

# There Won't Be Blood

Mark 5:21-34    September 3, 2025

In the 1920's, cattle were mysteriously dying across the prairies of North America. Previously healthy herds began to hemorrhage, seemingly without cause.<sup>1</sup> By 1933, one farmer was desperate enough to drive 200 miles through a blizzard to try to reach the state veterinarian. But, it was Saturday, and the offices were closed. With nowhere else to go, the farmer walked into a chemistry lab at the University of Wisconsin. A professor and his assistant were there and the farmer showed them a dead cow, a pile of hay, and a milk jug of the cow's blood.<sup>2</sup>

They were able to diagnose the problem: The hay was the blame. Actually, it was the mold that had grown on the hay. You see, during the financial hardship of the 20's and 30's, many farmers could not afford to replace feed when it spoiled. And so, their herds would eat only to bleed out.

The fix ended up being very straightforward: Give the cows new feed. And if an animal was already starting to bleed, they just needed a transfusion of fresh blood.

Blood and healing are the focus of our text tonight. A hemorrhaging woman fights through a squall of people, in a desperate act of faith. Her hope does not disappoint, even if it was a bit misguided.

**Mark 5:21 - 21 When Jesus had crossed over again by boat to the other side, a large crowd gathered around him while he was by the sea.**

Luke explains that this crowd of people welcomed people with great expectation. But in this great mass of people, I want us to notice that only *one* person experiences a meaningful interaction with Jesus and an outpouring of His power.

**Mark 5:22-23 - 22 One of the synagogue leaders, named Jairus, came, and when he saw Jesus, he fell at his feet 23 and begged him earnestly, "My little daughter is dying. Come and lay your hands on her so that she can get well, and live."**

As "president" of the synagogue, Jairus would've been a highly respected person.<sup>3</sup> He's toward the top of the Jewish social ladder. He's probably a person of means. But facing the death of his only daughter,<sup>4</sup> Jairus jettisons all dignity and pride and falls at the feet of Jesus.<sup>5</sup>

The last person we saw someone in this position was the demoniac of the Gadarenes. *He* begged Jesus to leave him alone. Here an anguished father begs Jesus to come see his little girl. He knows he needs Jesus up close, hands on. The power he heard about and had seen, now *he* needed it.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.nature.com/articles/nrcardio.2017.172>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.acs.org/education/whatischemistry/landmarks/warfarin.html>

<sup>3</sup> James Brooks *The New American Commentary, Vol. 23: Mark*

<sup>4</sup> Luke 8:42

<sup>5</sup> Frank Gaebelein, D. A. Carson, Walter Wessel, and Walter Liefeld *The Expositor's Bible Commentary, Volume 8: Matthew, Mark, Luke*

**Mark 5:24 - <sup>24</sup> So Jesus went with him, and a large crowd was following and pressing against him.**

Luke explains that the crowd was nearly crushing Jesus. It's so bad it's getting hard to breathe.<sup>6</sup> The crowds of Mar are always so interesting. Because, on the one hand, they welcome Jesus, but on the other hand, they're so selfish and short-sighted that they are actually doing Him bodily harm. And how could they have so little compassion? Here's this father, he says, "My daughter is at death's door." Jesus says, "Let's go save her." And no one clears a path. No one tries to help. And they don't even seem to actually want anything along the way. They're just *in* the way.

But notice, it says they were "following." That's a charged word in the Gospels. Looking at this scene, is this crowd listening to Jesus? Are they obedient toward Jesus? Do they recognize Jesus for Who He is? The facts of the case bear out the answer is no. They can see Him. There He is, within arm's length. And yet for all but one there is no interaction - no experience of power or transformation or relationship. Heaven help us when our "following" becomes lifeless like that. That we can be in His presence, hear Him speak, be among other disciples, yet go away unchanged, unaffected, only thinking about ourselves rather than the desperate needs all around us.

**Mark 5:25-26 - <sup>25</sup> Now a woman suffering from bleeding for twelve years <sup>26</sup> had endured much under many doctors. She had spent everything she had and was not helped at all. On the contrary, she became worse.**

The most expensive medical treatment out there is a heart transplant. It comes in at about \$1.3 million.<sup>7</sup> This poor lady didn't spend a million bucks, but she did spend all she had. Her problem was uterine or menstrual in nature.<sup>8</sup> And that would've caused so many other issues in her life.

Apart from the pain and the discomfort and the other troubles caused by loss of blood, her relationships would've been totally destroyed. You see, she would spend every day of these 12 years ceremonially unclean. Not only could she not go to the Temple to worship, she couldn't do day-to-day things with other people since that would make *them* ceremonially unclean.<sup>9</sup>

She'd be unable to have children. And so, she either would've never married or if she had been married, her husband likely divorced her, which men at that time often did when their wives could not bear children.<sup>10</sup> Her life was one of pain and isolation and embarrassment and hopelessness.

And then came the doctors. The Jewish rabbis had a saying, "The best physician is worthy of Gehenna."<sup>11</sup> That is certainly unkind hyperbole, but this lady not only suffered from her illness, she

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<sup>6</sup> Robert Utey *The Gospel According To Peter: Mark And First & Second Peter*

<sup>7</sup> <https://health.usnews.com/health-care/patient-advice/articles/most-expensive-medical-procedures-ranked>

<sup>8</sup> Morna Hooker *The Gospel According To Saint Mark*

<sup>9</sup> Leviticus 5:19-33

<sup>10</sup> Craig Keener *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament, 2nd Edition*

<sup>11</sup> Ralph Earle *Mark: The Gospel Of Action*

suffered from the treatments, too. We have records of the kinds of things doctors did for problems like this. There were strange concoctions she would have to drink. One ritual was to carry the ashes of an ostrich egg in a linen rag around her neck or carry barley corn from the dung of a white female donkey.<sup>12</sup> Or, she could stand in the intersection of two roads, holding a cup of wine and have someone come up behind her and scare her and say, "Arise from thy flux!"<sup>13</sup>

Funny unless it's *you're* the one paying the bill and drinking the sluice.

But here's what's important: God *cared* about this woman's suffering. Now, she was not important like Jairus. She had *no* standing in the community, in fact she was the absolute opposite, socially speaking. But God was mindful of her life, He saw her suffering, and He cared enough to help her.

God's watchful, merciful attitude toward our suffering is a long running theme throughout the Bible. The Lord sees, He knows, He cares, and He promises that we can cast *our* cares on Him.

Like the demoniac in our last passage, there was nothing any humans could do to help this poor lady. They had tried and only made things worse. But Christ Jesus has power over demons *and* disease *and*, we'll see next time, death.

**Mark 5:27-28 - <sup>27</sup> Having heard about Jesus, she came up behind him in the crowd and touched his clothing. <sup>28</sup> For she said, "If I just touch his clothes, I'll be made well."**

In some ways, her courageous faith was inspiring. But it was quite imperfect. She thinks of Jesus' power in a superstitious way - that it can be transferred magically or mechanically.<sup>14</sup> Though we don't blame her for wanting healing, she didn't see the need to *speak* with Jesus. She didn't intend to worship Him or become His disciple. Now, maybe that's because she thought He wouldn't have her, as an unclean outcast of Jewish society, but nevertheless, there is a vending machine, transactional character to her faith.

This is a pattern any of us can slip into. We believe the Lord has power, we go to Him with certain things that are important to us, things that are troubling us, and we pray, "Lord, solve this problem or fix this issue in my life." But we need to remember that we don't *only* need *that* issue fixed. At the same time we *all* need a heart transplant - the biggest job of all. We all need spiritual brain surgery. We all need spiritual rehabilitation. We all need *more* than we realize from our Great Physician.

But *at least* she knew Jesus could save. She reached out to Him, while the crowd seemingly just pressed onto Him, asking *nothing* of Him. They were faithless or simply blind to their own needs.

**Mark 5:29 - <sup>29</sup> Instantly her flow of blood ceased, and she sensed in her body that she was healed of her affliction.**

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<sup>12</sup> Utley

<sup>13</sup> Adam Clarke *Commentary And Critical Notes On The Bible*

<sup>14</sup> Charles Erdman *The Gospel Of Mark*

What a beautiful testimony of God's amazing grace. Yes, her faith was imperfect, but God still rewarded her imperfect faith.

All of our faiths are imperfect, by the way. Thank God He condescends to our weakness. He does so because He *wants* to transform our lives with His love and power.

In an instant, the Great Physician did what a decade of doctors could not. She was totally, fully healed of her *affliction*.

That's an interesting word. It's the word used for a lash or a whip. The scourge used to flog people in the synagogue.<sup>15</sup> Jesus took her scourge away. And He was willing, ultimately, to literally take the greater scourge of the Romans, pouring out *His* blood so we could be saved. By His stripes we are healed. And now, not only does the Lord save us from our afflictions and sufferings, because of the divine power He pours out on us, now we know that our current afflictions are only momentary and they are producing in us an absolutely incomparable eternal weight of glory.<sup>16</sup> Quite a treatment.

**Mark 5:30 - <sup>30</sup> Immediately Jesus realized that power had gone out from him. He turned around in the crowd and said, "Who touched my clothes?"**

Why call her out? Why not just give her a knowing nod and let her go? It's because Jesus does *not* want to have a transactional relationship with you. He wants to have a real, *personal* relationship with you. And He wanted her (and us) to understand it wasn't His clothes that saved her.

He wants her to know some things not just about His power, but about His *love* and about what this healing means for the rest of her life. That He *knows* her and loves her and sees her.

**Mark 5:31-32 - <sup>31</sup> His disciples said to him, "You see the crowd pressing against you, and yet you say, 'Who touched me?' " <sup>32</sup> But he was looking around to see who had done this.**

They say there are no stupid questions. That's not how the disciples felt at the time. Their answer was harsh.<sup>17</sup> Sarcastic.<sup>18</sup> They seem annoyed. Jesus doesn't didn't bother to answer them.<sup>19</sup>

If the Lord asks you a question, it's *never* a bad question. It's not a stupid question. Sometimes God asks us very straightforward, obvious questions because we are missing the obvious lesson. We need to be humble and sensitive to what He asks, not dismissive or annoyed.

**Mark 5:33 - <sup>33</sup> The woman, with fear and trembling, knowing what had happened to her, came and fell down before him, and told him the whole truth.**

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<sup>15</sup> Archibald Robertson *Word Pictures In The New Testament, Theological Dictionary Of The New Testament*

<sup>16</sup> 2 Corinthians 4:17

<sup>17</sup> Gaebelien

<sup>18</sup> Brooks

<sup>19</sup> R.T. France *The Gospel Of Mark*

Why was she so afraid? Well, she had just broken the Law. A woman with her affliction was supposed to notify everyone around her about her uncleanness. And *anyone* she touched would immediately become unclean, too. So now she is exposed and has to say *why* she touched Jesus... *and* all the dozens of other people she pressed through to get to Him.

Now, she had a private, transformational experience with God in the sense that she was healed and no one knew it at first. Sometimes Christians argue over whether a person need to say a prayer or go forward at an altar call when they get saved. The truth is, salvation happens in the heart. And so, that can happen in a public display or in the solitude of your own home. *But*, even though her rescue happened privately, Jesus asked her to give public testimony.

**Mark 5:34 - <sup>34</sup> "Daughter," he said to her, "your faith has saved you. Go in peace and be healed from your affliction."**

He was not trying to embarrass her, He wanted to instruct her. He wanted her to know that He considered her His *daughter*. This is the only time Jesus calls a woman daughter in the Gospels.<sup>20</sup> And what a comfort it must of been to know that no bill was coming in the mail. He healed her for free. She didn't make Him unclean. He solved all those problems.

And He wanted her to understand that she wasn't only healed of a sickness, but that this faith relationship she had with the Savior meant she could go from then on in *peace*. A word that means wholeness of wellbeing because of right relationship with God.<sup>21</sup> He said, "Be healed from your affliction." She might say, "I already am." But Jesus was saying, "No, the restoring and peace *starts* now. There's more. You're going to go from this place becoming more whole day by day."

How *else* might He intend to make her whole? That was the question. That's our question, too. God's intention is that we not just be *around* Him - that we not just see what He says in His word or come to church or hang around other Christians and then go away unchanged. He *wants* to transform us and fill our lives with His power and make us whole. But we have to have faith. We have to recognize that, yes, *I* need the Savior to save me. And that day-by-day, as I "follow" Jesus, there's always some treatment He intends, not only for my good, but also so that the watching crowds around me can *also* have their lives saved.

Jairus is about to be told, "It's too late. There's no hope. Your daughter is dead." But Jesus turns to him and says, "Don't be afraid. Believe." What had Jairus *just* seen? *This* woman's life restored. Transformed. Saved.

Back in 1930, those University of Wisconsin researchers didn't stop with diagnosing what those cattle were dying from. They realized something in this fungus made the cows' blood thin out. Fast forward another 10 years and in 1940 they developed a way to control the process for medical

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<sup>20</sup> Gaebelien

<sup>21</sup> Brooks

purposes and invented Warfarin or you may have heard it called Coumadin.<sup>22</sup> It is now one of the most widely prescribed drugs in the world, saving countless lives of stroke patients or heart attack victims. So not only were they able to stop the suffering of the prairie cattle, but also to use the suffering that had already happened to save many *other* lives for decades to come.

God wants to transform your life. He sees your struggles and not only wants to care for you in them, He wants to care for others *through* them. Our part is to understand *Who* Jesus is, believe it, and reach out in faith so He can do what He wants to do in us. We don't just gather to see Jesus pass by. To hear His word in one ear and let it go out the other. Faith means we understand *Who* He is and reach out, trusting that He has *life* for us. Salvation and rescue and transformation that we desperately need.

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<sup>22</sup> <https://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2017/08/29/531749974/how-moldy-hay-and-sick-cows-led-to-a-life-saving-drug>