



THE EXHORTER

“And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.” Acts 2:40

The Palmer Road church of Christ, Westland, Mi. (prchurchofchrist.org)

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Mark 5:25-26 *“A woman who had a hemorrhage for twelve years, and had endured much at the hands of many physicians, and had spent all that she had and was not helped at all, but rather had grown worse”*

Our verse today is about the woman with the issue of blood. She came to Jesus, and touched Him from behind and was instantly healed. Jesus revealed who had done this and instead of making her feel ashamed, He praised her great faith. All of this took place as Jesus is being escorted to Jairus's home, an official of the synagogue, to save his dying daughter. We have a miracle taking place on the way to do another miracle. It's a great lesson that is packed full of powerful thoughts to consider.

Today, I want to focus upon two thoughts about the woman with the issue of blood.

First, some people are in a truly hopeless situation. She was. She was broke, sick, tired, prodded, poked, discouraged, unclean by Jewish law, and not getting any better. In fact, she was getting worse. Nothing was working. She was out of answers. She was out of ideas. Her medical condition would have made her tired, weak and drained. Jesus was her last hope. Jesus was her only hope. This woman presents a challenge to me. I am an eternal optimist. I am type A. I thrive on finding solutions. Practical to the core, let's find an answer is the way I operate. There are some things we cannot fix. There are some situations that we don't have an answer. What do we say in those circumstances? "Cheer up, I know you'll get better?" Really? Do you know that? False hope can be as bad as no hope.

My wife is an oncology nurse. A good day for her is when a patient has completed the treatments, the labs results are looking good and they are released from needing to come back. A bad day is when the patient is told that they need to call Hospice because nothing more can be done. That gets to her. I wouldn't do well working there. I want to fix everyone and you can't always do that.

Sometimes marriages get that way. There has been so many broken promises and trust has been shattered by unfaithfulness so many times, that restoring the marriage seems hopeless. It's really bad when one doesn't care and they want to end the marriage anyway. How can you fix things when the people involved are content to let things fall apart?

Sometimes relationships get like that. Recently, I've talked to two different people who have not talked to their grown children in years. Things happened. They moved on in separate directions. There seems to be no hope in building a bridge to connect them. Hopeless.

The feeling of hopelessness is what leads some to giving up and taking their life. I cannot imagine what that would feel like. I think about the people on the Titanic who realized that there was no hope for them. I think about coal miners trapped in a cave in, watching fellow miners die one by one, realizing there was no hope. What a dark and empty feeling hopelessness is.

Listen to Paul's words describing Gentiles: "remember that you were at that time separate from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world" (Eph 2:12). Without hope. Without God.

A person who has lived a lifetime, avoiding and ignoring God, suddenly realizes at the end of his life, that he is dying without hope. His death isn't a sweet passage into a better world, but rather, terror fills his heart because he doesn't know. He doesn't know if God is real or not. He doesn't know what is beyond death, if anything. He doesn't know what will happen to him. He wants to think that he'll go to Heaven. He hopes that he has been good enough, but he knows. He realizes that he doesn't even know how to pray. He knows nothing about the Bible, God or things spiritual. He spent his life living for today and now he is just about out of today's. This is a man who lives without hope.

The death of Robert Ingersoll illustrates one without hope. Ingersoll lived a long time ago. He spent his life lecturing and writing in defense of atheism. He didn't believe in God. He debated those who believed in God. His life was spent in academic pursuits of naturalism. He died. His funeral, according to newspaper reports, was oddly secular. It was strange, people reported. No hymns sung. No prayers offered. No reading of Scriptures. After the funeral, his wife and two daughters clung to his body weeping. They refused to turn his body over to the undertaker for burial. This went on for a few days. They couldn't part with one that they knew they would never see again. His doctrines of hopelessness came to fulfillment. For them, there was nothing beyond death and death was the ultimate thief. Hopeless.

The other thought the woman with the issue of blood presents to us is that she found hope in Jesus. Man didn't have the answers, but Jesus did. Jesus did what doctors could not. Jesus did what all of her money could not do. Jesus healed her, saved her and gave her hope. This woman shows us that in God all things are possible. With God there is hope.

Under the banner of Christ, broken lives can be forgiven, restored and given a second chance. Marriages that are doomed to crash, can be salvaged through Christ. Those who have lived for today, can have the hope of Heaven when they bow their knees to Christ.

This woman found that Jesus was the answer. That must be our message. The answer is not the church. The answer is not in what we know. The answer is in Jesus. Follow Jesus. Obey Jesus. Listen to Jesus. Learn. Change. Become.

A broke, suffering and hopeless woman was called "daughter," by Jesus. Her faith made her well. It didn't happen at home. It was more than just a thought. She found Jesus. She worked her way through a massive crowd. She reached out and touched Jesus. It took courage and faith to do that. Will you do that? Will you search for Jesus? Will you reach out to Jesus? Will you overcome fears and doubts to find the one who can change your life? Isn't it time for you to come back to where you belong? Isn't it time to fill your life with real hope?

This unnamed woman is a hero for showing us that someone who has no hope can find hope in Jesus.

How about you?

Roger Shouse

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