**Research: Healing of the Woman with the Issue of Blood**

**Mark 5:25-34**

25 And a certain woman, which had an issue of blood twelve years,

 “The story of the healing of the woman with a hemorrhage is sandwiched between the report of Jairus’s daughter’s illness and Jesus’ action in raising her to life. The precise nature of the woman’s ailment is not stated. Probably some sort of uterine disease caused the bleeding that had persisted for twelve years” (*EBC* 8.661).

“The woman’s illness would make her ritually unclean and in consequence everything she touched would be unclean” (*AYB Mark* 285).

The illness that this woman manifested was a hemorrhaging of the blood and was considered incurable. For a Jew, any visible or concealed flow of blood caused the person to be seriously restricted in religious and social life. She had been an outcast for twelve years. All physical contact with her was strictly prohibited. During all those years, she had probably not even been embraced by anyone. It could be that this was her time of menopause, contrasting with the twelve-year-old little girl, who may have been just coming into her time of womanhood and beginning menstruation.

26 And had suffered many things of many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse,

The appearance was that the medical profession had given up on her, science had given up on her, and theology had given up on her.

“All her substance had been spent on physicians and their medicines and now, having grown weaker and worse through the years, she was also destitute” (Sergio 31).

27 When she had heard of Jesus, came in the press behind, and touched his garment.

“The reports the woman had heard about Jesus’ healings and her belief that he could help her led her to come to him. But her faith seemed to be mixed with a measure of superstition. She apparently shared the belief, common in her day, that the power of a person was transmitted to his clothing” (*EBC 8*.661).

“No doubt it was his marvelous cures she had heard of; and the hearing of these, in connection with her bitter experience of the vanity of applying to any other, had been blessed to the kindling in her soul of a firm confidence that he who had so willingly wrought such cures on others was able and would not refuse to heal her also” (Jamieson 3.153).

“Coming secretly, because of ritual impurity, the woman’s action indicates her belief that mere contact will effect a cure” (*AYB Mark* 285).

28 For she said, If I may touch but his clothes, I shall be whole.

Perhaps she had heard of Jesus or heard of his healing work in the surrounding countryside. She might have seen the crowd gather around him, when he stepped out of the boat from the country of Gadara. There was a superstition that if one could just “touch the tassels, the holiest part” of a holy man’s shawl, one could receive something of him. Therefore, in spite of the mob-like crowd following the Master, she walked through the men. Even if they frowned at, ignored or ostracized her, she made it to the place where Jesus was walking.

What qualities of thought did the woman embody to approach Jesus for healing, especially in this male-dominated throng? Didn’t she need to exhibit intense faith? expectancy? hope? humility? It took such courage for her to get close to the Christ, to walk through the pushing and shoving curiosity seekers. Her thought was: “If I may but touch his clothes, I shall be whole.” It was a silent, mental touch that reached out for help, and Jesus felt it. And instantly, she was made whole.

29 And straightway the fountain of her blood was dried up; and she felt in her body that she was healed of that plague.

“Not only had something happened to the woman when she touched Jesus’ clothes, he too was aware that something had happened to him” (*EBC 8*.661).

“She did not want to hear him speak, much less speak to him, and she knew that, according to Mosaic law, she was ritually unclean and anyone or anything she touched would become unclean also. She risked severe punishment if anyone in the crowd discovered that while she suffered from a flow of blood, whether natural or due to illness, she had allowed herself to touch a man, or had been touched by him” (Sergio 32).

30 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?

“According to the ceremonial law, the touch of anyone having the disease which this woman had would have defiled the person touched” (Jamieson 3.153).

Reading her thought, Jesus was immediately aware that someone was seeking help and that “virtue had gone out of him.” The Anchor Yale Bible states: “The Greek is awkward, literally, ‘knowing that power from him had gone out’” (*AYB Mark* 285). Jesus did not allow her to remain anonymous; on the contrary, he deliberately drew attention to the woman and to her capacity for faith. He showed her dignity and worth, and treated her with equality, which undoubtedly stunned the all-male crowd.

33 But the woman fearing and trembling, knowing what was done in her, came and fell down before him, and told him all the truth.

“It is possible that the woman’s fear may have been increased by her knowledge that she had rendered Jesus ritually unclean” (*AYB Mark* 286).

“Deliberately, Jesus made it impossible for her to conceal the nature of her ailment or to deny that she had touched him, so that all, including the president of the synagogue, would have proof before their very eyes, that he had no use for a law that considered a woman ‘unclean’ in her circumstances. By rewarding her with a miracle for touching him, he showed his defiance of the law as well. It was one more deed wrought by him that day to affirm the equality of woman in legal and in ritual terms” (Sergio 33).

In front of everyone, he broke the Mosaic law that stated he could not be touched by a woman while she was bleeding, causing him to become ritually unclean. He spoke aloud to her in public, which was also forbidden. She knew the risk of touching him in her present state, and the severe punishment that might come down upon her if she was caught. Despite that fear, and with great courage, she reaches out in humility and touches the hem of his garment. And with total focus on the woman, ignoring the crowd around him, Jesus speaks to her.

34 And he said unto her, Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace, and be whole of thy plague.

Jesus’ words are very powerful: “He sent his word, and healed them, and delivered them from their destructions” (Ps. 107:20).

“Saw ye my Saviour? Heard ye the glad sound? Felt ye the power of the Word?” – Mary Baker Eddy (*Hymnal* 298)

Jesus lifts the woman’s concept of the blood relationship of daughter using the term in an entirely original way. He deliberately uplifts it to the divine relationship, seeing her as the daughter of God. The word “daughter” in Greek is *thygater* which means “a daughter of God, acceptable to God, rejoicing in God’s peculiar care and protection” (Thayer 292).

The word “faith” in Greek is *pistis* and means “the conviction of the truth of anything; the conviction that God exists and is the creator and ruler of all things; a strong and welcome conviction or belief that Jesus is the Messiah, through whom we obtain eternal salvation” (Thayer 512).

Mark 5:34 …thy faith hath made thee whole… uses the Greek word *sozo* which means “to keep safe and sound from danger or destruction; to save one suffering from disease, to make well, heal, restore to health” (Thayer 610).

Mark 5:34 …be whole of thy plague… uses *hygies*, a different word for “whole.” This word means “a man who is sound in body; to make one whole, i.e. restore him to health; metaphorically, teaching which does not deviate from the truth; whole” (Thayer 634).

“Whole” in English can mean “complete; unimpaired; total; unbroken; uninjured; sound; restored to health and soundness; to be undivided or unfragmented” (Webster 112).

“The phrase ‘Go in peace’ is a traditional Jewish formula of leave-taking (salom), ‘shalom.’ The word peace here means not just freedom from inward anxiety, but wholeness or completeness of life that comes from being brought into a right relationship with God” (*EBC 8*.662).

“The word *peace* is found only here in Mark. The Hebrew word shalom carries the meaning of wholeness, soundness, rather than the sense of an absence of strife implied by the English translation” (*AYB Mark* 286).

Sources:

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