**SERIES 03 (PREACHED IN 1904) - THE PREACHING OF G. CAMPBELL MORGAN**

**05. JESUS AND THE WOMAN WHO TOUCHED HIM by G. CAMPBELL MORGAN**

*"Behold, a woman who had a discharge of blood for twelve years came behind him, and touched the fringe of his garment; for she said within herself, "If I just touch his garment, I will be made well." But Jesus, turning around and seeing her, said, "Daughter, cheer up! Your faith has made you well." And the woman was made well from that hour."*

*Matthew 9:20-22*

*"A certain woman, who had a discharge of blood for twelve years, and had suffered many things by many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was no better, but rather grew worse, having heard the things concerning Jesus, came up behind him in the crowd, and touched his clothes. For she said, "If I just touch his clothes, I will be made well." Immediately the flow of her blood was dried up, and she felt in her body that she was healed of her affliction. Immediately Jesus, perceiving in himself that the power had gone out from him, turned around in the crowd, and asked, "Who touched my clothes?" His disciples said to him, "You see the multitude pressing against you, and you say, 'Who touched me?' " He looked around to see her who had done this thing. But the woman, fearing and trembling, knowing what had been done to her, came and fell down before him, and told him all the truth. He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace, and be cured of your disease." "*

*Mark 5:25-34*

*"A woman who had a flow of blood for twelve years, who had spent all her living on physicians and could not be healed by any came behind him, and touched the fringe of his cloak. Immediately the flow of her blood stopped. Jesus said, "Who touched me?" When all denied it, Peter and those with him said, "Master, the multitudes press and jostle you, and you say, 'Who touched me?'" But Jesus said, "Someone did touch me, for I perceived that power has gone out of me." When the woman saw that she was not hidden, she came trembling, and falling down before him declared to him in the presence of all the people the reason why she had touched him, and how she was healed immediately. He said to her, "Daughter, cheer up. Your faith has made you well. Go in peace." "*

*Luke 8:43-48*

THIS STORY is one of the most beautiful in some respects in all the Gospel narratives; one of the most tender, and fascinating, and beautiful in the records.

It is hardly true, and yet it seems to me as the nearest we can come to the truth, to say that almost without His knowing it, Christ answered the woman, and yet He knew it immediately. The virtue seems to have flashed from Him almost before human consciousness was His. I perceive that it is gone, He said, so quick, and keen, and sensitive was Jesus in the presence of such need and faith as are revealed in this story. And it is therefore a very beautiful revelation of the attitude of Christ toward suffering which is part of evil, an almost unmatched story in that respect. Our Lord was seen dealing with evil as sin. Here He is seen dealing with evil as suffering. So closely are the facts concerning this woman and Christ, that it is almost impossible to consider either in separation from the other. We shall attempt simply to follow the sequence of movements, and finally make just one or two deductions of importance for ourselves.

We cannot begin to look at this without for a moment pausing to take in the whole scene, for you will have noticed in your reading that this whole dealing of Christ with the woman is a parenthesis in another thing He is doing. He is really going to the house of Jairus, and this is a side issue, something not in the immediate programme of the Master. It is one of the occasions in which He was not confined in His service for God. Those who are in service with God must not be merely bound by certain formula, but must be running over. "Joseph was a fruitful bough, his branches run ever the wall." That is more than can be expected of any bough. That is something for the man next door. Jesus is a fruitful bough, and His branches are always running over the wall; and though He is on His way to the house of Jairus, He stops long enough to deal with this woman. Some of us are so busy doing the arranged thing for God that we do not find time for side issues. What a blessed thing it is when we are ready to be disturbed even in the line of duty, if by the disturbance we can scatter more of His life, and light, and love. So this story is a parenthesis. We must stay to see the whole picture, which leads us to this particular event.

If we were going to fling this picture upon the canvas, the figure, not the most prominent, but the foremost, would be that of Jairus. You know perfectly why I put him in the front. He has come to Christ, and there is agony in every tone of what he says to the Lord. Come down, for I have a little daughter twelve years of age, and, as one of the evangelists makes him say, she "is even now dead," the case is absolutely hopeless, nobody can do anything except You come. Twelve years of age. Twelve years of sunshine in the life of Jairus, all going out. I know Jairus led that procession. I know if he could have hurried Christ he would have done it.

And then coming near to him, and following him, the reverent and beautiful Christ. I cannot describe Him. If you know Him, you have never seen a picture yet that satisfied you. And round about, the disciples, the most dignified men of the whole crowd, for before Pentecost the apostles were characterized by dignity, and after by power, and there is a great contrast. And then outside, and yet close at hand, the thronging crowd. There is nothing so fascinating, more marvelous than to see a great crowd surging, pressing, thronging upon this central figure of the Christ, strong men determined to see, mothers holding the children up to get one glimpse of His face. Suddenly He stands still, and you know immediately what happened. The disciples and Jairus, too, reluctantly, and the crowds all stopped. Something is going to be said or done by the Christ, and a great hush falls upon all, and His voice is heard saying, "Who touched me?"

Now, we must get back behind it, and we will look for a moment or two at the woman before that touch. You have noticed the story. She had been suffering twelve years. Jairus' little girl has been in the world twelve years, and this woman has been suffering twelve years. Twelve years of sunshine over against twelve years of shadow. Let us see what that meant. She had been excommunicated from the synagogue. She was not allowed to worship during all those twelve years. She had for twelve years been divorced from her husband. She had for twelve years suffered social ostracism. The peculiar form of trouble from which she suffered, according to the law and the tradition of the elders, therefore, shut her out from worship, from family, and from society. She had suffered religious excommunication, marital divorce, and social ostracism through all those years, and added to this the suffering itself, the ebbing away of strength.

Imagine we know her before she gets to Christ. In addition to the twelve years of religious excommunication, and marital divorce, and social ostracism, and the suffering of her own actual disease or complaint, was the fact that in the of the years she had been working hard, trying to get relief, and had utterly failed. Is it possible to have a case of more urgent need than that? Twelve years' suffering, twelve years' shadow, twelve years shut out from worship, from family, from society. And when I see her away back in the crowd, not having come to Jesus, I see a woman weak, and wan, and emaciated, with all those deep lines of agony ploughed across her face, which only the face of womanhood is capable of ever bearing, a poor, despised woman, nobody able to help or heal her, with her life slowly ebbing away. It is a case of direct need and extreme suffering.

She heard of Jesus. She believed what she heard, and ventured upon the basis of her belief, and she felt that virtue had healed her. That is the whole movement. She put into practice the thing that she believed, and went to Him, and found contact with Him, and then I wonder whether she was surprised. Faith may go in perfect confidence, but when He answers we are always surprised. She felt. Do not miss the place of feeling. You are not to trust in it, but feeling always gives the inner deep consciousness that the thing we want we have. She heard of Jesus and of His power, for the fame of Him had spread through all the country side. She might have heard that Peter's wife's mother had been sick of a fever, and that He touched her hand and the fever left her! She had heard of Him. That is the first thing. Faith always comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God. Her faith came out of what she had heard, and it was her hearing of the Word incarnate at His work around her. I do not mean to say she understood it. And perhaps she had heard of His willingness. One other thing she had heard, - He was coming her way. Perchance the woman asked somebody, What is the meaning of this movement in the crowd coming down the road? It is Jesus. She has heard, and she believes in His ability to do something for her. If that woman, having heard the joyful sound, and believed the joyful sound, had sat there, and let that crowd go by, she would have gained nothing. Knowledge of the good news, belief of its truth never brings healing or blessing into any life. It must be the faith that acts. And then she came, she ventured. I have tried to sit down and with closed eyes watch that woman and Jesus; and the more I do, the more astonished I am. You all know what it is to get through a crowd. In full health and strength it is not easy. But, ah, me when dire need drives, and confidence inspires, how much we can get through. And faith overcomes all obstacles. See the strong men round about Him. It will be impossible for her to reach Him. There was no listening to any story of difficulty, she went through the crowd, and nobody saw her, nobody noticed her, so weak and wan was she. Just one of the crowd to the crowd, she came right through it, and touched the border of His garment, the hem, or really the fringe.

Let us go back for a moment to the book of Numbers (15:37-40). Jehovah speaks unto Moses, saying: "Speak unto the children of Israel, and bid them that they make them fringes in the borders of their garments throughout their generations, and that they put upon the fringe of each border a cord of blue: and it shall be unto you for a fringe, that ye may look upon it, and remember all the commandments of Jehovah, and do them: and that ye follow not after your own heart and your own eyes, after which ye use to play the harlot: that ye may remember and do all my commandments, and be holy unto your God." I believe that Jesus wore that cord of blue upon the border of His garment. The life of Jesus as a Jew was true to the original Divine ideal. Though with ruthless disregard He swept aside the traditions of men, He was particular about every commandment of God through His servant Moses, and wore, I believe, that ribbon of blue upon the border of His garment. If He did wear this cord of blue, it is probable that the woman also knew the suggestiveness of the blue upon the border of His garment. She does not quite understand all the truth about the mystery of the person of Christ, but she looks and sees the fringe of that garment that has a cord of blue, and grasps at that. It is not a touch, it is a grasp, a clutch. She touched it, and she felt. She knew she was whole. Her supreme lack was met in that moment of contact.

Let the stages be kept in mind. She heard of Him. She believed what she heard. She acted upon the basis of her belief. She felt. Now, let us turn from the woman, and look at the Christ.

We go back to the point at which we halted in our observation of the general scene, and we listen to Jesus, and He says. "Who touched me?" What a very remarkable question. I never feel that I can possibly criticise the disciples because I am sure that I would have said to Jesus exactly what they said, "Master, the multitudes press thee and crush thee, and sayest touched me?" There are a hundred people near You, pressing and brushing against You. The words of the disciples are suggestive, and give us a revelation of the greatness of the crowd. But it is not the question of pressing, jostling, it is a question of touch. He is not going to change His question, "Who touched me? ... I perceived that power had gone forth from me." How do You know it, Lord? May we reverently suppose the Christ as saying this: I know there has been one touch different from all the rest, for all the rest have helped to tire Me, but this one has taken virtue out of Me. Some hand has been upon Me that My nature has answered with an outflow of virtue. Dunamis is the word from which we get our word dynamite, translate it as you will, as force, or virtue. I like to get that literal and perfect translation. Dynamite has gone out of Me. It was a touch that made demands upon Him. Notice the question was a selective question, a question that revealed that in a crowd, surging and thronging upon Him, all were not upon the same footing. Someone has reached Him, and reaching Him has drawn from Him. Hundreds have pressed Him, have thronged round Him, have come into physical contact with Him; but one has through the physical found the spiritual. It is a question that discerns, discriminates, divides. It is a question that reveals to us a great truth for all time, that there is a contact that makes demands on Him, that there is an attitude that draws something out of Him. It is a question that reveals this great truth, that Jesus knows the difference between the crush of a curious mob, and the touch of a soul in its agony, that is making its last venture of faith. And all the crushing of the mob gains nothing, but the touch of that one woman He answers.

And then once again, this question of Jesus, this healing in the procession was intended to bring about a further result. He might have gone right on, and that woman might have gone home healed. That is what so many people want today. You can get your blessing and go, but you will miss one far greater than you got. The woman might have gone home healed, but oh, what she would have missed if she had! Jesus did not mean her to miss it, and He stopped her and asked her the question in order that she might be brought into the place of public confession, for a threefold reason. 'Who touched me? Someone has touched me, for I perceive that virtue is gone out of me," and that someone must speak, must confess it. And when she found out that she was not hid, see how frail her faith was, at least, her understanding. I think she thought she would touch, and get, and go, but He knew, and she came trembling before Him. It is a beautiful word, she "told him all the truth," all about the past, all about this present, all about the weakness, and the weariness, and the woe, and all about this great dynamic that had gone tingling, thrilling, throbbing right through her changed being. She told Him all the truth. And why did He make her do that? For three reasons, if I do not misinterpret the story. First for His own glory. He was always seeking for witnesses, and expecting people who got anything from Him, to witness. And He always asks the soul He blesses and helps to tell it out for His glory. He is building up the glory of the everlasting kingdom, not upon the battles won, but upon the witness of the saints. They overcome the devil by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony, and Jesus Christ is for evermore calling people to confess Him for His glory. Look at the crowd, some interested in Him, some kindly disposed to Him, but doing nothing for Him. Here is a woman that has had something from Him. Is it not right to do something for Him? Do you remember upon one occasion, when He had cleansed the ten lepers, and one poor forlorn soul, nay, one true, happier soul than the rest, came back to thank Him. "Were there not ten cleansed?" They all had something from Him. "Where are the nine? there is only one coming back." I think Jesus Christ is saying it today, "Where are the nine?" O woman, thou hast touched Him, and thou hast received virtue from Him, now thou must confess Him, for His glory's sake.

But is there no other reason? Do you see that man who has been waiting all this while? If you can imagine what it is to have a dying daughter in the house, you will know what he felt. I know if Jairus could he would have hurried Christ, and got Him away. Jesus has not forgotten him. He never forgets anyone, and He knew the agony of that man's heart. He knew that while He was banishing twelve years of shadow and letting the sunshine in, Jairus' twelve years of sunshine were merging into the darkness of an abiding sorrow. He made her confess for Jairus' sake. Jairus would begin to hope again for his child. Not only for His glory, but for the helpfulness of this other troubled heart. I think that as Jairus heard that woman's story, even though trembling and afraid that it would be too late, he hoped again in Jesus Christ, and it helped him and strengthened his faith. See how it works out, for these two stories so interlace. They went on their way, Jesus moving on with Jairus. And presently the messenger comes from the house to Jairus, and it is an awful message he brings. Jesus sees him coming, and Jairus sees him. As he comes up he says. "Trouble not the Master, thy daughter is dead." Before Jairus can speak, the music of the voice of Christ says, "Fear not; only believe." The testimony of the woman helped Jairus now to trust Christ. This woman's testimony was intended not merely for the glory of Jesus, but for the strengthening of the faith of another troubled soul in the crowd. Dear child of the King, Jesus wants your testimony. You have honored Him by trusting, and He has answered your honoring by healing your life. But now He says, If this is true, say so for My glory, say so because there is always some Jairus near with broken heart whose sore need your testimony will meet.

And yet once again, not only for His own glory, and for the sake of Jairus, but for the woman's He brought her in front. And when she told Him all the truth, you notice that He said three things to her, and yet all one, of course. And yet I like to divide it. He said, "Daughter." Oh, it is so easy to read that. Put yourself in her place. That is the only time that the Scripture ever chronicles that Jesus employed anything like an endearing epithet to a woman. "Daughter." The beauty of it! She is excommunicated from the synagogue. "Daughter." She is brought into the temple of God. She is shut out from her family. "Daughter." She is brought into the family. She is ostracized from society. "Daughter." She is in the society of heaven. One little word, simple as the language of fatherhood and motherhood and yet negativing all the negatives, and reaffirming the eternal positives. The limitation of the woman's life melted like mists before the dawning of the sun. "Daughter." Oh, to have heard Him say it, and to have felt as she felt!

And then the great pronouncement, "thou art made whole." And then the last thing. "go in peace." Did anything trouble her again that day? Did she mind the struggle, and the waiting while the great crowd surged by, and they jostled her? Did she care for the rulers of the synagogue when they investigated her case with their objectionable regularity? He has said "Daughter," He has said "peace," and all the gray has become purple, and the darkness has lifted with the morning. Has he ever said "Daughter" to you?

Has He ever said "Peace" to you? And do you say this morning, I am not quite sure, I don't think He has? Then, there are two things for you to do. Touch Him, make personal contact with Him. Don't trust any more to being one in a crowd, admiring Him, but get right through the crowd, and touch Him. Here stretch out I my hand to catch this ribbon of blue, O Son of God. Heal me, satisfy me. We have done that, you say. Then there is one other step. Don't be satisfied with touching Him from behind, and have the virtue extracted from a garment and a distance, but get in front, look into His face, confess Him, and hear His "Daughter" and "Peace."