

Week 11 Day 5 | *New Testament Heroes: The Sick Woman*

How would you complete this sentence? If I just _____, then _____.

Perhaps you'd say, "If I just got that raise, then we could pay our bills." "If I just got married, then I'd be happy." "If I just quit my job, then life would be better." "If I just lost 30 pounds, then I'd look pretty." "If I just got a little stronger. A little faster. Had more discipline. Got more sleep . . . then I'd be healthier."

The truth is, there's always more to want in this world, but none of it satisfies for long. No worldly achievement. No relationship. No amount of money. No job. No result in the mirror, on the scale, in the gym, or on the racecourse. Because no sooner do you reach one of these goals than you change your answer. You will fill in the blank with something else. However, in the New Testament, we read about a woman who filled in the blank perfectly the first time.

Mark 5 recounts three of the many miracles Jesus performed, each indelible in its own way. We first read about Jesus healing Legion, a man possessed with thousands of demons. The last one we read about is a young girl being resurrected. It's the one in the middle, the story of the sick woman, that we can relate to most easily.

The story begins in verse 25: "And a woman was there who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years." That's a long time to be sick. It's a long time to be suffering. Do you, too, have a long-standing ailment of some kind? Could it be a different kind of suffering: addiction, relational, or occupational? Have you struggled with being over- or under-weight, eating disorders, or an unhealthy self-esteem—be it pride or negative self-worth? Whatever it is, we, like the sick woman, have all gone through legitimate sufferings in our lives, some lasting many, many years.

Mark 5:26a continues, "She had suffered a great deal under the care of many doctors and had spent all she had . . ." She had sought professional help, but no one was able to help her. In fact, she had seen so many doctors that she had used up all her money. Sound familiar?

Perhaps you've seen doctors or counselors, and read all the latest self-help books. You've attended workshops, listened to podcasts and sermons, and subscribed to medical journals. You've tried the latest fad diets, done all the Hollywood exercise plans. You've both ignored fitness and been consumed by it. In the process, you've spent a small fortune. That's the story of this sick woman.

Verse 26b finishes, ". . . yet instead of getting better she grew worse." To add insult to injury, not only didn't she get healthier, she got sicker. She had nothing to show for her efforts. Her health was going and her wealth was gone.

Starting to relate? Could it be that you are worse off now than when you started? Your weight is at an all-time high or a life-threatening low. Your race times are getting longer. Your sleep is getting shorter. Your fatigue is going up while your confidence is going down. You're more frustrated, confused, obsessed, and hopeless than ever.

The sick woman was also hopeless until . . . until she remembered Jesus. There were large crowds wherever He went. He had just freed a man from demon possession and was on His way to free a girl from death. Jesus was in this poor lady's midst and this was her chance. Her story continues:

"When she heard about Jesus, she came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak, because she thought, 'If I just touch his clothes, I will be healed.'"—Mark 5:27 (NIV)

The woman was healed immediately. Jesus tells her in verse 34, "Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your suffering."

You see, no longer was her cure about seeing the so-called experts. Her treatment would not require spending money. Healing certainly was not coming from her own efforts. The remedy wasn't about anything this world had to offer anymore. The solution was Jesus. The medicine is Jesus.

Although Jesus may or may not cure our suffering, we can have peace and hope in the midst of it. We have the same opportunity as the bleeding woman. We can follow her lead, be broken and desperate, and have faith only in Jesus. No matter what suffering we are facing. No matter what we've tried before. No matter what results we've seen. No matter our past, present, or future. He promises that we will not be disappointed in our hope (Romans 5:5).

So, now, let me ask again. How would you complete this sentence? If I just _____, then _____.

Are you tired of getting your hopes up and then letting yourself down? Are you exhausted from fear, despair, and disappointment? If in Week 11 you're worse off than you were in Week 1, it's time to change your answer.

If you are not seeing results in your fitness, are you reaching for Jesus first? If you are reaching, do you truly believe in His power to help you? Don't go through the motions with your fitness or your faith!

Take a cue from the sick woman with the perfect answer: "If I just touch Jesus."

When you do, don't let go. Trust Him with the results, because in the end, He is the only One who truly heals.

Prayer

Father, thank You that amid a temporary world, we have an everlasting love in You. Will You forgive me when I base my satisfaction on things that can't satisfy? Please help me to reach only for your Son, Jesus. Amen.

Meditation

I'm healed by the touch of Jesus.

Daily Spiritual Exercise

Pick a meal to fast from for the day. The hunger you feel is a reminder to be praying for a fully surrendered life. As you pray throughout the day, be sure to ask God what He'd like you to learn from this exercise. We don't just pray. We pray and we listen.