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Title: Questions Jesus Asked: Who Touched My Clothes

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Text: [Mark 5:24-34](#)

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Two of the most powerful promises of Scripture are God's "I Know You" and God's "I Love You"

Time and time again, we hear these two affirming statements shared with all people from all walks of life and in the various situations that life throws at us.

The promise that God knows every person and that God loves each person. We don't say it enough. We don't hear it enough. Even from the church itself, people have heard and experienced messages that are contrary to this great promise of Scripture.

A few years ago, a person in his late 20s came to see me in my office. He had visited the church several times and he asked if he could come and ask a few questions. "Of course," I said. He said that it had been a long time since he went to church, but he had recently decided to look for a church community. He shared that he had grown up in church, been active in the church youth group, sang in the youth choir, had even thought about a call to ministry. He had grown up in a different tradition and I told him his story was not unheard of, active in church as a youth, and then stepping away. I asked him what led him to step away, and he said he came to feel unworthy of God's love, unworthy of being known by God. I asked him, "why did you feel that way." His response was stark, "my church told me I was unworthy of God's love and I was unworthy of being known by God." The church universal had failed that person.

We are all worthy of being known and being loved by God. It's one of the natures of God that Jesus makes clear. During this season of Lent, we are in a worship series called Questions Jesus Asked where we are looking at just a few of the 370 questions Jesus asks in the Gospels. We are looking at the meaning of these questions, how people responded, and what this means for our faith and living today. Today's question is a simple, yet powerful question, like many of Jesus' questions "*Immediately aware that power had*

gone forth from him, Jesus turned about in the crowd and said, 'Who touched my clothes?'" Mark 5:30

This scene from Mark is like many scenes from Mark is quick, the disciples, Jesus' inner circle, don't understand what is happening, and those who are considered to be outsiders or one living on the margins understood who Jesus is and what he has come to do, which is often in the Gospel of Mark, a story of healing.

We have a woman who has been ill, who has been suffering for a long time. Because she has suffered physically people have shunned her, ignored her, pushed her to the margins of society. She has spent all of the money she has and then some trying to find healing, to find a cure to what ails her, but to no avail.

All the safety nets in society have failed her

The healthcare system of the day has failed her

Even the religious institutions of the day have failed her

I would have to think that she feels like she is unworthy, unworthy of being known and loved by God.

She comes up with what we might recognize as a Hail Mary. If you are a football fan, you know that term as a play or a long pass that is only attempted in the most desperate of situations.

"She had heard about Jesus and came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak, for she said, "If I but touch his clothes, I will be made well." Immediately her hemorrhage stopped, and she felt in her body that she was healed of her disease. Immediately aware that power had gone forth from him, Jesus turned about in the crowd and said, "Who touched my clothes?" Mark 5:27-30

Everything else had failed her, however, she had heard about Jesus. Most people, every system, everything had told her you are not worthy of being healed, of being known and loved by God.

With Jesus, it's a different story. She is worthy... she is known... she is loved. Bishop Michael Curry is the first African American to preside over the Episcopal church, but you most likely had not heard his name until the summer of 2018 when he preached the sermon at the royal wedding of Prince Harry and Meghan Markle. He preached a sermon on the power of love. Part of what he shared in that sermon was about the power of love

"There's power in love. There's power in love to help and heal when nothing else can. There's power in love to lift up and liberate when nothing else will."--Most Rev. Michael Curry

The truth is that there are times in our lives when we are pressed to our limits and beyond. There are moments and challenges in life that take us to the edge of our ability to cope. In these moments, when we are at our breaking point, it's easy to lose hope. It's easy to forget how God feels about us. It's easy to look around and not see any signs of God. It's easy to believe we are at a point where we are beyond the healing power of God's love.

Mark leaves the healing of this suffering woman ambiguous. If you are into details or formulas, if you always ask, "How exactly did this happen?", this healing will confound you, maybe even disappoint you. The message of this healing wants to be heard, not explained.

So that's what we must do, hear what happens, and then figure out what that tells us about God and what it means for us today.

"He said to her, 'Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace and be healed of your disease.'" Mark 5:34

She is worthy. Jesus calls her daughter, daughter of God. We don't know how, but we do know that she is healed because of God's power to heal, Jesus' compassion, and her faith. It's why he is so interested in how it is that touched his clothes because he knows that she gets it. When everyone else, every system, said differently, she knew that she was worthy. She knew that she was known. She knew that she was loved by God and what the power of God's love can do.

Joyce Wallace is a Yale-educated physician who has her own medical clinic. Her medical clinic is not a building, rather it is an old Ford Econoline van. She drives around Manhattan daily looking for women who have chronically experienced homelessness and those who have been trapped in worlds of the street. She gives them free medical care, a word of encouragement, and a word of liberation. She tells them they don't have to live this way, that there are people who will care for you, accept you, and support you. A few years ago, she was interviewed about her work by the New York Times. The reporter was skeptical of her work, telling Joyce it must be very discouraging, that for all she knew, many of these women would likely die way before they are supposed to. Joyce Wallace said, "well, you could look at it that way." She went on to say that her mother taught her to see the world differently. Her mother, for all of her adult life, was a teacher for children who had suffered brain damage in accidents/children whose lives were altered significantly. Joyce said that her mother would say to her regularly, *"Joyce, you have to learn to look at the image, not the damage,*

you have to learn to look at the image of God in every person, not the damage."

The whom we follow. The one we confess as Lord of our lives. Jesus knew that better than anyone. To look at the image of God in every person. To look in the mirror and see the image of God in ourselves.

Worthy.
Known.
Loved.

Let Us Pray Together.