

# ENCOUNTERS WITH JESUS

*Sermon Series*

## **Able and Willing**

Mark 5:24b-34

### **Preface**

Dr. Vance Havner was one of the great preachers of our time. I had the privilege of hearing when I was a teenager. He was preaching at the Alabama Evangelism Conference.

Dr. Havner wrote a sermon titled “Playing Marbles with Diamonds”. In this sermon, he speaks of someone visiting Africa and observing some young boys playing marbles. The visitor notices they are playing marbles with diamonds.

He makes the comparison to Christians who do not grasp the power of their faith and the one they serve. As we read today’s text, “Are you playing marbles with diamonds?”

### **Scripture – Read**

*A large crowd followed and pressed around him.<sup>25</sup> And a woman was there who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years.<sup>26</sup> She had suffered a great deal under the care of many doctors and had spent all she had, yet instead of getting better she grew worse.<sup>27</sup> When she heard about Jesus, she came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak,<sup>28</sup> because she thought, “If I just touch his clothes, I will be healed.”<sup>29</sup> Immediately her bleeding stopped and she felt in her body that she was freed from her suffering.*

*<sup>30</sup> At once Jesus realized that power had gone out from him. He turned around in the crowd and asked, “Who touched my clothes?”*

*<sup>31</sup> “You see the people crowding against you,” his disciples answered, “and yet you can ask, ‘Who touched me?’”*

*<sup>32</sup> But Jesus kept looking around to see who had done it.<sup>33</sup> Then the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came and fell at his feet and, trembling with fear, told him the whole truth.<sup>34</sup>*

*He said to her, “Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your suffering.” Mark 5:24b-34 NIV*

### **Introduction**

In our text, Jesus is teaching and a large crowd is following him. The crowd is pressing in on him and things are obviously tight.

This woman had suffered (lit. “was in”) greatly for 12 years. This illness did not only bring physical discomfort, it also brought shame. She was considered unclean and anyone who touched her was considered unclean. Her unclean status excluded her from any social contact or activity.

She obviously heard about Jesus and his healing power. This hearing had aroused her faith and she reasoned that just touching his garment would heal her. She believed he had the power to heal her. Despite her uncleanness, she touched his outer garment. I suspect she hoped to be healed and then slip away quietly without any public disclosure or embarrassment.

### **Content**

#### **1. She had faith Jesus was able but did not believe he was willing**

This woman had faith that Jesus was able to heal her but she does not have faith that Jesus is willing to heal her.

Rather than just approaching him, she devises this plan to sneak amongst the crowd and just touch the outer edge of his garment.

Had she believe he was willing; she would have approached him directly.

If you will be honest, this also represents our faith most of the time. We know God has the ability to change our circumstance but we don’t believe he is willing.

We often reason that God is too busy or our prayers are too petty to warrant his attention.

In our churches, we use what we have done in the past as our benchmark of what we can do. We rely on our experience and what we know we can do rather than trust God to do the impossible.

We don’t exercise faith that he is willing to change our life. We pray timidly. We pray with hope rather than faith.

## 2. Jesus was able but also willing because of her faith

Jesus was not only able to heal her, he was willing to heal her.

The garment had no magical power; Jesus willingly extended his healing power to honor her faith.

Jesus asks, "Who touched my clothes?" Jesus knew the difference between the touch of someone who in faith expected deliverance and the inadvertent touch of those crowding against him. There was, and still is, a great difference between the two. Do you expect?

The woman was the only person in the crowd who understood his question, "Who touched my clothes?"

Jesus did not ask this because he did not know who touched him. He asked because he wanted to acknowledge her. She fell before him and "told him the whole truth."

The idea that she told him the "whole truth" indicates that she felt there was some shame or inappropriateness in her approaching him. She did not believe she was worthy, clean or fit to approach him directly so she chose this sly method.

Jesus affectionately refers to her as "Daughter." This is like calling someone "My Child" when they are not your offspring. Jesus is showing great love and recognition to her. This term recognized her new relationship with the Lord.

Jesus says, "Your faith has healed you." Jesus is acknowledging that he healed her because of her faith, not because she touched his garment.

She was not healed because his clothing had some magical power. She was healed because he recognized her faith and was eager to reward her faith.

Have you ever grasped the idea that Jesus is willing to change your life? Jesus is willing to acknowledge your faith.

I believe if we can ever grasp that truth in our churches, we would be amazed at what God would do.

In our lives, and in our churches, we miss greatness and settle for mediocre because we lack faith that God is not only able but also willing to do great things.

## Conclusion

*Faith does not operate in the realm of the possible. There is no glory for God in that which is humanly possible. Faith begins where man's power ends. George Muller*

Jesus is willing to do miraculous things in our lives and in our church if we will understand that he is willing and we will have faith.

We miss greatness and settle for mediocre because we lack the faith that God is not only able but willing to do great things in our lives and our church.

This lack of faith is reflected in our offerings, our worship and many other aspects of our church.

Illus: When Hudson Taylor went to China, he made the voyage on a sailing vessel. As it neared the channel between the southern Malay Peninsula and the island of Sumatra, the missionary heard an urgent knock on his stateroom door. He opened it, and there stood the captain of the ship. "Mr. Taylor," he said, "we have no wind. We are drifting toward an island where the people are heathen, and I fear they are cannibals." "What can I do?" asked Taylor. "I understand that you believe in God. I want you to pray for wind." "All right, Captain, I will, but you must set the sail." "Why that's ridiculous! There's not even the slightest breeze. Besides, the sailors will think I'm crazy." But finally, because of Taylor's insistence, he agreed. Forty- five minutes later he returned and found the missionary still on his knees. "You can stop praying now," said the captain. "We've got more wind than we know what to do with!"

"... but the righteous will live by his faith Habakkuk 2:4

Are you playing marbles with diamonds?

Are you using the resources of God in your life for strength?

Last Sunday we had 13 decisions during the invitation. I told several people I would probably never see that again. Then it hit me just how small my faith really is. I could see 13 decisions again; I could see 33 decisions. He is able and he is willing.