

Sermon – Experience Jesus’ Care and Healing
Sunday June 6, 2021

As disciples of Jesus, you and I are called to bring healing to a hurting world. But what if the person who needs healing is you? What if the person who’s hurting is you?

The book, *The Road Less Travelled* begins with these three words. LIFE IS DIFFICULT. How many of you would agree? Let’s face it, life is just hard. We all have struggles, stresses and challenges. And that’s during “normal” times.

But this year has been anything but “normal”! We’ve had racial injustice, political division, economic fallout. Not to mention the fact that we’re in a pandemic!

Life is hard. And the truth is, many of us are struggling.

- Maybe you’re struggling with your health. You have an illness that prevents you from doing what you used to do.
- Maybe you’re struggling in your relationships. You have a conflict with a coworker, your friend is withdrawing from you, your spouse is leaving you. You feel betrayed.
- Maybe you’re struggling with your emotions. You’re angry and bitter. You feel intense loss and sadness.
- Maybe you’re struggling with mental health. You’re anxious and depressed. You have negative thoughts and addictions. You find it hard to cope and just feel “blah.”

Last month, the New York Times published an article about languishing. How many of you saw that article?

Languishing describes what many of us have been feeling. Languishing is when there’s nothing to look forward to because everyday seems the same. Do you know what I’m talking about? It feels like life is going nowhere.

How many of you are struggling, hurting or languishing? If you can identify with that, click the button that says, “I could be better.”

[Response moment: I could be better!]

I know I have so much to be thankful for, but if I’m honest, I’ve also struggled with pain and loss. Many of you feel that as well in your own ways.

As a disciple of Jesus, what do you do when the person who needs healing is you?

Today, we’re wrapping up our series called *Following Jesus: Find Your Next Step*. This series has been about discipleship. Discipleship is the life-long process of living daily with Jesus and being transformed into his character.

At Cornerstone, we say that discipleship is: BEING with Jesus, to LEARN from Jesus how to BECOME like Jesus.

As a church, this is our number one job – to make disciples. How do we do that?

We use a 5-part framework that we call the Discipleship Pathway. We've been unpacking each area or "E" from our framework.

[Production Note: Show Discipleship Pathway image]

As disciples,

- We ESTABLISH our Identity in Jesus.
- We EMBODY the Jesus Way of Life.
- We EXPLORE Jesus' Call to Life Mission.
- We EXTEND Jesus' Love in Life Mission.

Following this message, Pastor Steve will introduce our Online Discipleship Assessment tool so make sure you stick around for that.

But first, we're going to conclude our series by looking at the final E in our Discipleship Pathway. Experience Jesus' Care and Healing.

How many of you feel like you could use a touch from Jesus right now? If that's you, click the button in the chat.

[Response Moment: I need a touch from Jesus]

There are times when we just need a special touch from Jesus so that we can move forward in our discipleship and experience his abundant life.

What I want to do today is look at how we can experience Jesus' care and healing. We're going to look at a story about a woman who was in tremendous pain. She tried everything but nothing worked. Her story's found in Mark chapter 5 verse 25.

[And a woman was there who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years. \(Mark 5:25\)](#)

So what do we know about this woman? She's been bleeding for twelve years. Some Bible translations call her, the woman with "the issue of blood". How would you like to be known as the woman with the issue of blood?

This woman has a problem with her reproductive system. She's been hemorrhaging and bleeding. Her chronic condition causes tremendous pain.

Some of you know what it's like to be in pain.

But she's not just in physical pain, she's also experiencing relational pain.

Why? Because according to Levitical law, her condition makes her ritually unclean. People believed that her impurity could transmit to others. In other words, anyone who comes in contact with her would become unclean themselves.

As a result, her community ostracizes her. They treat her the same way they treat lepers. She's not allowed social interactions with others. This means that she can't hang out with her friends, go to church, or hug and touch her family.

Does that sound familiar?

Do you remember when we hit the 12-month mark of the pandemic? How early on you thought the pandemic would last just a few weeks? But then those weeks turned into a year? Do you remember how isolated and tired you felt?

Between me and my wife, I'm definitely the more introverted one. Not because I'm super-introverted, but because she's super-extroverted. But that's another story... for my counsellor. Anyway, even as an introvert, I miss people! I miss friends and family, I miss my small group, I miss worshipping with all of you.

How many of you miss being with people? If you do, click the button in the chat.

[Response Moment: I miss people!]

Now think about this. This woman has been in lockdown. But it hasn't been for 12 months, it's been for 12 years!

So she's tired! She's tired of the loneliness. She's tired of the pain. But do you know what else she's tired of? The doctors.

Verse 26 says: *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. (Mark 5:26)*

This woman has tried every cure.

According to William Barclay's commentary, the Talmud (or the main source of Jewish religious law), gives at least eleven possible cures for her condition.

One of the "cures" involves carrying the ashes of an ostrich egg around in a linen cloth. Another involves drinking wine filled with rubber, alum and garden crocuses. Imagine how that would taste. And you thought Buckley's was bad!

This woman is desperate. She's tried miracles cures, self-help books, Oprah.

But nothing works.

Now you may or may not have a chronic condition. But all of us have at some point dealt with pain. Maybe you're experiencing it now.

- Trauma from your past
- Wounds from a family member
- Physical or emotional abuse
- Relational conflict
- Divorce
- Addiction
- Anxiety and depression
- Anger and resentment
- Feelings of failure and languishing

Where do you go to get better? Where do you look for a cure?

At Cornerstone, we run a powerful 28-week program called Freedom Session. I'll talk about this later in the message, but early in this program, participants identify their "drug of choice."

What's a "drug of choice"? It's whatever you turn to when your life gets hard and you want to escape the pain.

It could be your work or performance, it could be food or people pleasing, it could be alcohol or drugs, it could be video games or Netflix.

Your "drug of choice" is whatever you turn to to take away your pain. But as Dr. Phil says, How is that working for you? Is it making your life better or worse? Is it improving your relationships? Is it making you more loving?

This woman has lost everything. She's lost her health, her relationships, her money.

What do you do when you've tried everything but nothing works?

Verse 27: [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)

This woman has heard about Jesus. She's heard about his miracles and she's been wondering, If Jesus can heal others, can he heal me too? Can he take *my* pain away? Can he make *me* whole again?

But there's only one problem. According to Jewish law, she's not supposed to go out and be near people. So what does she do?

She quietly sneaks up behind Jesus and touches him by the hem of his cloak. And then what happens?

[Immediately her bleeding stopped and she felt in her body that she was freed from her suffering.](#) (Mark 5:29)

12 years of pain suddenly gone. She can't believe it! She wants to explode with joy! She wants to shout at the top of her lungs!

It was Jesus that healed her. But her actions and faith put her in that position to be healed.

How can you put yourself in a position to be healed? I want to share three thoughts from this story. Because there are things this woman does that we can learn from. [3 Lessons For Healing]

First, **She admits that she's powerless.** This might be the hardest thing you ever do. Why? Because our culture values strength and independence not vulnerability and weakness. Even if you are weak, you're not supposed to admit it. You're supposed to fake it til you make it.

But admitting her weakness is what saved her. Why? Because it was the truth. It was simply accepting reality. Nothing else could help her. No cure, no human being, nothing she could do. And she knows it - because she's tried it all!

So she's come to the end of herself. And it turns out, that's actually a good thing. Because it's been said that when you come to the end of yourself, you come to the beginning of God.

Pastor Tim Keller says, You have to be desperate. You don't find Jesus not because you have too much faith but because you have too much pride. Faith isn't just something you conjure up. Faith is admitting you're helpless and weak.

Have you noticed that every 12-step program begins with this? What's the first step in Alcoholics Anonymous? It's to admit that you're powerless.

Only when you recognize that nothing in the world can save you – not money, not people's approval, not what you do. Only when you admit that will you begin to heal.

The second thing this woman does is **She takes action**.

How many of you have a tendency to feel sorry for yourself when bad things happen to you? I know I can do that. I'll mope and throw a pity party for myself.

This woman has every reason to do that. But she doesn't. Why? Because she knows it won't help.

So what does she do? She doesn't feel sorry for herself, instead, she takes action. She goes to Jesus. She doesn't care what other people will think. She doesn't care what other people will say. She only cares about getting better.

I wonder, What do you need to do to start getting better?

- Maybe it's praying for your situation.
- Maybe it's talking with a Christian friend.
- Maybe it's seeing a doctor and getting medication.
- Maybe it's connecting with a Christian counsellor.
- Maybe it's signing up for a program.

As I mentioned earlier, Cornerstone offers a powerful 28-week program called Freedom Session.

[Production Note: Show Freedom Session image]

Freedom Session is a healing-discipleship journey. It helps you uncover the roots of your pain so that you can invite Jesus to heal those areas of your heart.

We just finished our Freedom Session program this year. In fact last week, we had our online graduation. Participants shared about the issues that brought them to Freedom Session. They shared about relational breakdowns, anger, divorce, abuse, wounds from a parent.

And I gotta tell you, I was moved. It was a holy moment.

One after another, people shared about the work God had done in their lives. Helping them deal with their brokenness and pain. Enabling them to let go and forgive. Reminding them that they aren't defined by their pain but by God's love.

How many of you know that God wants to heal you? His vision is for you to be restored and made new.

If you're looking for God to do a deep work of healing in your life, check out Freedom Session. Our program will start up again in the Fall and we only run it once a year so please check that out.

[Show link: www.cornerstonechurch.ca/freedomsession]

Back to our story. We were saying that the woman first, admits that she's powerless. Second, she takes action. And third, **she has faith in Jesus.**

How many of you think you need huge faith for a miracle? Probably a lot of you. But is that true?

What did Jesus say about this? He said, ... if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you." (Matthew 17:20)

So the question isn't, How big is your faith? The question is, Who is your faith in?

This woman has faith in Jesus even though her faith is imperfect. After all, she thinks that Jesus has some kind of magic cloak. And that by touching it she'll be healed. She's definitely superstitious.

But do you know what God cares about more than us having perfect faith? The fact that we come to Him with the faith that we do have. This woman comes to Jesus, just as she is, with her imperfect faith.

So you don't need mountain-sized faith, just mustard seed faith. Because faith isn't conjuring up more belief. Faith is coming to Jesus because you know only he can give you what you need.

So what happens when she touches him? She's instantly healed. But remember, she's not supposed to be here. So what does she do? She plans to sneak away before anyone notices.

But it's too late.

At once Jesus realized that power had gone out from him. He turned around in the crowd and asked, "Who touched my clothes?" "You see the people crowding against you," his disciples answered, "and yet you can ask, 'Who touched me?'"

But Jesus kept looking around to see who had done it. (Mark 5:30-32)

She's busted! Jesus knows someone has touched him. She's been discovered, so what will she do?

Then the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came and fell at his feet and, trembling with fear, told him the whole truth. (Mark 5:33)

How many of you remember what happened between Pope Francis and the woman who was eager to greet him? Last New Year's Eve, Pope Francis was greeting people at the Vatican. After reaching out to greet a child, a woman unexpectedly grabs him by his hand and yanks him towards her.

[Production Note: Show picture of Pope Francis]

In that moment, Pope Francis, who's known all around the world for his kindness and gentleness, turns from Bruce Banner into the Incredible Hulk. He loses it and slaps her hand. You can see the video on YouTube.

In his defense, this woman violated rules of common decency.

But what that woman did to the Pope is nothing compared to what this woman does to Jesus. Because by grabbing him, not only does she violate rules of common decency, she violates ritual purity laws. She has transmitted her uncleanness to a rabbi.

So how would Jesus respond? Would he, like Pope Francis go all Hulk on her and slap her hand? Would he rebuke her and humiliate her in public?

Jesus doesn't do any of that. Instead,

[He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your suffering." \(Mark 5:34\)](#)

Jesus doesn't get angry at her. Jesus doesn't scold her. Instead, he speaks tenderly to her and calls her "daughter".

Jesus has already healed her physical suffering. But what I love about this moment is how he recognizes the other ways she's suffered. For 12 years, this woman has longed for love, belonging and significance. For 12 years, she's experienced only rejection, pain and loneliness. It's in these areas of her heart that Jesus now speaks into.

No where else in the gospels, does Jesus use the term "daughter." But he does it here. To the "unclean" woman with "the issue of blood."

In Jewish culture, the term daughter was an expression of great affection and endearment. Jesus knows this and he adds another layer of meaning.

In calling her "daughter", Jesus is saying to her, You are a daughter of God. Through me, you've been adopted by grace. You are known by your Heavenly Father. He sees your pain and your suffering. Even though everyone has abandoned you, I will never leave you. Because you are my beloved child.

[Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your suffering.](#)

I wonder how many of you are longing for love, belonging and significance. I wonder how many of you have experienced betrayal, trauma and loneliness.

You've tried your "drugs of choice" but they made things worse.

Maybe what you need to do is come to Jesus so that you can reach out and touch him.

According to the Old Testament, anyone who was "unclean" was put outside the camp away from the presence of God. Why? Because if an "unclean" person comes into the presence of a Holy God, what would happen? They would die.

That's why the Israelites were forbidden from touching the sacred mountain... because they would die. That's why priests couldn't enter the sanctuary without performing all the ritual ceremonies ... because they would die.

So when the "unclean" woman touches Jesus, who is God himself, why doesn't she die? Here's why. Because there was a death, but it wasn't hers. Jesus, the Son of God came into the world because our "uncleanness" kept us from God's presence.

So what did he do? He went to the cross. And on that cross, the One who had lived a sinless life took on your uncleanness and mine. But Jesus didn't just take on our symptoms, he took on our disease – our self-destructive habit of putting ourselves above others. The Bible calls this sin. And it's a cancer that corrodes our souls and our relationships. Because of our sin, we deserve to die, but the good news is that Jesus took our place.

The prophet Isaiah says:

... he took up our pain and bore our suffering... he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed. (Isaiah 53:4-5)

Now, because of the cross, anyone who touches Jesus, won't die but will have life. They won't be condemned, they'll be healed.

Maybe like the woman, your healing will be immediate. But probably in most cases, the healing will be gradual and over time.

But when you come to Jesus and touch him, healing does come. He'll comfort you, he'll restore you, he'll remind you of who you are. He'll tell you: You are a beloved daughter of God. You are a beloved son of God. And your pain doesn't define you. Your suffering doesn't define you. You belong to me and the most important thing about you is that I love you.

Jesus invites you now to come to him. At this time, we're going to do just that as we celebrate Communion. Jesus gives us this meal to remind us of his healing presence. Through this meal, he invites you to draw close to him so that you can touch him. So that you can experience his care and healing.

On the night he was betrayed, Jesus took the bread. After giving thanks, he broke it and said, This is my body broken for you. Take, eat and remember me.

In the same way after supper, he took the cup and said This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Drink it and remember me.

And now as you eat the bread and drink the cup, may the body of Christ and the blood of Christ strengthen you, cleanse you, and heal you. May God forgive you, Christ renew you, and the Holy Spirit fill you and enable you to grow in love.

Amen