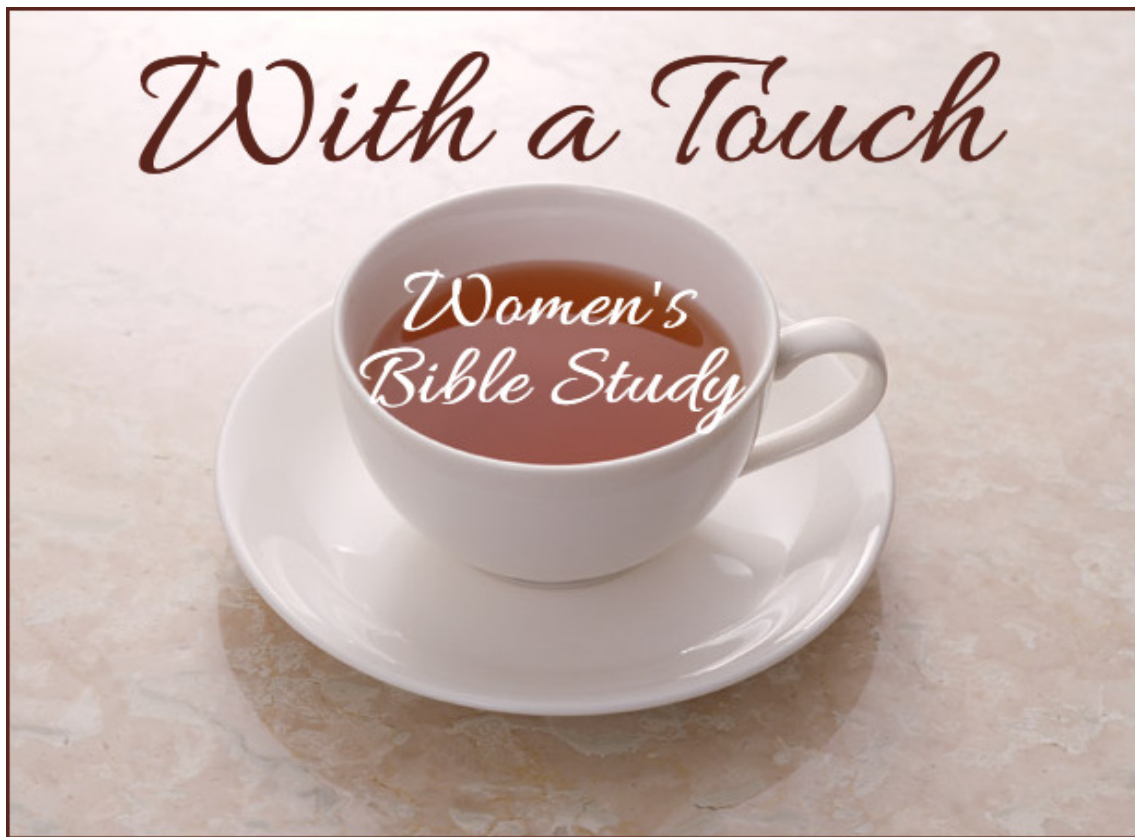


With a Touch



by Julia Bettencourt

Scripture Passages:

“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, and be whole of thy plague.” Mark 5:24-34

“And a woman having an issue of blood twelve years, which had spent all her living upon physicians, neither could be healed of any, Came behind him, and touched the border of his garment: and immediately her issue of blood stanchd. And Jesus said, Who touched me? When all denied, Peter and they that were with him said, Master, the multitude throng thee and press thee, and sayest thou, Who touched me? And Jesus said, Somebody hath touched me: for I perceive that virtue is gone out of me. And when the woman saw that she was not hid, she came trembling, and falling down before him, she declared unto him before all the people for what cause she had touched him, and how she was healed immediately. And he said unto her, Daughter, be of good comfort: thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace.” Luke 8:43-48



Okay, after reading the passages, have you gotten acquainted with this woman in Mark 5 and Luke 8 yet? I want you to get to know her. Pretend she's there in front of you and you are welcoming her to your circle of friends. What do you notice about her? What do you think is behind her eyes? Try to find out everything you can about her, just like you'd do with someone with whom you'd like to make a friend. You might want to read and re-read the main Bible passages a few times as we go along.

I love this story. Here she is, a woman who starts out with a large struggle in her life, and in the end she isn't held back by what lot in life she was given. If you've read the passages, you know that this woman had to carry a heavy health burden.

*“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.”*

Mark 5:25,26

I've known many ladies over the years who have had health struggles, and I think it just wears you out when you have a persistent health issue to go through. I know dealing with the Degenerative Arthritis in my knees is a daily struggle, so I always feel I have a kind of a kinship with this lady in Mark 5. I feel she's someone I could sit and have a cup of coffee with. I'm sure I'd enjoy chatting with her.

This is a lady without a name. The Bible just calls her a “*certain woman*” (Mark 5:25). The passage in Luke just calls her “*a woman*” (Luke 8:43) This lady is just someone in the crowd. It could be your neighbor. It could be the person you sit next to in church. It could be me or you. Just a woman with a story behind her face.

Everybody has a story. Working with women's ministry over the years I've had the pleasure of hearing a lot of life stories. I am humbled and just struck in awe by what some women go through on a daily basis and no one around the wiser. To those around them, they are just a face. Just women without names like this woman in our Bible story. Everybody has struggles in their lives. They all vary at different degrees, but we all have them and there is always a story in the background of those we come in contact with.

I challenge you to not look at those women around you and in your church and women's group as just another face or another body. Life happens to each of them on a daily basis. I think we sometimes get so caught up on what is happening in our own lives that we forget that other people are out there living day to day just like we are. We just don't know what kind of life is behind all the hair, smiles, and makeup of other women we know or meet. On the surface we might think someone has a wonderful life, but we just don't know what story they carry with them every single day.

The Bible gives us a glimpse of the story of this "*certain woman*". It says this lady had an "*issue of blood*" (Mark 5:25), so she basically had prolonged menstrual bleeding. The Bible doesn't give a whole lot of details. We basically know it was some type of hemorrhage. We don't know how old she was when it started. We don't know if it was perimenopausal, postmenopausal, or whatever. We just know she had it and that not only that she had it but that she had it "*twelve years*". And oh by the way, above that we do know that it got worse. Not better.

"...and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse..." Mark 5:26

I know we woman grumble about our monthly cycles. I think these passages can be humbling to read when we are busy grumbling about anything. I don't think most of us can even fathom what this woman suffered. This woman was hurting and her hurt was real. All she wanted was relieved of what ailed her. She had tried all the doctors and spent all of her money on what they could do for her, which was nothing.

"And had suffered many things of many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse." Mark 5:26

I don't even want to think about the "*many*" (Mark 5:26) treatments that those physicians had this women in our story endure. It makes me cringe to even dwell on it. I am a lover of modern medicine and all the modern miracles of science where health is concerned. My mind can't even wrap around all the things that have been tried on healing people over the centuries, especially when it comes to blood disorders.

Did you catch the next detail in our story? Just from a few verses in Scripture we are still finding things out about this woman. The next thing we learn is that this woman is broke along with having a heavy health burden to bear. We see in Mark 5:26 that she *“had spent all that she had”*.

As we’ve already seen, the Bible doesn’t say what type of woman she was, what her occupation was, or what type of family she was from. It doesn’t say how much money she had made in her lifetime, but we do know that all of her money was gone. It could have been her savings. It could have been she had to sell everything she owned. We just know this *“certain woman”* spent everything she had on doctors and everything was gone for her. Financial woes can sure make our world come crashing down and this woman’s financial predicament wasn’t pretty.

We will go on to find out even more about this woman but for now we will stop here in our story. I hope you’ve enjoyed reading along. I’ll leave you with a few questions.

Questions for Personal Reflection:

- What details have you noticed about this woman so far?
- Do you ever feel like no one understands you because they don’t know your circumstances and what is taking place in your personal life?
- Do you think you judge people too quickly before you even know them well?
- How do you deal with adversity in your life?



First a little review. We have met the woman of our story and found out a few of the details that the Bible gives us. We know that she wasn't named in the passages, but only referred to as a "certain woman" or just "a woman". We know that she had a health issue which was an "issue of blood", which was most likely a prolonged menstrual bleeding. We found out that this had lasted "twelve years" for her.

We saw that this woman had been to several doctors and they had tried various treatments on her. Nothing worked. *"...neither could be healed of any."* (Luke 8:43). Above that she had spent all of her money on these doctors and treatments so she was financially broke.

"...which had spent all her living upon physicians." (Luke 8:43)

So back to our story of the day this lady met Jesus. The setting is Capernaum. We don't know what kind of day it was. We are not told the season or what the weather was like. It could have been windy or it could have been calm out along the streets of this sea bordered town. The disciples were out on a boat with Jesus earlier in the passage in Luke 8, and the wind came up and a storm. We just don't know what type of day it was, but the air was filled with anticipation.

There are several indications that there were a lot of people out that day. If you read through these passages, you can see the story unfold of how everybody was out and about that day trying to get close to Jesus. The crowd was great and the press of the crowd was great. If you read a few verses up in Luke 8 above where we began our story we see there were people waiting on Jesus who wanted to see Him because they had seen or had been told of His miracles. The paparazzi and onlookers were all out in full force that day.

“And it came to pass, that, when Jesus was returned, the people gladly received him: for they were all waiting for him.” Luke 8:40

When Jesus arrived, Jarius, one of the rulers of the synagogue wanted Jesus to go to his house to heal his daughter. It mentions that as Jesus went He was “thronged” (Luke 8:42), which indicates there were a great many people up close to Him. Even later on in the story when Jesus asked who touched Him, the disciples said,

“Master, the multitude throng thee and press thee, and sayest thou, Who touched me?” Luke 8:45

So we see that it was kind of crazy that day on the streets of Capernaum. I wonder if the woman in our story was really up to the crowd in regards to her health issues. We know she had bleeding, but the Bible doesn't say exactly how much pain she was in. It does say she had *“suffered many things of many physicians”* (Mark 5:26). We can probably just guess that this woman must have been tired that day she came to see Jesus after all the treatments and suffering she had endured. Most likely, with all that was happening in her body, she was probably anemic. She was in all likelihood worn out at the start of her journey through the crowd toward Jesus.

Frankly, I hate crowds. if there is a line out the door of a restaurant or wherever we want to go, my husband knows not to stop because I don't do lines and crowds. And forget about that Black Friday thing. That type of thing is not for me. You have to have some determination to get into the crowd. You have to *want* to be there.

This lady wanted to be there in the crowd that day. She didn't let her health issues stop her. She didn't let the crowd stop her. She didn't even let the observances that she was to follow where having an *“issue of blood”* was concerned stop her. This woman was the one person who shouldn't have been in the crowd that day pressing against other people according to their law, but here she was. According to the law, this woman was considered “unclean” and so there were all types of rules and regulations that she had to adhere to. Even the people that she came in contact with had to follow certain precautions as well.

Why was this woman here in the crowd that day? It tells us in the first part of Mark 5:27

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

That is just so exciting! She *“heard of Jesus”*. Have you ever noticed what impact any of our five senses can have on our lives? Before anything happened, this

woman *heard* of Jesus. That prompted her to action. What did she hear? Well, what about that man a little farther up in Luke 8? Jesus had just performed a miracle with him and took the demons away from him. I'm sure he was known as the "crazy man" in town because he ran around naked, didn't live in a house, and lived in the tombs or basically the graveyards. This woman probably heard what happened to that man and how Jesus changed his life. Jesus had just calmed the storm on the water. I'm sure the disciples didn't keep that to themselves. Word had spread. The crowd was great, and this "*certain woman*" was determined to get close to the Man she had heard about.

Up to this point, this woman's life had been filled with discouragement. Remember, she had tried everything to be rid of this blood issue that affected her. She'd tried the doctors, the treatments, and spent all her money doing it. Just think about when she first heard of Jesus. Do you think her eyes lit up that there was hope out there for her? Do you think she shouted or jumped up and down? She hadn't had any hope up to this point. Just think how discouraged she must have been before she heard of Jesus.

Discouragement can really eat away at you. I've had my times when I've been discouraged. I've had times when I've been so discouraged that I had a hard time dragging myself up out of it. It wears you down. Sneaks in and just deflates you. Discouragement exhausts you. Leaves you sad and lonely. I'm sure this woman was at this point. It's hard for me to comprehend this long twelve years that she endured her suffering. That's a really long time to have something like this, but when she "*heard of Jesus*", (Mark 5:27) she finally had hope.

We discussed in the first part of this study that people have "stories" and we don't always know them. We don't always know when someone feels discouraged, when someone doesn't have any hope. That's why it's so important that we encourage others. That's why it's so important we tell other people about Jesus. He's the Hope of the world.

I said before that you need to have some determination to get into the crowd and I think that's what the woman in our story had. She had some determination. She was determined to squeeze her way through and get close to Jesus. He was her hope. This woman became focused. That thought in her mind was ringing loud and clear that if she could just get close to Jesus and touch Him, she'd be healed.

I think faith has a way of making us focused. It's clearer to see when faith is involved. It propels us along. Faith makes us put feet to our prayers like this lady did. She probably wasn't feeling up to that crowd. She probably wasn't up to the task of getting in there and making her way forward to Jesus, but she did it anyway.

“For she said, If I may touch but his clothes, I shall be whole” Mark 5:28

We'll stop right there with this lady following close behind Jesus with hope in her heart and continue a little more about this woman's faith next time.

Questions for Personal Reflection:

- The people in our story were waiting on Jesus and anticipating what He would say and do. How about you? Do you anticipate your time with Jesus in Bible reading and prayer? Do you anticipate how He can answer your prayers?
- Do you actively try to encourage others?
- How often do you tell others about Jesus so they can “hear” about Him?
- In what ways has faith kept you focused?



Okay, let's begin again. We have already learned about the woman in these passages. She was nameless, sick, and penniless. One of the things we found out last time is that even though she was all of these things, she had found Someone to put her faith in. After all the sickness, pain, and suffering that life had offered her up to this point, she "heard of Jesus" (Mark 5:27) and finally held hope in her hands.

When we last left this woman, the streets were crowded with the multitude following Jesus. He had performed miracles so the people were excited and anxious to see what He would do next. One thing I didn't mention last time is that along with most crowds comes noise, so I can just imagine that it was probably noisy along with all the movement on the streets that day. It seems that none of that mattered to this woman. She had a purpose and she was following right along in the crowd as well. The thought in her head was that if she just reached out and touched the garment of Jesus, she would be healed.

"For she said, If I may touch but his clothes, I shall be whole" Mark 5:28

What faith that took. We talked about how this must have been a difficult task for her to get out into the crowd that day, but she did it. What I notice about this woman is that she got out of her comfort zone. Faith can do that for you. It makes the impossible possible.

"...all things are possible to him that believeth." Mark 9:23

I have heard many times over the years working in ministry, people say, "I don't feel comfortable doing that". It could be anything. Working in the nursery. Serving in the church kitchen. Going out witnessing. Putting your arm around someone

during the invitation and praying with them. I've been guilty of saying that phrase on occasion myself.

Why do we Christians feel like we need to be comfortable when it comes to serving God? Sure, there are some tasks we are better suited at, and where we fit nicely in the body of Christ, but do we have to be "comfortable" in everything we do?

Look at the early Christians. I don't think they were doing the things that were comfortable. Paul preached the Gospel even though he knew it could send him to prison, which it did. What about Moses? He got out of his comfort zone and left Egypt in order to lead the people through the wilderness.

When is the last time you read through Hebrews chapter 11? Take a look at those long leaps of faith that those listed there took. They didn't make those leaps of faith living in their comfort zone. Why can't we get past wanting to live comfortable like that? It's like we *choose* to sit in the "cheap seats" through life. We don't want to get near the action. We don't want to pay attention to the game.

This "*certain woman*" did not sit on the fringes of the crowd. She took literal steps and faith steps to get close to Jesus that day. Her faith made her move. There's a saying. I'm not sure who said it or where I first heard it, "Faith can move mountains or faith can move you." Sometimes we are what needs moving, not the mountain. We have to take faith steps like this lady did. She moved forward in faith. She was focused on the "*things hoped for*" and the "*evidence of things not seen*".

*"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for,
the evidence of things not seen." Hebrews 11:1*

Look what Jesus was teaching when the disciples asked Him why they couldn't cast out the devils in the man in Matthew 17.

*"And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief:
for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of
mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove
hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and
nothing shall be impossible unto you." Matthew 17:20*

The next thing we see about this woman's faith is that she made it personal. She had to reach her arm out and touch Jesus herself. She "*touched the border of his garment*" (Luke 8:44). No one else reached out their arm for her. She did. She had to take that step of faith on her own. No one could do it for her. She had to

believe that Jesus could heal. In Mark it says she said, *“If I”*.

“For she said, If I may touch but his clothes, I shall be whole.” Mark 5:28

One more little gem that I love about this story and this woman’s faith is that it was complete faith in Jesus. It wasn’t half-hearted. She didn’t think she would just get a little better. She didn’t think that if she touched the clothes of Jesus that down the road she would heal a little at a time. This woman was going to touch Jesus to be made *“whole”*. Look at the last part of Mark 5:28.

“For she said, If I may touch but his clothes, I shall be whole” Mark 5:28

Did you notice what this woman had to do before she could touch the clothes of Jesus? It’s kind of simple but I’ve read and reread this passage on many occasions and one day it hit me that this woman had to get close to Jesus before she could touch Him. I realized that to put my faith into action that I have to get close to Jesus too. I have to get into His Word and read and study. I have to learn more about Him. I have to pray more. I have to really get close to Jesus and know Him more.

Faith like this woman’s is so powerful. It definitely inspires me to want to build my own faith more. I hope it does you too.

We’re stopping here, right at the point where the woman in our story has reached out her hand to touch the clothes of Jesus. Next time we will see what happened and how Jesus responded.

Questions for Personal Reflection:

- What about this woman’s faith inspires you the most?
- Do you find it easy to step out of your comfort zone to put your faith into action?
- Do you think your faith is as strong as it could be?
- What is one thing you can do to build your faith that you are not doing now?



This is the last part of our Bible Study. So far we have gotten a little acquainted with the woman in our Bible story. She had a health issue of twelve years and she had tried everything to be rid of it. She tried all the doctors and treatments there were and nothing worked. This woman had even spent all of her money doing so. She finally *"heard of Jesus"* and in our last lesson we left this lady, thick in the crowd following Jesus. She was full of faith, and reaching her hand out to touch the garments that Jesus was wearing. She had faith to believe that if she just touched His clothes she would be healed.

"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." Mark 5:27, 28

The next part of the story is so stirring. The part that says she felt that she was healed right away. Jesus didn't make her wait. That's just so fantastic to me. She didn't have to wait and see if some type of medicine was going to work and then try something else down the road if it didn't. It didn't matter if she was a *good candidate* for a special treatment or anything like that. She just had to have faith and reach out and touch. The result was immediate. Mark says, *"Straightway"* and the passage in Luke 8 says *"immediately"*.

"And straightway the fountain of her blood was dried up; and she felt in her body that she was healed of that plague." Mark 5:29

"[The woman] Came behind him, and touched the border of his garment: and immediately her issue of blood stanch'd." Luke 8:44

This reminds me about others in the Bible that the Lord healed immediately too. He healed the leper immediately.

“And there came a leper to him, beseeching him, and kneeling down to him, and saying unto him, If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. And Jesus, moved with compassion put forth his hand, and touched him, and saith unto him, I will; be thou clean. And as soon as he had spoken, immediately the leprosy departed from him, and he was cleansed.” Mark 1:40-42

Remember the blind man that Jesus healed in Mark 10?

“And Jesus answered and said unto him, What wilt thou that I should do unto thee? The blind man said unto him, Lord, that I might receive my sight. And Jesus said unto him, Go thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole. And immediately he received his sight, and followed Jesus in the way.” Mark 10:51,52

There was the deaf man who had a speech impediment.

“And they bring unto him one that was deaf, and had an impediment in his speech; and they beseech him to put his hand upon him. And he took him aside from the multitude, and put his fingers into his ears, and he spit, and touched his tongue; And looking up to heaven, he sighed, and saith unto him, Ephphatha, that is, Be opened. And straightway his ears were opened, and the string of his tongue was loosed, and he spake plain.” Mark 7:32-35

I'm sure the woman in our story was just elated that her healing was immediate. She didn't have to guess or wonder if she was healed. She felt it!

“...and she felt in her body that she was healed of that plague.” Mark 5:29

Here we are at the very climax of the story. That woman is healed and knows it and Jesus knows it too. He says, *“Who touched me?”* (Luke 8:45)

We all know Jesus is Lord, so we all know Jesus knew who touched Him. I think it was just another one of those times He wanted to show us how important our faith is. He's showing the other people there, that look, here's what I mean by faith. This lady understands it. She's gets it. Remember a little further up in Luke 8 and Jesus

was questioning the disciples faith. They were in the ship and the storm came and they woke Jesus up. They were scared for their lives. Look what Jesus says to them in Luke 8:25

“And he said unto them, Where is your faith?... “

Jesus draws attention to this woman and the other people there saw what can happen when we reach out and touch with faith. This woman’s healing was faith being manifested. When faith is manifested we are supposed to share it.

Don’t ever begrudge testimony time in your church or your ladies meetings. Don’t tune people out. Someone in the room might need to hear that testimony. It might be what spurs them on either to accept Christ or to be encouraged in the faith. God doesn’t tire of hearing our testimonies. It’s one way we praise and worship Him. Sharing testimonies of what Christ has done for us on a personal level is so important. We need to see faith manifested in others. It helps our own faith to grow. I love this woman’s testimony.

“...she declared unto him before all the people for what cause she had touched him, and how she was healed immediately.” Luke 8:47

In Luke 8:46 it says,

“And Jesus said, Somebody hath touched me: for I perceive that virtue is gone out of me.”

Not only does Jesus say someone touched Him but also that *“virtue is gone out of me”*. In other words, there is a correlation here. When you reach out in faith, something is going to happen. Christ is going to respond. That is so comforting. It might not be with healing. That might not be God’s plan for us, but we know God is always there to feel our touch, to listen, and hear us when we reach out to Him.

Another thing this passage shows us is that Jesus will accept our truth. He’ll listen to anything we have to say to Him. When you have something to say to God, lay it all out there and share it with Him. Just tell Him the truth. He’ll take it from you. That’s what He did for this woman. He wasn’t condemning her or confronting her. He was responding to her in a very loving way.

”And he said unto her, Daughter, be of good comfort: thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace.” Luke 8:48

Do you see what He called this woman? *“Daughter”*. That’s personal. This woman reached out and found a personal relationship with Jesus. If you haven’t found a personal relationship with the Lord, I pray you will do so. Jesus is always waiting for you to reach out to Him.

“But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.” John 1;12

“That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.” Romans 10:9,10

Thanks for coming along for this walk through the streets of Capernaum. I hope you enjoyed learning more about this *“certain woman”*. Her faith is inspiring.

Questions for Personal Reflection:

- Do you have a personal relationship with Jesus?
- If Jesus asked you “where is your faith?”, what would be your response?
- When is the last time you shared your testimony or something God has done for you either in a group setting or with just one other person?
- Do you share your truth with Jesus on a regular basis? In other words to you share your heart in prayer with the Lord?



- The woman in our story is nameless.
- The woman had a health problem. An “issue of blood”.
- The woman had seen lots of doctors.
- The woman had endured lots of treatments.
- She spent all her money on doctors and treatments.
- Nothing helped this woman.
- There was a crowd out that day the lady met Jesus.
- The woman “heard” of Jesus and finally had hope.
- Hearing of Jesus prompted this lady to action.
- She had faith that if she could touch just the clothes of Jesus she would be healed.
- She had complete faith. She knew she would be made “whole”.
- She had to get close to Jesus to put her faith into action.
- She was healed right away. It was immediate.
- Jesus asked for a response from the woman. “Who touched me?”
- The woman shared before the people what Jesus had done for her.
- Jesus will accept our truth as He did that for this woman.
- Jesus called her “daughter”. That’s personal.
- Jesus will accept those who reach out to Him.