



Looking Inwards (15 mins)

Caring For Each Other

*Reflecting on your life at the moment, is there anything you would like to share with other members of your home group which you feel is appropriate (this is an **opportunity to share**, not something you have to do, however, 'it's the sharing that enables the caring!') for:*

Thanksgiving?

Prayer?

Encouragement?

Support in any way?



Looking Outwards (15 mins)

Concern For Others

*Is there anything concerning someone in your: family; circle of friends; neighbours; or church, which you would like to share (please be careful not to pass on anything that is **confidential** or which you think the person/people concerned would not wish to be shared) for:*

Thanksgiving?

Prayer?

Encouragement?

Support in any way?



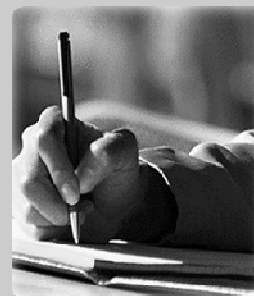
HG37: The Miracles of Jesus (2/6)

The Hem Of His Garment

Mark 5:25-34

Home Group Study Notes

19th September 2010 - Pauline Woolnough



PLEASE COMPLETE AS MUCH AS YOU CAN
ON THIS WORKSHEET IN PREPARATION
BEFORE THE MEETING!

Don't forget to take your Bible to Home Group with you, along with any previous notes and other resources that might be helpful.



Welcome/Ice Breaker (10 mins)

Share any personal examples of God's healing in your own life or in the lives of those you have prayed for.



Looking Upwards (10 mins)

Worship

In your time of worship, you may want to sing Songs of Praise, or listen to a Worship CD, as well as using Meditations; Bible Readings; Prayers; etc.





Looking Upwards (40 mins)

Bible Study

Read through the text for this study, Mark 5:25-34, and any references given below, alongside those in the sermon notes, then answer the following questions - you may find it helpful to read through the sermon notes as you do so. Discuss your answers with your Home Group.

1: If it is not too painful, discuss the times when your prayers for healing have seemingly gone unanswered. How has this made you feel? Has it deterred you from praying again?

2: Do you find it easy to ask for prayer for yourself? If not, what is it that makes it difficult?

3: The woman in the story let go of any thought of her personal safety and any thought of disappointment that she would not be healed. Is there anything that you need to let go of that could hinder the healing process?

- **Get rid of any unconfessed sin:** and put yourself right with God.
- **Forgive anyone who has wronged you:** get rid of grudges because holding on to unforgiveness doesn't hurt the person you won't forgive it simply hurts ourselves, unforgiveness can make us unwell.

Let go of Your Doubts

Whatever the woman's doubts were, she let go of them, and she acted on her faith. Many people don't doubt God's ability to heal but they do doubt his willingness to heal someone as "worthless" as themselves. I know lots of people who will pray for someone else but not for themselves, what nonsense!

- **Let go of things that dishonour God:** attachments to material things, your pride, and disobedience;
- **Let go of your ego:** learn to be a servant rather than need to be in a position of importance;
- **Reach out to God and trust Him:** and this takes practice

And Finally

Two years ago at work we went to an outdoor activity centre for a day's teambuilding. One of the activities we had to do was sit in a harness and attach ourselves to a rope that spanned a small river and then let go and step out into thin air and slide to the other side sitting on a very small piece of wood. When you got to the middle it stopped and you were suspended in mid air for a time as your team mates hauled you over the rest of the way. Before you got into the harness you were given instructions on safety advice and so on, it seemed easy -nothing to it!! There seemed nothing to worry about, that is until you got out into the middle of the rope, suddenly it was not quite so easy to trust that the rope would hold you or that your team mates would pull you over safely. The instructors did it all the time and because they did they genuinely had no fear they knew the ropes would hold.

It's the same with our doubts and faith, if we exercise faith, use it all the time, bring all our needs and those of others before God regularly, risk disappointment and remain forever hopeful our doubts will genuinely grow less and disappear. If we simply talk about the God who heals and put up with the things that hurt us, if we never risk letting go and ask God for help with day to day things then when we do need a miracle we will find it harder to trust and believe in Him because the doubts and fears will suffocate what little faith we have.

Discover by your own experience that God cares what happens to you in this life. You only have to look at Jesus, the face of God and see how he reacted to people's sufferings, see how he loved and affirmed this woman, how he restored her to health and accepted her into God's family and how he was moved by all those he reached out to with healing. Jesus knows all too well about suffering and death, about being afraid, alone and rejected. He hated suffering he loved the outcast, the sick, the underdog, the poor, the victim, the persecuted and the gospels provide us with a glimpse of God's heart and his views on all these matters. He isn't unmoved by our suffering but he looks for us to reach out to Him, to trust him and for his church to provide a place for all the unloved to call home.

The very essence of faith is about trust, its about putting our trust in the person of Jesus. Its about trusting in God, our Heavenly Father and trusting that His glorious Spirit has moved in and lives in each of us. Trusting in Jesus calls for intimacy and fellowship with Him, it leads to a deepening of our relationship, and its risky because it calls for us to make ourselves vulnerable and risk being disappointed. Trusting people always makes us vulnerable, they often disappoint us and we are no less vulnerable when we trust God.

We All need more Exercise

Simply having faith allows us to have it and use it as and when we need it. To take it out its box and exercise only when we need to, and have you noticed how seldom we actually do that? We often wait till we need a miracle before we give our faith a workout. We wait until we or someone we love is seriously ill before we get our faith out its box and pray in faith. At the weekend away I spoke to at least five people who had need of healing and I encouraged them to go forward for prayer ministry for healing but only one told me they did. I know many people that simply will not go forward for prayer, they wont ask a friend to pray for them and I am as much guilty as anyone else. Faith needs to be exercised, trust needs to be learned. A lot of the times we put up with things or take a pill, and save turning to God in faith only when the really big things happen.

Trusting God leads us to involve Him in all aspects of our lives, bringing our concerns and needs to him because we want his involvement and guidance and this leads to closer relationship. Trusting Him means that we hand over more of our lives to him and at times makes us face disappointment as we discover that what we think is best for us isn't always what God has in mind. Trusting Him means that we invariably learn patience because we often have to persevere in prayer, sometimes becoming desperate in the wait for answers, but during these times dialogue between us and God develops. This woman waited 12 years, how many times must she have asked God for help, for healing?

There is also something about the faith that is desperate, that has no where else to go that reaches out and trusts God despite how a situation looks and despite what people say. At Ashburnham, David told us that he got to a point in his own ministry when he was tired of not being able to live by the things he was teaching and desperate for God to do something to change the situation in his church and his own life. It was only when he admitted his weakness before God and the congregation that the Holy Spirit responded to David's desperation and brokenness and transformed his ministry and the church grew. However, don't wait too long before you acknowledge your need of God and trust Him for a miracle because if you do when you do need one, as we all will at some time, you may be overwhelmed by feelings of guilt when you examine your relationship with God and tell yourself that you don't deserve one, you haven't kept in touch, you haven't had your quiet times, God wont love you enough and all the usual doubts crowd in.

So would you like me to tell you what you have to do to secure your healing?

Unfortunately I can't. There are no magic formulas, but there are certain things we can do. The woman in the story had suffered for twelve years after which such a time anyone would have forgiven her for giving up and for not setting herself up for yet another disappointment, but she persisted, she had within her the capacity for faith that would risk not only her physical safety but also risk more spiritual disappointment, so -

- **Persist in Prayer.** Even when God is silent, when he delays, even when things get worse, if your situation doesn't change, pray some more, when things become humanly hopeless, persevere and remember that even when he told many of the great characters in scripture that he was going to do something he often still made them wait years before he carried out his promise.

4: Jesus felt something leave his body, perhaps strength or power, simply through the touch of his clothes, it was costly for Jesus to heal. How costly is your relationship with God? How costly e.g. in time, effort, money, is it for you to be a follower of Christ?

5: Jesus often wanted to keep his miracles quiet, he knew that the excitement they generated did not always result in life changing faith. *"Although faith may produce miracles, miracles do not necessarily produce faith."* P Yancey. How has your faith been affected by the recent healings in our congregation?

6: We *all* have need of healing, and not all healing is physical. Some of us need inner healing and relationships healed, and as the notes suggest we need to trust God and exercise that trust by bringing our needs to him. We also need to trust one another with our concerns. If you are able, take time now to share, either with one another or in a quiet time of prayer, something that you would like God to heal.



Is there anything you most want to put into practice as a result of this study?



HG37: The Miracles of Jesus (2/6) *The Hem Of His Garment*

Mark 5:25-34

Home Group Sermon Notes

19th September 2010 - Pauline Woolnough

Introduction

Somewhere in Capernaum, another day in the life of Jesus and another crowd gathers round Him, he is on his way to see Jairus' daughter who is very sick but something happens on the way. A woman sees her chance and secures her place in history, we don't know her name but who has not heard of the woman who reached out and touched the hem of Jesus garment.

The Woman

This woman had been bleeding for twelve years and we can only imagine what effect that had on her physically and spiritually, life was effectively draining out of her. She had tried everything humanly possible to get better, she had been to every doctor, tried every medicine and superstitious remedy but all had failed and she was now not only sick, she was also penniless from paying for various treatments. This wasn't just any sickness either because according to tradition this flow of blood meant that under the law she was regarded as being unclean. If she had been a leper she could not have been anymore unclean. In more recent years there are some who may have the same attitude to people suffering with AIDS.

The bleeding meant she couldn't attend the most important activities of the Jewish people. She wasn't allowed to go into the temple courts, nor could she take part in any of the annual feasts. According to the law in Leviticus 15 it meant that if anyone was to touch something she had sat upon, they too would become unclean. Wherever she had gone over the time of her illness she would have been shunned and avoided so for her to be among people, especially in a crowded situation, meant that she was taking a huge risk. She was also putting Jesus at risk of becoming unclean, but if she considered that she didn't let it worry her because she appeared to be absolutely convinced that Jesus would be able to heal her. Although she wanted to reach him, at the same time she didn't want to draw attention to herself, after all she was used to going unnoticed and being in the background, it was a way of life for her. She believed so much in Jesus' power and presence that she knew it would be enough for her just to touch his clothing in order to receive her healing. She didn't want his attention, she certainly didn't want the crowds attention, but like most people in the crowd she wanted something from Jesus, she wanted him to heal her.

We all want something from Jesus

When we were in Uganda we went out to several villages, we loaded up an old pickup truck with clothes sugar rice and soap to give out to the people. We had hoped to get the opportunity to talk with the villagers maybe pray with them but once they knew that we had food and clothing to give out any thought of talking quickly disappeared. At first it was fairly orderly and people were really grateful for what they were given then there was a bit of pushing and shoving, sometimes snatching, and the further into the village you went you realised you were seeing the same faces and the same outstretched hands looking for more because they had ran on ahead of us to meet us

next time we stopped. They wanted what we could give them and for them it wasn't the time for talk and I know, without any doubt that if I was in their situation I would have been the same, taking what I could, as much as I could for myself and my family. Jesus would have experienced a lot of that, people wanting what he could give them, crowds gathering, "what can I get from him, what has he got to offer me." Whether it was food, healing or hope that the Messiah had come, everyone wanted something from Jesus and at times we will be the same, how often do our prayers start with, "Father please," "Jesus please," "Lord I need" ...we all want something from Jesus.

Without a Shadow of a Doubt

The woman somehow manages amongst the crowd to edge forward and with the slightest brush of the material against her hand, she immediately feels something change inside her, the bleeding stops! Time for her to leave quietly become integrated once more into society, but Jesus knew the moment she had touched his clothing that something, some energy or strength had gone out of him and someone had benefited from his touch and so he looks around and the woman reluctantly owns up. She had hoped he wouldn't notice, nobody else ever noticed her, but Jesus did notice and he cared too much for her to just let her slip away. Although the woman was healed He wanted her to have something much more than just physical healing, he wanted her to know Him. He wanted her to go away from the place knowing that it wasn't his cloak that healed her, there was nothing magical about the cloak, it was he himself who had healed her. He wanted faith in Him to develop and grow not the superstition that may have led her to believe that his clothes had magical powers. He wanted her to know that there was much more to Him than healing.

Jesus wanted a relationship with the woman, but to learn all of this she had to come forward. After years of being in the shadows she was forced to step out into the light and explain herself to Jesus and the crowd, to face the fear and embarrassment of owning up to such a sickness. She told him her story and His says to her "Daughter your faith has made you well which literally means she has been 'saved,' he tells her to go in peace and be healed of her sickness."

In this miracle Jesus overturns the accepted wisdom of the day and by not recoiling from the woman's touch Jesus moved the emphasis from God's holiness to the mercy of God. Jesus was saying that there are no unclean in God's Kingdom, there are no outcasts or undesirables, no one is turned away and that God's mercy and healing is available to all. Through this healing he proves that God even loves the societies nobodies, they are accepted by Him, everyone matters to God. The woman was no doubt older than Jesus but he called her daughter, letting her know that she had a heavenly Father who loved and accepted her. If she had crept away and not owned up she would never have heard Jesus publicly affirm her for her faith because although it was misguided, it was still real faith. Through it Jesus gave her back her freedom to once more enter fully into her society when he declared her healed of her sickness before everyone.

What was so Special about Her?

Is there any of us that can honestly say that they are 100% perfectly fit with no need for any healing. I suffer from headaches and sinus problems, I know of people with hearing difficulties, hernias, back, problems, allergies, the ageing process alone brings with it all manner of nasties, aches pains arthritis and so on, and we have the benefit of modern medicines and healthcare, think what sufferings people must have had in Jesus time, so why was this woman fortunate enough to be healed? Hundreds must have touched Jesus garments that day all with different needs and illnesses, what was so special about this woman? Why was this woman healed when there must have been many more around her in need of a healing touch? Jesus said that her faith had saved her. Faith? I have faith at times, but my prayers often go unanswered. I believe that Jesus heals today as he did in the time of this woman's healing but people I pray for sometimes get worse!! But faith and belief are not quite the same, faith is not just about me believing that Jesus still heals.