly get filled up with hearing the truth of the Gospel? Mark 5:28 says, "for she said." This indicates that after she heard about Jesus and faith arose in her heart, she started saying, "If only I may touch His clothes, I shall be made well!"

Saints, this is what faith does- it speaks! This woman heard about Jesus and this birthed faith in her heart- a faith that had a voice! And in the original language, it denotes- "she kept saying."

You see, out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. So, if you want to know what is in your heart

in abundance, just listen to what you keep saying. This woman kept saying, "If only I may touch His clothes, I shall be made well" because she believed in her heart that this was true. It was the hope of her heart. Therefore, it was what kept coming out of her mouth.

Yes, she had tried everything else; now she was saying, "if only..." And then, after she continually said this, her words drove her to her knees and she started pressing through the crowd on the ground to get to Jesus' clothes.

So, let's consider the process of this woman's faith here:

1. She heard about Jesus- which is where the faith comes from according to Romans 10:17. She obviously had ears to hear about Jesus and then she took heed to what she was hearing about Him.
2. Then after she heard, she acted (i.e. she came behind Him in the crowd and touched His garment). Faith that is alive, according to James 2:14-26, is faith that works.
3. Finally, she then spoke what she believed in her heart. Amen! We believe and, therefore, we speak. We believe in our heart and confess with our mouth.

SHE TOUCHED ME

So, after this woman got to Jesus and touched the hem of His garment, we see that Jesus stops and asks- "Who touched Me?" (see Luke 8:45) Then we are told- "And He looked around to see her who had done this thing" (Mark 5:32).

So, we see through Jesus asking the question: "Who touched Me?" that He didn't know who it was. You see, Jesus did not know everything. He did not operate in the omniscience of God like many believe. However, He did know one thing for sure: He knew that power went out of Him! But I do want you to notice that Jesus' disciples thought it was a strange thing for Him to ask- "Who touched My clothes?" when there were multitudes thronging Him. In other words, there were a lot of people touching His clothes. So, for Him to ask this question was perplexing to them. They were like- "Duh! A bunch of people are touching your clothes, Jesus. What do you mean, 'Who touched Me?'"

What this teaches us, however, is that people can be going through the motions, doing or saying certain things, but that doesn't mean they will all get the same results. In this situation, hundreds of people were touching Jesus, but one particular person put a demand on the anointing to where He felt more power going out of Himself. So what Jesus was really asking was- "Who *really* touched Me?"

So, my question then is: What is the difference between how all of these other people touched Him and how this woman touched Him? Well, the obvious answer is- she touched Him *by faith*. You see, all of the other people (which I would guess that at least some of them were getting healed) were not putting the same draw on His power that this woman did or else Jesus would not have noticed the difference. Then there was something different about this situation, wasn't there? And God obviously wants us to know what that difference is by recording this account of healing in the Holy Scriptures. Amen?

THE HEART OF THE HEALED

Now I think it is interesting to see how this woman reacted after receiving her healing. Mark 5:33 gives us three very important truths:

First of all, notice that she was "fearing and trembling." Of course, this is referring to the fear she must have had of potentially being stoned for breaking God's Law and going into public, touching whoever she had in getting to Jesus. But I want us to look at it from another perspective: notice that this verse says that she was fearing and trembling "knowing what had happened to her."

You see, don't you think that there is a good chance that this woman thought she had upset the Lord by "cutting in line" and getting what she needed without asking first? But notice the Lord did not rebuke her

for this or even acknowledge any transgression on her part. He just simply said, "Go in peace." This speaks volumes to me, and portrays the heart of so many Christians.

You see, so many Christians feel like they are asking too much of God at times or they are overstepping their bounds in some way. However, when it comes to the Lord, I believe He simply loves it when people receive His goodness and is not as concerned with the manner by which we receive it. Amen.

Then notice that it says that she "came and fell down before Him..." This, to me, shows this woman's heart. She didn't run from Him; she ran to Him. Friends, we must learn to always do this. When everything in our mind and emotions are telling us that we made a mistake, we need to run to the Lord and fall down before Him- trusting in His mercy and His grace. Never forget this one thing- when you blow it, don't run from God; run to Him! He is a merciful and faithful High Priest!

Finally, notice that she "told Him the whole truth." She didn't tell Him a half truth or start making excuses as to why she did what she did. She simply told Him the "whole truth." Friends, walking in truth is a major key to being set free. As Jesus said, "the truth will make us free." (John 8:32). So, if we want to be freer than we already are, then we need to walk in the "whole truth." It is only when we cover our mistakes and weaknesses that the Lord cannot free us from them. Amen?

YOUR FAITH MAKES YOU WHOLE

Now there is a truth found in Mark 5:34 that religion just cannot swallow, and it is how Jesus attributed this woman's healing to her own faith. Notice that He said to her- "your faith has made you well!" No, not His divine power and not His healing anointing, but he said that her own faith had made her whole! That is an awesome statement!

Again, this one truth right here completely counters so much popular theology! And if this seems strange to you, let's look at a few similar things that Jesus said to those who came to receive from Him:

- a) In Mark 10:52, He said the same thing to blind Bartimaeus- "your faith has made you well."
- b) In Matthew 8:13, He said to Centurion- "as you have believed, so let it be done for you."
- c) In Matthew 9:29, He said to the two blind men- "according to your faith let it be to you."

So here we have three other witnesses (all out of Jesus' own mouth I might add) that clearly show us that it is one's own faith that heals them, not God's power.

Of course, this does not mean that our healing doesn't ultimately come from the power and anointing of God. That should go without saying. But the truth is that since Jesus has come, the grace of God Himself, it is our faith that simply receives that power and anointing that has already been made available by God's grace. Understanding this is the key to learning how to receive our healing from the Lord.

No, saints, we are not waiting on God! We are not looking for Him to do it! We are believing in what He has already done and expecting to receive it by our faith. Amen and amen!

INTERRUPTING THE STORY

Now I want to conclude with a powerful truth from this healing...

One thing about this particular healing that is so unique is that it is sandwiched in between another story- the miracle of Jairus' daughter.

For example, if you look at Matthew's account, he begins in Matthew 9:18&19 telling us how a certain ruler (which we know from Mark's Gospel to be Jairus, a ruler of the synagogue) approached Jesus imploring Him to come lay His hand on his daughter that she might live. But then in Matthew 9:20, he says, "And suddenly..." and goes on to describe how this woman with the issue of blood received her healing. Then each Gospel writer immediately goes back to telling the story of how Jesus went to Jairus' home and raised his daughter from the

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dead. My point, you ask? My point is that the woman with the issue of blood basically interrupted Jairus' story! And you would be hard-pressed to find another story in the Bible get paused to tell another story like this one did. And I believe there is a reason for this- and that reason is: sometimes you have to "Interrupt your story!"

What I mean by this is that there is a customary order to things and a plan that everyone expects things to go according to. And sometimes, the order and the plan needs to be interrupted if you want to see a change in the story! In other words, sometimes we have to do what we have to do to get our miracle like this woman did, even when it upsets the normal course of things.

You see, there were several things that were violated in this account of healing: Number one, Jesus was going to heal Jairus' daughter and this woman interrupted a good thing that was supposed to happen. Number two, this woman violated the Law by being considered unclean and putting all of these people who were thronging Jesus at risk of being made unclean as well, not to mention trying to touch Jesus and risking making the Rabbi Himself unclean! But here is my point: if you want to get different results than the majority, then you are going to need to do things differently than the majority! In other words, don't just do things the way everyone else does- if you want different fruit than everyone else, then you need to plant differently than everyone else.

One thing that I do when I read these accounts of healings and miracles in the Word of God is I look for the actions and characteristics of the person receiving their answer. And do you know what you see? Like in this account of the woman with the issue of blood, they were not just casually believing. No, they were aggressively believing for their miracle! In some cases, blind men cried out to the point that the people around them were telling them to shut up (i.e. Blind Bartimaeus). In others, women followed the Lord patiently crying out for His mercy to receive a miracle for their loved ones (i.e. the Syrophoenician woman). Yes, in many of these accounts of healings, people went to extreme measures to get what they needed from the Lord and were not concerned with what people thought of them.

For example, a married couple who are friends of ours had been believing God for a child when they had a hard time conceiving, and after the woman conceived their miracle baby, the baby was born prematurely and they were told that their daughter would not live. So, the couple decided they were going to believe God, but here is the difference between this couple and others who "believe God"- they also decided that they were not going to let anyone in that room where they kept the child unless they were in the same radical kind of faith that they were!

Of course, this offended many of the family members who traveled from afar to come offer their condolences because this couple wouldn't even acknowledge them. But guess what? They got their miracle! No, they were not cordial or polite, but sometimes we must decide- do we want people to like and accept us or do we want our miracle. Sometimes, we cannot have it both ways.

And this is, in essence, what this woman did. She went against "the flow" and went out on a limb where the best fruit is. Amen and hallelujah!

So, I encourage you today: Interrupt your own story! You can change the natural course that you have been taking by choosing to get radical and believing God like this woman did. It will take courage. It will take boldness. But this is the kind of faith that always yields results. Dare to believe God today!

Till next month... Maranatha!

Victoriously,

