

Feb 22 10 Lent 1 Mark 5:21-32

COME TOUCH HIS ROBE:

ONE LAST CHANCE

*(The woman who touched Jesus' robe)*

This morning we begin a series for Lent that comes from our special music. The series is called "Come Touch the Robe." In this drama once again we will be dealing with people and their stories of how they met Jesus along the way and how it affected their lives. And to go along with that, each week during Lent I have asked someone to briefly share their own lives experience since they met Jesus to let us know that the Jesus who touched lives we read about in the Bible still touches lives today. And when the sermon is through, at our final hymn you will be invited to come touch the robe yourself for a variety of reasons. Some may come once; others might feel to come again next week or the week after that. It doesn't matter how many times you come. You come in answer to the invitation that God gives, for whatever reason, for whatever need you have, not my invitation.

During the next few weeks of Lent let us prepare our hearts to experience the Resurrection victory on Easter Sunday allowing God to examine our hearts and to transform each of us into his vessel during the next 40 or so days of Lent. Let us

be in prayer for our own lives preparing for that glorious day of Resurrection when we will sing “He lives! He lives! Christ Jesus lives today!”

Last chances! That is what this woman we are talking about this morning thought about. You know the story, you’ve heard me mention it a time or two, even preached about her, or used her as an illustration. But today her story is our main focus. Listen to God’s Word concerning her from Mark’s gospel 5:21-32 and let’s see how we might relate to her. **READ**

How many times have some of us heard those same words, or even used them. “Billy Bob, this is your last chance. Stop doing what you are doing or you will be in timeout.” “Sally Ann, stop that! This is your last chance. If you hit your little brother again, you will stay in your room with no TV or games.” “Oscar, this is your last chance. You’ve been coming in late for work too often. One more time and we will have to let you go.” “Benito, you have been invited to spring training to see what you can do. This is your last chance. You are getting up in years and if you don’t make it this year, you will be released.”

I don’t know how many other ways you’ve heard that statement about last chances but you know you are always hoping things will change. Even those who are ill sometimes hear those words in another way. They might hear, we’ve done all we can, this is the last treatment we can give you. Or maybe they hear this is the last drug if this doesn’t work, well....

This woman who had the bleeding problems for many years was looking for one last chance. She had gone through doctor after doctor, cure after cure. Her money was gone. Her hope was gone. In her own mind she thought she would never be able to live a normal life. But then she heard about a man who might be able to help her. She heard how this man healed a variety of people from a variety of diseases. She heard how he did one miracle after the other. Her hope perked up when she heard this man would be passing through their area, so she decided to go and see if he would touch her. She was willing to give it one last chance to see if this man people talked about and praised and followed could help her. So she got herself cleaned up as best she could. She combed her hair, put a little Mary Kay makeup on to cover the sadness and colorless features on her face, put on her finest blue jeans and bright top and went to meet this man she believed could transform her life. She walked with pride and with a mission and with hope as she kept saying to herself, “If he can, he will. If he can he will. Praise the Lord! I believe he can. Today I’m going to get my miracle.”

But you need to realize when she got there she was overwhelmed because there was such a crowd of people who also heard about this miracle making man coming to their town. It was as if a president had come to town, or a championship team was being honored because they just won the state title. People came and filled the roadway. It was so bad that the disciples had to act like secret service

men, brushing back the crowd, trying their best to protect their master. Scripture says “when they got to the other side a large crowd had gathered.” This man was popular. Perhaps the word spread about his compassion. In that crowd was none other than the leader of the local synagogue, Jarius. But he did not come to give this man the key to the city or too ask him to preach a message for him, or read scripture at the next meeting, or give the benediction at the close of the service. None of these things were on the leaders mind. What was on his mind was the same thing that was on our unclean women’s mind. Can this man help me? Though some of his fellow synagogue leaders brushed this man aside he came to embrace the teacher not for what he could teach them, but because of what he could do for a member of his family. When Jesus stepped out of the boat and made his way to the crowd an anxious Jarius was waiting for him. “Jesus, I’ve heard stories about you and I have a need.” His voice was wavering; he had tears in his eyes as he stated the problem. “Jesus, my daughter is ill. She’s very ill. All hope has been dashed. The doctors tell us it’s just a matter of time. You are our last hope. Will you come with me and touch my daughter?” And Jesus embraced the man and told him to have faith and to lead the way.

That’s what our unclean woman saw as she came upon the crowd. She was too embarrassed about her condition to go up to Jesus and seek his help. She certainly didn’t want to tell others. So the crowd moved on to Jarius’ house, and

this woman stood behind as the crowd got further and further away. The disciples tried their best to keep others away, but the crowd was so big and came so close to Jesus, they would need an army to protect him. And as Jesus got further and further away the woman's hope of transformation and healing began to fade away. She stood there with tears in her eyes believing her one last chance had just passed her by. She leaned against a tree and slithered to the ground and sobbed. Then she thought of all the doctors she had been to, all the money she spent, she thought of the life of misery she would have, and she said to herself, "I know beyond a shadow of a doubt that this man can heal me. If I touch just his robe, I believe I will be healed." So with that thought in mind. With her faith growing as she put herself back together again she wiped the tears from her eyes, got to her feet and began to race after the crowd. Finally she caught up with them and tried to get closer and closer to reach out to touch Jesus just as others were doing, but each time she reached out she fell short. The disciples kept pushing the crowd back so she ran to the front of the line hoping maybe just to catch his eye, but when he got there others pushed her aside and she fell to the ground. But she got up ran back and she said to herself, "This is my last chance." And with all the strength she could muster, with all the determination she could conjure up, with all the faith she had knowing just one little touch would do, she reached out once again and at that exact time, like it was meant to be, Jesus' robe seemed to 'pop' up and in a flash of

time the tip of her finger touched the tip of his robe and she fell to the ground and when she did the bleeding she had known for 38 years stopped. And just about that time Jesus yelled out “Who touched me?” His disciples looked around and said, “Master, so many people have touched you.” Jesus answered, “But one person who touched me received something because I felt my power leave me.” And as the crowd stopped, and the disciples looked, Jesus looked as well. Way back in the crowd, still on the ground, still reeling with joy from her miracle, came the voice of the unclean woman. “Sir, it was I who touched you.” The crowd backed away to let Jesus see who it was who was speaking. Jesus saw the woman got to her feet, came closer to Jesus and knelt at his feet and told her story. With all the faith she could muster she told her story how Jesus was her last chance. She told how doctors gave up on her and all treatments had failed and all her money was gone and all the latest drugs would not work on what she had. So she had a bleak future. However, she heard about a man who touched the eyes of the blind and they saw. Spoke to a man whose legs had been crippled since birth and he rose up and walked for the first time. She heard about a deaf man receiving his hearing. She heard how Jesus touched 10 lepers and as they were going on their way they were healed. She told him she believed the stories and she began to believe in the man of the stories and she asked herself, could he not do the same for me? And then she told she believed if she even just touched his robe she would be healed. This was

her last chance so she told him that as the crowd passed by she reached out as far as she could and his robe came flying up and with the very tip of her finger she came in contact with the edge of his robe, and as she fell to the ground, she realized the bleeding had stopped. Jesus listened to her story and smiled upon her and said, *“Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your suffering.”*

*“Your faith has healed you,”* Jesus said. It wasn’t the robe that healed her. It was her faith. *“If I can touch his robe, I will be healed”* she had thought and it happened.

Do you have such faith in Jesus? Do you have half that faith? You know all healing comes through faith. For this woman faith was a big issue because she had **to come** to Jesus to get her healing. She had **to believe** that when she touched it she would be healed and she had to fight her way to Jesus to get her healing. And is one thing we know. **SHE HAD TO REACH OUT TO JESUS.**

And so on this first Sunday of Lent we marvel at her story and we wonder, could it happen to me? What if I touched his robe could something happen to me? It’s just a piece of cloth. Do I have the faith to come and touch his robe believing what I need Jesus will provide? Is there healing in the robe? The narrative of our focused hymn for Lent says, “The robe was just a piece of cloth. Yet when Christ was present there flowed healing power.....Come encounter the presence and

power of Christ...come...touch the robe.” Yes it is just a piece of cloth. But you know Jesus is present here as he was back there with that woman.

Three things we learn from her wonderful story. First, she had to come to Jesus. Second, she had to believe that Jesus could do it. Third, she had to reach out to touch him. Will you come to Jesus, believe in him and reach out and touch him? Maybe a miracle awaits someone who is looking for a miracle. Never underestimated what God can do.

The theme song began, “Come, touch the robe, through faith touch the robe. Feel the power that flows to all who believe. Come to His side, no one is denied all the life giving power when we come to bow to touch the hem of his robe.” The end of the song is your invitation as Jesus says, “O come to me now in faith, to pray, to touch the hem of my robe. Come, touch my robe.”