

CRYING IN THE CHAPEL

AND OTHER MESSAGES

by

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CHAPTER TWO

THE TRIUMPH OF A TOUCH

“And, behold, there cometh one of the rulers of the synagogue, Jairus by name; and when he saw him, he fell at his feet, and besought him greatly, saying, My little daughter lieth at the point of death: I pray thee, come and lay thy hands on her, that she may be healed; and she shall live. And Jesus went with him; and much people followed him, and thronged him. And a certain woman, which had an issue of blood twelve years, and had suffered many things of many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse, when she had heard of Jesus, came in the press behind, and touched his garment. For she said, If I may touch but his clothes I shall be whole. And straightway the fountain of her blood was dried up; and she felt in her body that she was healed of that plague. And Jesus, immediately knowing in himself that virtue had gone out of him, turned him about in the press, and said, Who touched my clothes? And his disciples said unto him, Thou seest the multitude thronging thee, and sayest thou, Who touched me? And he looked round about to see her that had done this thing. But the woman fearing and trembling, knowing what was done in her, came and fell down before him, and told him all the truth. And he said unto her, Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace . . .” (Mark 5:22-34).

In this fifth chapter of Mark, Jesus is psychiatrist, gynecologist, and pediatrician.

In the opening part of the chapter, He deals with a mental case. The man bound in chains and abusing himself, the victim of delusions, an extreme paranoid, is brought back to the realm of sanity by the assistance of Christ.

Then a woman meets Him on the way. She is the object of a weakening disease which had been with her for many years. Jesus performs a miracle with her, and she is brought to health.

The chapter closes with Jesus assuming the role of a pediatrician. He raises a little girl from the sleep of death and restores her to her overjoyed parents.

Jesus has control over demons, as in the case of the man. He has control over disease, as in the case of the woman, and He has control over death, as in the case of the little girl.

We are to observe also how broad and expansive His ministry is.

- He is the Saviour of men. Here was a man bound in chains and the pawn of his sinful past. Christ releases him.
- He is the Saviour of women. This timid lady had tried every remedy in the attempt to bring healing to herself, but Jesus performed the miracle that gave her release.
- He is the Saviour of little children. The little twelve-year-old was dead. Jesus brought her back to life.

Notice the part that the crowds played in the three instances.

- When He healed the man, the crowds were enraged at the miracle because it hurt their business.
- The crowd was thronging Him when the timid woman reached her fragile hand to touch Him.
- The crowd made fun and laughed when He informed them that He was going to bring the little girl back to life.

Don't let the crowd keep you from Christ tonight. Between you and Christ, there is a crowd. Maybe your friends, maybe your business associates, perhaps the kinfolks will stand in the way. But remember, Christ can be reached.

Miracles of healing are parables of grace.

I want to talk to you about this little, fragile woman who found the fountain of health in a simple touch. Often when you go to a doctor, he will inform you that your malady is not in his field and he will send you to another. Not Jesus. He knows your problem and He will heal you tonight. Other physicians had not been able to help her, but here is One who will not turn her away. We do not know her name. Some say her name was Martha; others say it was Veronica. No name is mentioned, but who cares? The Great Physician will heal her anyhow.

Suffering brings people to Christ. Many of you here will never think of your spiritual need until the bony hand of death begins to knock on the door. Some never come until the baby dies. Others will have to lose their health and be placed in a sick bed before they will look up. The prodigal Son had to almost starve before he said, "**I will arise and go to my father.**" The Philippian jailer in Acts 16 had to almost perish in an earthquake before he lifted his voice and said, "**Sirs, what must I do to be saved?**" Tonight Christ is calling. Listen to His voice. Do not wait until you have almost wasted away before you come to Christ. Do not wait until your money is gone and health has taken the wings of the morning before you come to Christ. Christ is available now; He will heal once and for all and forever. There were many who needed Christ in the crowd that followed Him that day, but they got nothing because they were just spectators.

Crowds gather around Christ every Sunday morning in our churches, but they go away empty-handed because they throng Him but they don't touch Him. Jesus is here to be appropriated. Do not waste this opportunity; you have some need. Relate that need to Him, and He will bless you and make you a blessing.

I. THE SICKNESS OF THE WOMAN

It was a draining disease. For many years her strength had been ebbing away. By virtue of this illness she was forbidden to be with her children. She could not have a home. She was excluded from the temple worship. What a lonely life she must have lived! Maybe she had been a beautiful woman in the past. This horrible illness had interrupted her future plans. Perhaps there are those who read this who are facing a spiritual illness like this one. There is some habit that is draining your life, draining your character, draining your influence, draining your money. Oh, how you could wish that you could be done with it! It has kept you from being happy. Maybe, like this woman, you have looked for help in various places, but to no avail. The malady continues to harass you and to exclude you from the happy hours that belong to every individual.

Such is the nature of sin; it has a draining power upon human life. James said that “**sin, when it is finished, it bringeth forth death.**” And you may despise this spiritual illness like the woman despised her sickness, but you have to live with it.

I take that back—you do not have to live with it. There is a way out, and the person of Christ furnishes the answer. I do not know how to describe it to you, but Jesus has the answer to your weak heart. Millions would testify to His power in delivering life from these various bondages. Oh that many of you who read these words would come to Christ!

This woman had a fighting heart. In spite of her disease, she had not lost hope. She kept looking for the answer. She could have easily convinced herself that all hope was forever gone. A man may be down, but he's never out until he's dead. Everything may seem to be against you, but Christ will deliver you, and He is not far from any one of us. He is passing by even now, and if you will reach out with the fingers of faith, He will save you and give you peace.

I came to Jesus as I was
Weary and worn and sad,
I found in Him a resting place,
And He has made me glad.

The woman had been sick for twelve years. That's a mighty long time. Think of it! Day in and day out; hour in and hour out for twelve years. A lot can happen in twelve years. You recall that Jesus was on His way to the bedside of a dying girl who was twelve years old. The woman had been sick as long as the life of the little girl that Jesus was going to resurrect. Remember that another sick person, a man who had been waiting for the moving of the waters by the Pool of Bethesda, had been sick for thirty-eight years. It is amazing how long people can endure tragedy.

Sin can hang on for a long time. Many of you have been carrying a spiritual illness for a long time. The time that you could have spent in the sunshine has been spent in the shadows because you have allowed this condition to remain. How long have you ignored the Saviour? How long have you continued in this condition? Count the years! The Bible exhorts us to redeem the time for the days are evil. If we coddle our spiritual sickness, we are losing precious time that could be used more wisely.

One of the great marvels of grace is the patience of God. I have often wondered how He puts up with our indecision and our unwillingness to deal swiftly and drastically with these maladies that afflict human life. We are all acquainted with a Bible character named Methuselah. He was the oldest man that ever lived, and everyone knows that. But do you know why he lived so long? His father, Enoch, was a prophet. He was preaching against the godlessness of the time, and then this baby was born. He told the people of his day that they were going to face judgment, that God would visit their sins. The people would ask Enoch, "When will this judgment come?" Enoch would point to the newborn son and say, "**Methuselah.**" In the Hebrew it means, "**when he is gone, it will come.**" Enoch prophesied that when Methuselah would die, the judgment would come. So God prolonged the life of Methuselah to give the people of that day a chance to repent.

God has prolonged mercy for many of us. His patience continues with us until this very hour. In baseball, when a player hasn't gotten a hit, though he has been up to bat many times, they say that he is overdue. Many of you who read this are overdue. You have heard the Word of God, and the Christ of salvation has been made available to you many times. There is no excuse for continuing in your sins. The gates of mercy are open to all. The way of salvation includes the human race. I care not what your past has been; I care not what your present status is, the Lord can heal the soul. There is hope today for you.

I am sure that the little woman could have discouraged herself by dwelling on the disease. After all, had she not consulted the best doctors and spent all of her money trying to get well? But she had more faith in Christ than she had in her disease, and she believed that Christ could help her. He can help you; you are no exception to His cure, and if you come in humble faith as this little woman came, you, too, shall have new life.

The little woman had a double burden—the burden of sickness and the burden of poverty.

The only thing that the doctors had relieved her of was her money. When the postman rang at her house and she rushed out to get the mail, all she got was doctor bills. The medical men, I am sure, had done their best. But the woman was still sick. I know that she was very timid. Being a woman, and then having this horrible illness, would combine to make her reticent. But she struggles through the crowd, and perhaps the only reason that she can stand up is because the crowd is so close to her that she cannot fall. But she stretches a thin, transparent hand from the crowd and touches the hem of His garment, and the miracle takes place.

Have you touched Jesus? "Oh," you might say, "I have joined the church." Many people reject Jesus by joining a church. Ponder that statement. You are not necessarily a Christian because you are a Methodist or a Baptist or a Catholic. The church is important in the Christian life, but it is like a sign on the highway telling you the way to Florida—the sign cannot take you there.

Wouldn't it be foolish, if I wanted to go to Florida and I found a sign that said, "To Florida" so many miles, and I sat on it. Suppose you would come by and say, "What are you doing?" I would reply, "I am going to Florida! See? The sign says 'To Florida.'" You would inform me that the sign gave information, but it would not furnish transportation. So the church points the way, but it cannot take you there. Touch Jesus now—there is the answer.

II. THE SENSITIVENESS OF JESUS

“**Who touched Me?**” He asked. The disciples were amazed. How can He ask a question like that? Everybody was touching Him as they jostled back and forth along the road. But Jesus knew the difference. Some person with the fingers of faith had secured a blessing.

We are told in Hebrews that He is a High Priest who can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities. You remember the day that He was dying on the cross. I am sure that there was a great tumult around Golgotha, for many were objecting to the inscription that read, “**Jesus, King of the Jews.**” I cannot describe the confusion and the noise that must have surrounded this crimson scene. But can you imagine that in the midst of all this loud yelling and shouting, a thief, dying on one side of Him, said with a weak voice, “**Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.**” Jesus heard that feeble cry. The Scripture tells us that He will not bruise a broken reed nor quench a smoking flax. He heard that feeble wail above the roar and confusion of the angry mob.

He will honor your approach, no matter how feeble, if you will come to Him. Often people have said to me, “I don’t have enough faith.” Jesus said that if you had faith the size of a grain of mustard seed (which was the size of a grain of pepper), you could remove mountains. What makes for the salvation that Christ freely gives is not the amount of faith that the individual possesses, but the amount of love that the Saviour has. And He has plenty of love for all of us. You can trust anyone who loves you like Jesus does. He loved you enough to die for you on the cross. You can trust anyone who loves you that much.

Jesus continues to appeal to men and women in this hour because He cares for the individual. When wicked sinners saw Him at a distance, they were convinced that here was a man who understood them. Jesus never judged sinners by what they were at the moment; He judged them by what they could become in the future. Men who had lost their way felt at home with the Carpenter of Nazareth. When defeated women looked at Him, they thought, Here is someone who can help me; He won’t kick me around. It was this feeling that sinners had for Him that has made the Saviour perennially attractive. He cares for the individual.

I believe that if all men had been saved and fit for heaven, and I had been the only sinner in the world needing redemption, that Christ would have come to Bethlehem and humbled Himself at Calvary, and burst asunder the bands of death just for one poor soul like me. And I believe that if Christ could look down from the majesty on high and discover one soul for whom He had not died, He would come and do it all over again for the one individual.

Religions have arisen and fallen, but Christ goes on forever. Brahma hasn’t any throne, and the harp of Orpheus has been silenced. The thunders of Jupiter roll no more; Egyptian mummies continue their perennial slumber. The fires of the Persian burn low, and the wandering Arab finds that Mecca is mute. But the love of Christ is embalmed in sculpture, made rhythm in music, and the galleries of art have been busy through the ages describing the brilliant beauty of the redeeming love of Christ.

- This tender and sensitive Christ never wrote a song, yet He is the inspiration for all song.
- He never founded a college, yet colleges have sprung up from His influence.
- He never built an army or drafted a soldier, yet His kingdom stretches from shore to shore till moons shall wax and wane no more.

Though two thousand years have elapsed since the time of His death, He still lives. Herod could not kill Him, Satan could not defeat Him; death could not destroy Him, and the grave could not hold Him.

Jesus could have brushed aside the seeking woman. After all, He was going to the bedside of a dying girl. But the Saviour is not in a hurry. He stopped to bless the woman and to make her a blessing to others. He is not in a hurry now. He will save from the uttermost to the uttermost all who will come unto God by Him. He made the world, but He can stoop and dry a tear.

In the nineteenth century a group of men called “Deists” arose. They were brilliant men. They believed in a Creator, but they did not believe that He was concerned with the plight of men. They thought that He was too busy making worlds to condescend to human need. The God of the earth had made the universe and left it running in harmony with law, but He was not concerned in our tears or troubles. This is a false concept of God. Jesus came to reveal the interest God has in human life. **“The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us.”**

Jesus loved the common people because He made them.

You remember before His crucifixion He commanded His disciples in Matthew 21 to bring Him a colt and its mother. The mother was an experienced animal, and it stands to reason that Christ would have ridden her into Jerusalem. But He chose to ride the young, unbroken colt. Such is the course He takes in choosing men.

- When He desired to find disciples, He didn't choose the stable, learned Pharisees. He went by the seaside and chose fishermen and tax collectors, young and inexperienced.
- When He wanted to shake the Catholic system, He chose a young, daring monk named Martin Luther.
- When He wanted to awaken England from its spiritual slumber, He by-passed the students and professors in seminary and chose a rugged John Wesley.

At the present moment, God is using humble preachers to confound the mighty. He always chooses the unbroken colt. He loves us, common as we are. He seeks to bring us unto Himself.

My friend, you are not dealing with a cold Christ. Jesus was not born in a deep freeze. His heart is warm, and His love is available. I do not understand how anyone can refuse Him. Reject the appeal of this preacher, but do not turn your back upon the Christ who loves you and has proven that love by dying on the cross. This is the worst sin that human beings can be guilty of—the sin against divine love, the love of God. Whatever transgression you are guilty of, do not burden your feeble existence with a sin against the love of God. Rejecting Him and continuing in your condition caused by sin is inexcusable. Jesus of Nazareth is passing by.

III. THE SEQUEL TO THE STORY

Let me close by mentioning for a moment on what happened when the sick woman touched the sensitive Christ. The story says that she was healed immediately. There must have been a smile in her face and a feeling of thanksgiving in her heart. Can you imagine, for the first time in twelve years she was free of this difficult and indescribable disease? There must have been a thrill in her soul as she began to make plans to live a different kind of life made possible by the healing. There is no greater joy than to be cured—cured at last, after all the nights of weeping, after all of the money spent on this and that remedy, after the disillusionment that must come from constant suffering.

The cure for sin will also be instantaneous.

I cannot describe to you the joy that comes from knowing that **“there is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.”**

There are some who claim that we will never know whether or not God has received us until the final judgment when “God has made the file complete.” This is not so. We can be saved today and know it. Eternal life is not a prize at the end of the race, but a gift at the beginning of the race. Jesus said, **“Verily I say unto you, Whosoever heareth my word and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life.”** Spurgeon said, “The word ‘hath’ spells ‘got it.’” And so it does. God has promised to save us forever if we will trust Him completely.

But you cannot steal a blessing. This little woman tried to sneak out of the moving congregation and go home. But Jesus stopped the procession and brought her out into the open. Maybe He brought her out to help the distraught father to whose home Christ was journeying. His little girl was dying, and this wayside miracle would strengthen his faith on the way.

The Saviour wants us to come out in the open. It is His way of dealing with people who are blessed. But so many are like this woman; they refuse to bless others by their new found joy and peace. Jesus has said that if we confess Him before men, He will confess us before the Father. Why should anyone be reticent to do this if it glorifies the Saviour? But I know many people who refuse to make a public profession in order to strengthen the faith of others.

Why should we be ashamed to own Christ! We are not ashamed in other situations of life.

- If a man is in the service of his country, he is not ashamed of the uniform. In fact, he is proud to let others know that he is related to a branch of the service.
- If a woman is married, she will proudly sport the rings that symbolize a relationship that is dear to her.
- If a man is a college graduate, he will wear the ring that will declare to others his achievements in college.

Why, then, should a person refuse to make public the blessing that has become the foundation to everything that is wonderful to life.

I heard a story once about a parade. It seems that two Irishmen were watching the parade, and every time the flag came by, they would remove their hats and shout, “Hooray for Ireland! Three cheers for Ireland!” They kept this up, and a Frenchman who was standing behind them got tired of this display. He made plans to check it the next time they made a patriotic demonstration.

After a while, the flag appeared in sight again, and the Irishmen removed their hats and shouted, “Hooray for Ireland! Three cheers for Ireland!” When they had replaced their hats, the Frenchman removed his hat and shouted, “Hooray for hell! Three cheers for hell!” The Irishmen turned around and said, “That’s right, friend — every man for his own country.”

When the children of Israel were instructed to slay the lamb for the Passover, they were told to put the blood on the doorpost — not in the closet, or not on the back door, but within the full view of everyone. So the Lord commands us to come out in the open and let the redeemed of the Lord say so. For in doing this we encourage motion on the part of others, and we help them to come to Christ.

But perhaps the Lord brought the little woman out in the open to correct her theology.

He didn’t want her to get up in a testimony meeting and tell the people that the power of Christ was in the fringe of His garment. She could have very easily thought this, and who knows, she might have begun a new denomination and called them the “Fringeites.” The Lord said to her, “Thy faith has saved thee, not the fringe or thy finger.” Jesus always honored faith. The writer of Hebrews states that without faith it is impossible to please Him. He asked His disciples one day, “**When I return, will I find faith on the earth?**”

The little woman had the wrong theology but the right motive, and Jesus honored it. He understands the heart and seeks to save those who come unto Him in simple trust. He even made her feel that she had been part of the process. “**Thy faith hath saved thee.**” He called her “**Daughter**”; He adopted her into the family of faith. The healing was a gift. What had not been done in twelve years, Christ did in one beautiful moment.

Notice that He gave her peace. “**Go in peace,**” He said.

And this world needs that peace that passes understanding and misunderstanding. For many people with well bodies do not have peace of soul. Jesus knows the root of our problem, and for this complex day in which we live, peace is the greatest achievement in human life. The psychologists are telling us that hostility and conflict are one of the most difficult problems in living today.

Leon J. Saul, in his book entitled *The Hostile Mind*, has said,

“No problem today is more crucial than man’s hostility to man; no emotions more destructive than rage and hate.”

Jesus knew that if the woman had a well body and a hostile soul, another tragedy would follow.

So the Saviour is passing by today. He wants to give you peace. He told the disciples, **“My peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.”**

This very day Christ is available. Do not think that He is too busy in other errands that He is not concerned about you. He will stop along the way and minister to your need. So arouse yourself in this moment and come to Christ. Do not wait until some dramatic event sweeps you into God’s kingdom.

Remember, Christ did not touch the woman — the woman touched Christ. Touch Him today, and He will heal you forever by giving you the peace that comes from God.

~ end of chapter 2 ~

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