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The Draining Touch

Text: Luke 8:43-48

What a depressing description of this woman:

* She has been hemorrhaging, off and on, for 12 years!!! (43)
* She is financially drained and exhausted. She has spent ALL her livelihood on doctors (43). Mark tells us something that Luke, a physician, might conveniently omit: The woman spent all she had and was no better, but rather grew worse (Mark 5:25-26).

2 Chronicles 16:12

*And in the thirty-ninth year of his reign, Asa became diseased in his feet, and his malady was severe; yet in his disease he did not seek the Lord, but the physicians.*

This woman had already tried the physicians. It was now time to try Jesus.

Psalm 108:12

*Give us help from trouble, for the help of man is useless.*

I wonder if this woman in our text felt like that. After significant investment of time and money, she was not getting any better.

She has been labeled “incurable” (43)

**1. The woman’s social condition**

* Because of her condition, she is a social outcast (Leviticus 15:25-27). This defilement affected all her relationships. If she sat on an item, the item was now unclean. If she was intimate with her husband, he was then unclean for seven days.

Pastor Steven Cole has written:

*This woman’s ceremonial defilement is a graphic picture of how sin defiles us all. It creates distance between us and God, as well as distance from our family and friends.[[1]](#footnote-2)*

Before we touch *Jesus* and Jesus touches *us*, we are all like this woman. We spend our resources trying to better ourselves. Ultimately, there is no wholeness apart from the Christ.

**2. The woman’s spiritual condition**

Matters are not going well between this woman and her doctors, this woman and her colleagues, perhaps this woman and herself. It is time to try Jesus! This woman took a risk and touched the fringe, hem, edge of Jesus’ garment.

Jesus asks a question that seems ridiculous, given the crowd: “Who touched me?”

Jesus goes on to say that the touch to which He refers was a different touch. Something went out of him (Luke 6:19). It was no ordinary touch. It was a draining touch. What an idea: that something we do might affect our Lord. That is, as we *touch* Him we might pull something *out* of Him. How does one drain the Eternal? This woman, by her faith, drained the divine.

This hemorrhaging woman approached Jesus in desperation *and* faith. She is spiritually focused and hungry. Because of that rare mixture of desperation and faith, this woman experienced what many did not. Mark says that many begged to touch the hem of Christ’s garment. Mark also says that “as many as touched Him were made well” (Mark 6:56). I want to bear public witness to the change that takes place when a desperate person says “yes” to the possibility of reaching out to Jesus. It is a spiritual act. When was the last time we figuratively or literally expressed our need *of* Jesus *to* Jesus?

*I need Thee, Oh I need Thee. Every hour, I need Thee.*

That’s this woman’s theme hymn. It’s what every human being on the planet needs to be saying and singing. This woman has no other viable option. Her money is gone (43). Her relationships are strained, due to her disease and the customs and protocols that must be followed because of it (Leviticus 15:25-27). In light of this, she deliberately reaches for Jesus. Some in the crowd touched Jesus by accident. This woman was not only **desperate**. She was also **determined**.

**3. The woman’s deliverance**

The woman feared she might be rebuked (47) but pressed on to her healing.

Notice what makes her well. It is her faith. Not her

* Positive thinking
* Sowing a generous financial seed
* Being a good person

No, it was her faith and, specifically, her faith in Jesus, that brought healing. In both the OT and NT the word for *well* is variously translated *save, deliver, preserve, protect, (make) whole, do well.*

Thiswoman doesn’t just *feel* better. She *is* better. She is whole!

A higher level of our growing relationship with Jesus is that level on which we take the risk and touch Him, have a physical connection with Him, embrace Him, touch the fringe of His garment. This is a narrative in which the woman is anything but abstract and theoretical.

It would be more comfortable for some, if ministry could be done without our personal space being invaded. However, sometimes we have to be accessible enough for people to touch us, figuratively and literally. People who are hurting and broken and alienated and lonely need to *touch*...and *be* touched.

In this woman’s case **desperation** and **determination** led to her **deliverance**.

**Illus.**

The Bucharest Early Intervention Project([clinicaltrials.gov](http://clinicaltrials.gov))[[2]](#footnote-3) and Harry Harlow’s experiments with rhesus monkeys[[3]](#footnote-4) demonstrate the power of physical touch. **Touch is a critical component of the healing/deliverance experience**. Children who are raised in an environment of neglect or cold, non-physical detachment suffer cognitive, developmental and motor skills delays.

This woman took something *out of* Jesus, but Jesus put something *into* the woman!!

We who aim to be the hands and feet of Jesus on the earth, will wrestle with the implications of touch all our days. We who are desperate and determined will continue to reach out to Jesus and take the risk of touching Him!!

Amen

1. Steven Cole. Sermon, *Jesus’ Cleansing Power.* [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. The Bucharest Early Intervention Project(BEIP) was a randomized controlled trial of foster care as an intervention for children abandoned at or around the time of birth and placed in one of six institutions for young children in Bucharest, Romania. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. Using methods of isolation and maternal deprivation, Harlow showed the impact of contact comfort on primate development. Infant rhesus monkeys were taken away from their mothers and raised in a laboratory setting, with some infants placed in separate cages away from peers. In social isolation, the monkeys showed disturbed behavior, staring blankly, circling their cages, and engaging in self-mutilation. When the isolated infants were re-introduced to the group, they were unsure of how to interact — many stayed separate from the group, and some even died after refusing to eat. psychological science.org [↑](#footnote-ref-4)