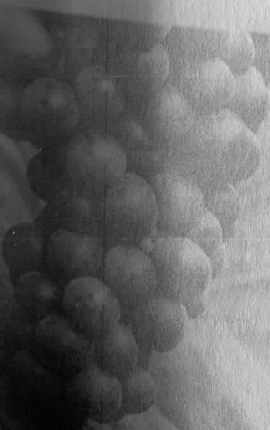


LESSON FIVE

STEP OUT IN FAITH

When she heard about Jesus, she came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak, because she thought, "If I just touch his clothes, I will be healed."

MARK 5:27-28



REFLECTION

Every day presents opportunities for exercising faith. Sometimes getting out of bed to face the day can feel like a major step of faith. Throughout the day we have decisions to make, challenges to meet, and often we face unexpected hardships or tragedies that require a step of faith. In the passage for this lesson, we see this daily faith principle illustrated in Jesus' life and in the lives of the people who approached him with their requests. Think of a time when you took a step of faith toward God in a difficult situation. What did you do, and how did God respond?

SITUATION

Jesus had ministered for a brief time in the country of the Gadarenes, where he healed a demon-possessed man. Then he moved to the northern end of the Sea of Galilee, where crowds awaited his return. Among them was a desperate father with a very sick daughter. He hoped Jesus might heal her. Hidden in the multitude was also a woman with a terrible secret. She hoped to be healed anonymously. Each of them took a step of faith.

OBSERVATION

Read Mark 5:21–42 from the New International Version or the New King James Version.

NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION

²¹ When Jesus had again crossed over by boat to the other side of the lake, a large crowd gathered around him while he was by the lake. ²² Then one of the synagogue leaders, named Jairus, came, and when he saw Jesus, he fell at his feet. ²³ He pleaded earnestly with him, "My little daughter is dying. Please come and put your hands on her so that she will be healed and live." ²⁴ So Jesus went with him.

A large crowd followed and pressed around him. ²⁵ And a woman was there who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years. ²⁶ 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. ²⁷ When she heard about Jesus, she came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak, ²⁸ because she thought, "If I just touch his clothes, I will be healed." ²⁹ Immediately her bleeding stopped and she felt in her body that she was freed from her suffering.

³⁰ At once Jesus realized that power had gone out from him. He turned around in the crowd and asked, "Who touched my clothes?"

³¹ "You see the people crowding against you," his disciples answered, "and yet you can ask, 'Who touched me?'"

³² But Jesus kept looking around to see who had done it. ³³ Then the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came and fell at his feet and, trembling with fear, told him the whole truth. ³⁴ He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your suffering."

³⁵ While Jesus was still speaking, some people came from the house of Jairus, the synagogue leader. "Your daughter is dead," they said. "Why bother the teacher anymore?"

³⁶ Overhearing what they said, Jesus told him, "Don't be afraid; just believe."

³⁷ He did not let anyone follow him except Peter, James and John the brother of James. ³⁸ When they came to the home of the synagogue leader, Jesus saw a commotion, with people crying and wailing loudly. ³⁹ He went in and said to them, "Why all this commotion and wailing? The child is not dead but asleep." ⁴⁰ But they laughed at him.

After he put them all out, he took the child's father and mother and the disciples who were with him, and went in where the child was. ⁴¹ He took her by the hand and said to her, "Talitha koum!" (which means "Little girl, I say to you, get up!"). ⁴² Immediately the girl stood up and began to walk around (she was twelve years old). At this they were completely astonished.

NEW KING JAMES VERSION

²¹ Now when Jesus had crossed over again by boat to the other side, a great multitude gathered to Him; and He was by the sea. ²² And behold, one of the rulers of the synagogue came, Jairus by name. And when he saw Him, he fell at His feet ²³ and begged Him earnestly, saying, "My little daughter lies at the point of death. Come and lay Your hands on her, that she may be healed, and she will live." ²⁴ So Jesus went with him, and a great multitude followed Him and thronged Him.

²⁵ Now a certain woman had a flow of blood for twelve years, ²⁶ and had suffered many things from many physicians. She had spent all that she had and was no better, but rather grew worse. ²⁷ When she heard about Jesus, she came behind Him in the crowd and touched His garment. ²⁸ For she said, "If only I may touch His clothes, I shall be made well."

²⁹ Immediately the fountain of her blood was dried up, and she felt in her body that she was healed of the affliction. ³⁰ And Jesus, immediately knowing in Himself that power had gone out of Him, turned around in the crowd and said, "Who touched My clothes?"

³¹ But His disciples said to Him, "You see the multitude thronging You, and You say, 'Who touched Me?'"

³² And He looked around to see her who had done this thing. ³³ But the woman, fearing and trembling, knowing what had happened to her, came and fell down before Him and told Him the whole truth. ³⁴ And He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace, and be healed of your affliction."

³⁵ While He was still speaking, some came from the ruler of the synagogue's house who said, "Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the Teacher any further?"

³⁶ As soon as Jesus heard the word that was spoken, He said to the ruler of the synagogue, "Do not be afraid; only believe." ³⁷ And He permitted no one to follow Him except Peter, James, and John the brother of James. ³⁸ Then He came to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, and saw a tumult and those who wept and wailed loudly. ³⁹ When He came in, He said to them, "Why make this commotion and weep? The child is not dead, but sleeping."

⁴⁰ And they ridiculed Him. But when He had put them all outside, He took the father and the mother of the child, and those who were with Him, and entered where the child was lying. ⁴¹ Then He took the child by the hand, and said to her, "Talitha, cumi," which is translated, "Little girl, I say to you, arise." ⁴² Immediately the girl arose and walked, for she was twelve years of age. And they were overcome with great amazement.

EXPLORATION

1. Why is it surprising that Jairus, given his position in Jewish society, publicly approached Jesus and begged him to heal his daughter?

2. What made it difficult for the woman who was bleeding to approach Jesus?

3. Why was the woman so determined to just get close enough to touch Jesus' cloak?

4. How do you think Jairus felt when Jesus stopped to heal the woman?

5. Why do you suppose Jesus stopped everything he was doing to point out the woman?

6. What does the story of Jairus and the woman reveal about faith?

INSPIRATION

A chronic menstrual disorder. A perpetual issue of blood. Such a condition would be difficult for any woman of any era. But for a Jewess, nothing could be worse. No part of her life was left unaffected.

Sexually . . . she could not touch her husband. Maternally . . . she could not bear children.

Domestically . . . anything she touched was considered unclean. No washing dishes. No sweeping floors.

Spiritually . . . she was not allowed to enter the temple. She was physically exhausted and socially ostracized.

She had sought help “under the care of many doctors.” . . .

She was a bruised reed. She awoke daily in a body that no one wanted. She is down to her last prayer. And on the day we encounter her, she’s about to pray it.

By the time she gets to Jesus, he is surrounded by people. He’s on his way to help the daughter of Jairus, the most important man in the community. What are the odds that he will interrupt an urgent mission with a high official to help the likes of her? Very few. But what are the odds that she will survive if she doesn’t take a chance? Fewer still. So she takes a chance.

“If I can just touch his clothes”, she thinks, “I will be healed.”

Risky decision. To touch him, she will have to touch the people . . . But what choice does she have? She has no money, no clout, no friends, no solutions. She hoped he’d respond, but she didn’t know if he would. All she knew was that he was good. That’s faith.

Faith is not the belief that God will do what you want. Faith is the belief that God will do what is right. Her part in the healing was very small. All she did was extend her arm through the crowd. “If only I can touch him.” . . . Healing begins when we do something. Healing begins when we reach out. Healing starts when we take a step. (From *He Still Moves Stones* by Max Lucado.)

REACTION

7. In what ways can you identify with the story of the woman who was bleeding?

8. Think of a time when you found it difficult to step out in faith. Why was it difficult for you?

9. In what area of life do you need to experience more of Christ’s power?

10. What does this story teach you about Jesus' compassion for those in need?

11. Jesus comforted Jairus by saying, "Don't be afraid; just believe" (Mark 5:36). How are these words applicable to your life?

12. Many people touched Jesus as he passed by. Why do you think Jesus' power affected this particular woman and not others?

LIFE LESSONS

Stepping out in faith isn't easy, and the results may not be what we expect. Jairus stepped out in faith to get help for a sick daughter, but at first things got worse . . . she died. Other times, the results for stepping out in faith will turn out better than we hoped. The woman with the bleeding issue was instantly healed, and Jairus's daughter was ultimately raised and healed. Often, there will be mixed results. The woman was publicly recognized (which she dreaded) and then affirmed (which must have transformed her). In what ways are you making it a life-habit to step out in faith?

DEVOTION

Lord, I see that Jairus and this woman had one priceless thing in common: they both came to you in trust. I realize this is one of the basic lessons of faith. If I want to exercise trust in you, I must come to you. I must bring my problems, my needs, and my life to you. I realize I may sometimes feel as unworthy as the woman who was bleeding, but help me to come anyway.

JOURNALING

What steps can you take to strengthen your faith? In what areas of your life can you practice believing?

FOR FURTHER READING

To complete the book of Mark during this twelve-part study, read Mark 5:21-43. For more Bible passages about stepping out in faith, read Genesis 12:2-9; 22:1-19; Joshua 6; Daniel 3; Matthew 7:7; Luke 17:6; Hebrews 11:1, 7-12.