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God's Woman: The and Now  
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### The Woman With the Issue of Blood

The Bible contains many important stories of women. Each story intrigues and captures the reader drawing them to a deeper understanding of what the story holds. The stories empower, encourage and challenge women as well as men.

The story in the New Testament concerning the woman with the issue of blood is no different. The story holds great meaning for people in many different walks of life. The story also gives deeper meaning into the person of Jesus Christ. However, this story cannot be fully understood without mentioning and exploring the story that is intertwined into it, the account of the synagogue ruler Jairus and his dying daughter.

This story can be found in the New Testament books of Matthew, Mark and Luke. Mark and Luke have the greatest details concerning the event. The story in Mark reads as follows:

**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 rulers, named Jairus, came there. Seeing Jesus, he fell at his feet **23**and 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."  
(BIBLEGATEWAY)

The story begins with Jesus, having just delivered a demon-possessed man, and also just crossing over in a boat back to Galilee, being surrounded by a crowd of people.

At this time, Galilee was described as a small village, which was not made up of much. “It was probably only a small settlement at the time, with several rows of houses along the shoreline of the Sea of Galilee. The apostle Peter had a house there. The town was well situated as a headquarters for someone like Jesus. It was on a main highway, and had access to the water for travel by boat. It probably also had a tax or toll office, and a small garrison of soldiers” ([http://www.womeninthebible.net/2.6.Menstruating\\_woman.htm](http://www.womeninthebible.net/2.6.Menstruating_woman.htm)-----  
[Woman](#) with prolonged menstration)

While the crowd surrounded Jesus, a man named Jarius, who the Bible states was a Synagogue ruler, came to him and pleaded with him to come quickly to his house because his daughter was dying. Dr. Constable writes this about Jarius, “He was a Jew who enjoyed considerable prestige in his community. It is noteworthy that someone of his standing believed in Jesus. This ruler humbly knelt before Jesus with a request. The ruler had probably seen or heard of Jesus' acts of healing with a touch. However, his faith was not as strong as the centurion's who believed that Jesus could heal with a word. Jesus arose from reclining at the table and proceeded to follow the ruler to his house.” (Constable---MATTHEW COMMENTARY).

While Jesus and the crowd of people were making their way to the house of Jarius, the Bible introduces a woman who was in the crowd. The story explains that she had been bleeding for 12 years. She spent all of her money on doctors who she hoped would find a cure and stop this bleeding. The Bible does not give detailed information into the woman's past or even her present. The account does not confirm if the woman was from Galilee or if she only heard about Jesus and came to see if he could heal her. The Bible only states that she had dealt with this issue of blood for 12 years and was never able to

be healed. Not only did this woman deal with the continuous flow of blood, she also dealt with every procedure and practice that came with a new doctor. This woman must have endured much pain in order to be healed. The Bible says that instead of getting better the woman only grew worse. “When blood flows freely and frequently instead of in its regular monthly pattern, women endure not only the untidiness of the condition but can also experience a loss of strength and weight. The woman in this story suffered from such a hemorrhage and for twelve long years. She was probably weak and thin” (WOMEN OF THE BIBLE). This quote gives insight into the burden that this woman carried as she bled continuously for 12 years. It is important to note that Jewish law rendered a woman bleeding unclean and would not allow her to touch anyone else due to the fact that she would then cause him or her to become unclean. This is found in the Old Testament book of Leviticus, which writes,

**25** "When a woman has a discharge of blood for many days at a time other than her monthly period or has a discharge that continues beyond her period, she will be unclean as long as she has the discharge, just as in the days of her period. **26** Any bed she lies on while her discharge continues will be unclean, as is her bed during her monthly period, and anything she sits on will be unclean, as during her period. **27** Whoever touches them will be unclean; he must wash his clothes and bathe with water, and he will be unclean till evening." [Leviticus 15:25-27]

One commentator believes that the woman may have been from another village or town because no one in the crowd seemed to object to her being there. If the villagers believed the law, they would have protested to her being so close to them in the event that they may touch her and become unclean. The ritual process would have taken an entire day to be recognized as clean after being touched. “Perhaps she had come from some distance since no one in the crowd apparently recognized her or objected to her being there” (DR.CONST-MARK).

As Jesus was walking with the crowd of people to the house of Jarius, the woman

came up behind him in order to touch his cloak. The Bible states that she believed she would be healed if only she could touch him. However, the crowd was pressing around him on all sides and it would have been difficult to even get close to Jesus. “However hope of healing led her to push her way through the crowd so that she might touch Jesus. She apparently believed that since Jesus' touch healed people if she touched Him she would get the same result” (CONSTABLE-MATT). This woman had hope in the power of Jesus. At that moment, she knew she would not be able to let him pass her by, instead she must get close enough to touch him.

As the woman finally draws close enough to touch his cloak, she reaches out and grabs the cloak that Jesus is wearing. Some commentators believe that she touched the fringe of Jesus' cloak, which was an important part of a Jewish man's attire. “The fringe of Jesus' cloak (v. 20) was probably one of the four tassels that the Jews wore on the four corners of their cloaks to remind them to obey God's commands” (CONSTABLE-MATT).

The moment the woman touched Jesus' cloak, the Bible says she was healed. She knew that she had received powerful healing from Jesus and she realized she would no longer have to live with the constant flow of bleeding. The Bible writes in Mark verse 29, “Immediately her bleeding stopped and she felt in her body that she was freed from her suffering.” Relief wrapped around her as a blanket. A heavy burden had been lifted at that moment and she would never be the same again. She forgot where she was for half a second as she came to the reality of what had happened. However, though she had been healed, she was confronted by the healer who immediately recognized something had taken place. The Bible states that at the moment she was healed, Jesus felt power going

out of him into someone else. Edmund D. Hiebert writes, “Jesus perceived in himself, without any external suggestion, the significance of the woman’s touch and actively willing to honor her faith, He was immediately conscious of his healing power going toward her” (HIEBERT).

Jesus then turned around to ask who in the crowd had touched him. Some believe that Jesus asked this question in order for the woman to publicly confess her belief and faith in Him. The woman would show a greater measure of faith by stepping out in front of the large crowd and identifying herself as the one who had done it. Instead, the disciples seemed to think Jesus was crazy for asking who touched him. The crowd was so large and so close that it would have been impossible for someone to not touch him or brush him with a hand or arm. The account in Mark states that the disciples asked him why he would ask such a question concerning the circumstances while Luke writes that Peter was the one who questioned Jesus. “The harshness of the disciples' reply is unique to Mark. Luke wrote that Peter voiced it (Luke 8:45). Probably the disciples were eager to get Jesus to Jairus' house before it was too late. Yet Jesus wanted to speak to the woman and to assure her that it was her faith in Him that had resulted in her healing, not merely her touch. He "looked around" searching the faces in the crowd to discover the person of faith. (CONSTABLE-MARK).

As Jesus looked around the crowd to see who had touched him and taken power from him, the woman knew she could no longer keep silent. She knew she would not be able to hide and would need to identify herself and tell the story of her past as well as the healing that had just taken place. The Bible writes that the woman came and fell at his feet. She was trembling and was afraid. “She had nothing to fear from Him. Perhaps the

woman was afraid because she had obtained Jesus' power surreptitiously. Still, we have seen that a typical response to the revelation of Jesus' power was fear” (CONSTABLE-MARK). The woman may have been afraid because she realized that her touch might have made Jesus unclean. He may not be pleased with her actions.

Instead of speaking harsh words to the woman, Jesus called her daughter and told her that the faith she had in him had healed her. He also told her to go in peace and to be free from the suffering she had endured for so many years. The use of the word “daughter” is significant. This is the only time Jesus uses this word to speak to his believers. “This is the only place in the Gospels where Jesus called someone "daughter." The woman's faith in Jesus had brought her into His spiritual family. Her faith was the means whereby she obtained Jesus' help. It expressed belief that Jesus *could* heal her and hope that He *would*” (CONSTABLE-MARK). She was now part of the spiritual family, which all believers at this time shared part. Her faith paved the way for her to be drawn into the family of believers and to be drawn to Jesus Christ as her Lord.

Jesus did not deal with the woman harshly as she might have thought would happen. Instead, he commended her actions. “Jesus encouraged the woman and commended her faith (i.e., her trust in Him). It was her faith that was significant. Her touching Jesus' garment simply expressed her faith. Faith in Jesus is one of the themes Matthew stressed in his Gospel. It is not the strength of one's faith that saves him or her but faith in a strong Savior” (CONSTABLE- MATT). Her faith was most important. Stepping out of the crowd and identifying herself also helped to show the great measure of faith this woman had that Jesus was who he claimed to be and would be able to heal her as well.

As the story continues, Jesus tells the woman to “go in peace” and to be “freed from her suffering”. “The phrase "Go in peace" (Heb. *shalom*) was a common way of saying "good-bye" among the Jews. Shalom ". . . means not just freedom from inward anxiety, but that *wholeness* or *completeness* of life that comes from being brought into a right relationship with God” (CONST-MARK). Jesus was not only saying good-bye in order to continue on his way to the house of Jarius but he was also assuring the woman that the freedom she had received would now be the missing piece to the puzzle of her completeness and wholeness. She was now right with God and would be a new person. “That day, countless men and women had brushed against Jesus, but only one had truly touched him. and instead of being defiled by contact with her, his own touch had proven the more contagious rendering her pure and whole again” (WOB). This strong quote reminds the reader that the power of God is much more powerful than any sickness or dark and evil thing. Although the woman feared she may have caused Jesus to become unclean, he instead made the woman clean wiping out any sign of sickness and defilement.

Jesus’ words also confirmed that she would now be able to live a normal life and interact with the rest of society. Dr. Constable writes, “It was God's will for this woman to experience healing. Jesus assured her that her healing was complete and permanent with these words. She could now enjoy social interaction and participation in public worship, as well as physical health, since she was clean” (CONST-MARK). Twelve years later, this woman would not be free to touch those who she loved and share completely in their lives. If she had children and a husband, she would now be able to touch them and show them the affection that she had wanted to give them for so many

years but was unable too. The healing of Jesus was complete and would allow her to live life without the burden and pain of this ailment.

The women with the issue of blood had been healed through the faith that she had in Jesus. However, still had not reached the house of Jarius in order to see his sick and dying daughter. The Bible goes on to say that as Jesus was still talking to the woman, news was brought that the daughter of Jarius was dead. Men from his home told him not to bother the teacher anymore, yet Jesus told Jarius to believe. Jesus is then described as going into the house of Jarius and raising his dead daughter back to life. Many were in disbelief and we told to keep silent by Jesus himself. One commentary writes, “Why did Matthew include this miracle within the account of the healing of Jarius' daughter? I suspect the answer is the common theme of life. The woman's life was gradually ebbing away. Her hemorrhage symbolized this since blood represents life. Jesus stopped her dying and restored her life. In the case of Jarius' daughter, who was already dead, Jesus restored her to life. Both incidents show His power over death” (CONST-MATT). Jesus’ power was shown over death and sickness in both stories.

Dr. Constable helps to sum up these two stories in this way,

“It is interesting that Jarius and this woman—two opposite people—met at the feet of Jesus. Jarius was a leading Jewish man; she was an anonymous woman with no prestige or resources. He was a synagogue leader, while her affliction kept her from worship. Jarius came pleading for his daughter; the woman came with a need of her own. The girl had been healthy for 12 years, and then died; the woman had been ill for 12 years and was now made whole. Jarius' need was public—all knew it; but the woman's need was private—only Jesus understood. Both Jarius and the woman trusted Christ, and He met their needs.”(CONST-MATT).

Therefore, faith and the greatness of God’s power are the two major themes found in the account of these two stories. The woman with the issue of blood demonstrated her faith and hope in Jesus by letting nothing stop her from touching the tassel of his cloak.

Jesus was pleased with her faith and chose to heal her that day. Her example of faith stands out to not only women who are struggling but to men who need to remember to keep the faith. The duration of time this woman dealt with this issue of blood shows people everywhere that faith is key no matter how long the trial, test or sickness may last.

The power of Jesus is clearly shown through the healing of the woman, even though she was said to be unclean, and the healing of Jarius' dead daughter. Although the people in the house of Jarius laughed at Jesus and disbelieved all he said, Jarius had faith in Jesus for his daughter and his faith was honored. Jesus raised his daughter back to life and she was able to continue on with her life and the things she was not able to do as a sick girl.

Both of the stories recorded in the Gospels are powerful and moving. They show what God can do when his people will just have faith in him. They show that true commitment to him involves faith. This faith allows God to work in his believers lives in ways they never thought imaginable. The woman with the issue of blood probably allowed doubt to flood her mind many times, however, when she stepped out in faith and trusted God, he was able to do more than she could have imagined. This is the way that God works. He does everything for the good of his people and beautiful and wonderful outcomes will be seen.

