

Call to Obedience
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By Pastor Reimar A. C. Schultze

The Spirit of Persistence

What would you call me if I were to sneak up behind you, take something from you and steal away with it, unnoticed, as quickly as I could? In the story of the woman with the issue of blood we have just such a thing:

And a certain woman, which had an issue of blood twelve years, And had suffered many things of many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse, When she had heard of Jesus, came in the press behind, and touched his garment. For she said, If I may touch but his clothes, I shall be whole. And straightway the fountain of her blood was dried up; and she felt in her body that she was healed of that plague. Mark 5:25-29

Fortunately, the woman was "caught" by our Lord before she got away and the wonder is that she was instantly acquitted (for her stealing), blessed and confirmed in her deed. Let us look at the accompanying circumstances that grant us a more magnificent picture of the whole. There are two main points in the story: go to Jesus and have a spirit of persistence.

Go to Jesus

No matter what your problem, be it large or small, be it physical, mental or spiritual: **Go to Jesus**. This is the panacea. This is the one cure for all: whether you have a problem finding a tool, whether it relates to mathematics, whether it has to do with getting an airline ticket, whether it is depression: **Go to Jesus**. Please consider that I not only say this because the Bible says so, but I've lived by this formula for 58 years. It has never failed me.

The power of all great things lies in the simplicity found at their roots. In science it is the atom and the cell. In computers it is the combination of zeros and ones which form all the instructions for the machines. In the realm of man's dilemmas it is all in: **Go to Jesus**. It is there where all things begin. It is there where all things are sustained. It is there where all things will be fulfilled.

You can go through your whole Christian life reading your Bible, becoming a scholar of church history and doctrine. But if you have not learned to **go to Jesus**, you have learned nothing and received nothing. Make going to Jesus your daily plan. You will never be disappointed. Never make Jesus a last resort. Why waste time, energy and resources on all kinds of things before you go to

Jesus?

So here is a woman who had suffered for 12 years. Suffering comes out of Adam's fall. With sin comes suffering. While we are on earth, suffering is every man's lot from the greatest saint such as Job to the most wicked man such as King Herod (Acts 12:23). Jesus Himself came to suffer and to die. Suffering can come as a punishment. Suffering can come to us to perfect us, to bring us more into the likeness of Christ. The apostle Paul first saw his sufferings as an encumbrance. But after God told him that he needed it he looked upon it as a blessing (2 Cor. 12:9). If God can be glorified out of a healing, He will heal. But suffering is inextricably linked with Christianity.

This woman had suffered. Not only did she suffer from her disease but also from the failure of the many physicians who did not cure her, but yet took her money. She suffered bodily and financially. And here is a picture of a common failing of humanity: we are not willing to do as much for the health of our souls as we are for the health of our bodies. Most will sacrifice nothing to be saved, but will sacrifice all to be healed. But a willingness to give all to Jesus is a prerequisite of becoming His disciple (Luke 14:33). The old hymn "All to Jesus I Surrender" is still good theology. So first this woman paid the medical bills out of pocket. Then she started selling things to pay the doctors: first perhaps a necklace she received from her grandmother, then a vase, then a piece of furniture, then a dress and so on. Then, glory to God, when she had nothing left, Jesus came by. How often we see that in the Bible: that when nothing was left, God came on the scene. Man's moment of despair becomes God's moment of great opportunity. So at the moment when despair should have raised its ugly head, the spirit of persistence, which had been in this woman all along, now began to bear its finest fruit. And all of this now links **Go to Jesus** with:

The Spirit of Persistence

So this woman is a picture of persistence par excellence: every time a doctor failed, she still had faith for the next one to heal her, and the next, and the next, for 12 years. And when she heard of Jesus she came to Him with the same spirit of persistence, with the same undaunted faith. She came to Him saying, *If I may touch but his clothes, I shall be whole.*

What was the power of her persistence? Was it 50 watts, 100 watts, or thousand watts or more? How bright was the light of persistence burning within her soul? How would you like to have this precious one in your church prayer meeting or as a mother?

I weep when I think of all the millions of Christians who have grown weary and quit on the way to the celestial city only to be buried in the ditches of despair before they reach the city. They are like the five virgins, who where on their way to Jesus' wedding feast but never arrived at the Master's table (Mat.

25). Parents, teach your children persistence and they will never be far from help. You can have all the money in the world, you can be a picture of perfect health, but if you don't have persistence you are poor. You may not look poor now. But you are poor because you lack what it takes to make it through when the rains descend and the floods come and the winds blow upon your house. Jesus said, *he that endureth to the end shall be saved* (Mat. 10:22). But when you have neither house nor health, but only persistence, you shall endure. You are rich. When your children start piano lessons, or a science project, don't let them quit. Their eternal destiny may depend on whether you let them quit, or make them persist till they succeed with the project. Don't just feed and clothe your children; prepare them for eternity!

So the woman had nothing of earth. She had no credentials to get to Jesus. She did not know any of the disciples to introduce her to Him. As a woman she was a second-class citizen, not allowed make a spectacle of herself. Then there were the throngs of people: thousands surrounding Jesus, dozens pummeling Him. But she had persistence. Friend when you have this type of persistence, this undaunted faith, you don't need special connections, you don't need money, you don't need man's help. You don't need a red carpet rolled out for you: you are unstoppable. You will do things that are totally out of the common ways of men. Gently yet firmly, she pressed and made her way through one layer of humanity after another to come to Jesus. And she succeeded because her Heavenly Father saw her credentials and He helped her get through. With this combination of what was in God and what was in her, all hell could not stop her. It is because of this, although others had touched Jesus during this time, she was the only one who was transformed.

Millions of people go to church every Sunday, yet they never change, they never receive living water from our Lord. They are thronging Jesus, but without drawing virtue from Him. Many of them will say on Judgment Day: *we have eaten and drunk in your presence* only to be rejected as workers of iniquity (Luke 13:26). Friends, this woman touched Jesus purposefully with faith that said, "I shall be whole". Don't go to church every Sunday just to experience Jesus' presence or to hear a sermon. Go there with purposeful faith to touch Jesus, and you will get the blessing you need. As this woman touched Jesus she was not just feeling a little better, she was made whole

Then, out of a spirit of humility so as not to create a disturbance, she attempted to steal away quietly. But friend, no way, no way! Jesus will not let it happen - when you get saved or helped in any way, He knows of it and He wants you to testify immediately in public of what Jesus has done for you. So the woman *fearing and trembling* fell down before Jesus and told Him in the presence of all what happened. And then Jesus put the amen on it all with this sweet confirmation saying, *Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace, and be whole of thy plague.*

Go to Jesus. Go with persistent faith, go immediately when you have a need and something good is going to happen to you. Go to Jesus. Sisters, perhaps you want to post these words on your refrigerator door. Brothers, you may want to post them on the walls of your workshop or in your office.

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