

One Body Initiative: Week Eight – Seeking Healing

November 2, 2020

Scripture: [Mark 5:25-34](#)

There was a woman afflicted with hemorrhages for twelve years. She had suffered greatly at the hands of many doctors and had spent all that she had. Yet she was not helped but only grew worse. She had heard about Jesus and came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak. She said, “If I but touch his clothes, I shall be cured.” Immediately her flow of blood dried up. She felt in her body that she was healed of her affliction.

Jesus, aware at once that power had gone out from him, turned around in the crowd and asked, “Who has touched my clothes?” But his disciples said to him, “You see how the crowd is pressing upon you, and yet you ask, ‘Who touched me?’” And he looked around to see who had done it.

The woman, realizing what had happened to her, approached in fear and trembling. She fell down before Jesus and told him the whole truth. He said to her, “Daughter, your faith has saved you. Go in peace and be cured of your affliction.”

Commentary:

From a commentary on Mark by John Shea¹:

Jesus makes clear what has happened. She has never been an unclean woman with uncontrolled bleeding. She is a daughter of God who is suffering. She held onto that spiritual identity, and that deeper identity gave her the courage to reach for God’s love as it was manifesting itself in Jesus. God’s love is for God’s children, and she is one of God’s children. That is her faith. And the healing that comes from that faith is more than physical. She can go in peace and enter back into the community. Since she has been spiritually touched by God, she can physically touch and be touched by others. She is re-included into interpersonal and community living.

¹ John Shea, *The Spiritual Wisdom of the Gospels for Christian Preachers and Teachers, Year B: Eating with the Bridegroom* (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2005), 163.

Resources for Further Exploration of This Topic:

Mental Health: Overcoming the Stigma of Mental Illness - This article from the Mayo Clinic staff outlines how false beliefs about mental illness can cause significant problems:

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/mental-illness/in-depth/mental-health/art-20046477>

Reducing Stigma – This article from the CDC reflects on how some may experience the effects of stigma due to aspects of their identity or profession.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/reducing-stigma.html>

Mother Theresa: A Case Study in Christian Mental Health Stigma – This talk recently offered to the UP community through the Garaventa Center takes a look at how mental health stigma in the Christian community can be noticed in conversations about Mother Theresa and the spiritual dryness that she experienced.

<https://www.up.edu/garaventa/archives/lectures-and-readings/2020-2021-lectures-and-readings/jessica-coblentz-lecture.html>

Questions for Reflection:

- How have you experienced stigma related to mental or physical wellness as a barrier to seeking healing or as a cause for exclusion from community?
- What are some of the thoughts or feelings that you experience when encountering someone who is facing a challenge in their mental or physical health?
- What have you experienced as the most effective aides in lowering barriers to seeking help?
- Have you encountered helpful practices for integrating your spiritual life into your pursuit of physical and mental wellness? What have been most helpful about them?
- Are there ways that you would like to grow in your capacity to serve as a conduit of God's healing grace?