

Who Do You Say That I Am?

Seeing and Delighting in Jesus through an Expository
Journey through the **Gospel of Matthew**

94- Jesus' Authority Over Disease; Disabilities;
Demons; and Death- Part 5

Church April 14, 2024

Matthew 9:18-35

18 While He was saying these things to them, a synagogue official came and bowed down before Him, and said, "My daughter has just died; but come and lay Your hand on her, and she will live."

19 Jesus got up and began to follow him, and so did His disciples.

20 And a woman who had been suffering from a hemorrhage for twelve years, came up behind Him and touched the fringe of His cloak;

21 for she was saying to herself, "If I only touch His garment, I will get well."

22 But Jesus turning and seeing her said, "Daughter, take courage; your faith has made you well." At once the woman was made well.

23 When Jesus came into the official's house, and saw the flute-players and the crowd in noisy disorder,

24 He said, "Leave; for the girl has not died, but is asleep." And they began laughing at Him.

25 But when the crowd had been sent out, He entered and took her by the hand, and the girl got up.

26 This news spread throughout all that land.

27 As Jesus went on from there, two blind men followed Him, crying out, "Have mercy on us, Son of David!"

28 When He entered the house, the blind men came up to Him, and Jesus said to them, "Do you believe that I am able to do this?" They said to Him, "Yes, Lord."

29 Then He touched their eyes, saying, "It shall be done to you according to your faith."

30 And their eyes were opened. And Jesus sternly warned them: "See that no one knows about this!"

31 But they went out and spread the news about Him throughout all that land.

32 As they were going out, a mute, demon-possessed man was brought to Him.

33 After the demon was cast out, the mute man spoke; and the crowds were amazed, and were saying, "Nothing like this has ever been seen in Israel."

34 But the Pharisees were saying, "He casts out the demons by the ruler of the demons."

35 Jesus was going through all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness.

*To the Glory of God the Father; God the Son;
and God the Holy Spirit. Amen.*

Now last time I told you that over in **Luke 8:41**- we find that the Synagogue Official's name, who had the Daughter who died in verse 18, was "Jairus". And the Event of this sick, bleeding Woman here in Matthew- is also found in both John Mark's as well as Dr. Luke's Record. So, in **Luke 8:43-48**- we read this:

43 And a woman who had a hemorrhage for twelve years, and could not be healed by anyone,

44 came up behind Him and touched the fringe of His cloak, and immediately her hemorrhage stopped.

45 And Jesus said, "Who is the one who touched Me?" And while they were all denying it, Peter said, "Master, the people are crowding and pressing in on You."

46 But Jesus said, "Someone did touch Me, for I was aware that power had gone out of Me."

47 When the woman saw that she had not escaped notice, she came trembling and fell down before Him, and declared in the presence of all the people the reason why she had touched Him, and how she had been immediately healed.

48 And He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace."

... which illustrates how the Crowd was pushing in on them and so, they had no idea who had touched Jesus.

And so here in this account- Dr. Luke gives us tremendous insight into Jesus' Ministry. Jesus' Ministry was literally filled with all kinds of Interruptions. He would be walking in one direction to go do something and then somebody would call Him to go in another Direction. And from that we see that Jesus was very accessible to the people. He was available to reach to save and to heal and to prove His Own "Messiah-ship". So, Jesus was "interruptible" and He was literally *inexhaustible* in dealing with people's Needs.

And in His earthly Ministry- Jesus was very used to being interrupted. I mean, He'd be preaching a Sermon and right in the middle of the Sermon- all of a sudden- the roof would come apart and down would come somebody in a bed. Everybody who wanted something- interrupted Jesus. And being "*Interruptible*" or having the Divine Characteristic of being able to be interrupted by a Sea of needy Humanity was a very godly Virtue of Jesus. And when you begin to see this- it is absolutely amazing.

No matter what He was doing- Jesus would turn to help. He's Preaching and Teaching in the 12th Chapter of **Luke** and the good doctor wrote this in verse 13,

Someone in the crowd said to Him, "Teacher, tell my brother to divide the family inheritance with me.

Whoa! Can you imagine some guy standing up in the middle of my Sermon and say, "*Hey, Pastor, tell my brother to give me half of the money I'm owed!*" What? That would be *unthinkable*- but Jesus was interrupted all the time. And as God- Jesus never had a Problem with His "train of thought"- which allowed Him to always be "Interruptible".

Now here in this Section we see a desperate Father- who also happened to be a Ruler of the Jews. And Jesus is moved with Compassion; and He's trying to get through this Crowd to get to this man's house in Capernaum. And all of a sudden- this Woman- who has had a terrible bleeding Problem for twelve long years- which is as long as Jairus' daughter was alive- reaches through the Crowd to touch Jesus. Jairus and his family had had twelve years of wonderful Joy with their little girl while this woman was having twelve years of Suffering.

Now we don't exactly know what this woman's Problem was- but it was enough to take up twelve long years of her Life and literally turn her into an Outcast. Because we have to try to think about what the *physical* Effects of having an "Issue of Blood" for twelve years would have been for a Woman in 1st Century Israel. There would have been a tremendous loss of Blood the entire Time- which would have resulted in a loss of Strength and Stamina. And along with that physical Weakness would have been the real danger of Death. So, there would have been severe physical Effects.

But what may have been even worse than that- was the severe

social Effects. Because back in **Leviticus 15:19**, the Holy Bible says,

When a woman has a discharge, if her discharge in her body is blood, she shall continue in her menstrual impurity for seven days; and whoever touches her shall be unclean until evening.

So, a woman's regular monthly Cycle was used by God as constant Reminder of the Need to be regularly purged and purified. It was a Way to remind the people that they needed Purification. And so, all Women were considered- during that Time- to be “Unclean”- as a sort of Symbol for the *spiritual* Uncleanness of the Heart. But this Woman would never be able to be anything but Unclean because this Blood never stopped for twelve long years!

So, what happened when a Woman was Unclean *ceremonially*? Well, she couldn't go to the Temple; and she couldn't go to the Synagogue, either. But think about this- as Unclean- she also couldn't be with her Husband. And she couldn't touch her Family- couldn't even touch her own Children! The Law of Moses taught that she was considered *ceremonially* “Unclean”- and she would transmit that *ritual* Uncleanness- that *symbolic* Uncleanness- to anybody she touched!

So, *socially*- this poor Woman was an Outcast- even to her own Family! So, even though this Woman had a real, serious physical Problem- it also carried with it a ritual Defilement- that, in many Ways, could have been even *worse* than the *physical* Effects!

And in that Condition- she never could be taught the Word of God. And she couldn't go and worship God; and she couldn't go and learn. She couldn't hear the Word of God read. And in her Fear and in her Distress- this Woman couldn't even have been embraced by her own Husband; or her Father; or her Mother; or her own Children!

The Scrolls were all locked up in the Synagogue and so she was isolated from everything that could offer her any Comfort; Support; or Hope. And then on top of all that- Luke says here that she couldn't be healed by anybody! Nothing worked! She tried *everything* and yet she was never any better.

Now remember, Luke is a trained Physician. And so, he has a Desire to protect his own Profession. So, Luke basically says that her Problem was incurable. But over in **Mark 5:26**- John Mark says that this Woman:

... had endured much at the hands of many physicians, and had spent all that she had and was not helped at all, but rather had grown worse —

...so obviously Mark was *not* in the medical Profession.

And by saying this- the Apostle Peter through John Mark was illustrating that even 2,000 years ago- it was expensive to go to the Doctor. Now in my Research into the background of this- the Talmud says this was a *common* Malady- excessive bleeding, hemorrhaging like this for Women- that it was relatively common. And they had some Cures that were sort of “*legitimate* Cures”- some kind of Astringents or some kind of Toxins were used- it's hard to find exactly what they were. And that would be some “*legitimate* Effort” made by some *legitimate* Practitioner who would serve, for the most part, the Rich- who could afford to pay.

But on the other hand, I read that there were also some medical Quacks back then who took people's Money- promising them Cures that could never work. So, I read about other Efforts to cure Problems like this by carrying the Ashes of an ostrich egg in a linen bag around your neck in the Summer and a cotton bag in the Winter. Another one was to carry barley corn that was put inside donkey dung. So even back then- there were some real Fakers and Pied Pipers and Snake Oil Salesmen going around saying that they could heal people. And this Woman may have been deceived into giving some of these Charlatans all her money.

And there are some other things that were used like crushing alum into a solution of wine and crushing onions into a solution of wine, and other weird Concoctions. So, it didn't matter whether it was suffered at the hands of *reputable* Practitioners, or the *non-reputable* ones. None of it did any good. She couldn't get any Help at all and **Mark 5:26** says that she...

... Spent all she had

So, all her Money was in the pockets of the Practitioners now. And this poor sick Woman had nothing left. All her Money is now gone. And by this Time- she has no Connection with her Family either. She can't connect with anybody in the Society. And she is in this terrible, physical Condition of Debilitation, and along with it goes the social Stigma and the Shame and the Embarrassment associated with it.

But she's heard about the healing Power of this Man named, "Jesus". And she's at the complete other End of the social Spectrum from the Ruler of the Synagogue.

And she is aware of what the acceptable Boundaries are for her, but she's reached the Point where she doesn't care anymore. She was desperate- even as Jairus was desperate. And being desperate- neither one of those people cared anymore what was or what was not Acceptable.

Jairus is going to fall on his face before Jesus and plead and beg for the great Healer with the Power of God to heal his daughter- *regardless* of the Rules or *whatever* other people might think. And this pitiful Woman is going to go in there and she couldn't care less about what's Acceptable in terms of the Tradition or even the Law. She is going to get to Jesus if she has to push her Way through the whole Crowd of people and grab Him.

And this is a Type of the very same Desperation that every single human goes through with true and genuine Salvation. It doesn't matter what your social Background is; or your economic Position; or your Education. Those who are chosen will come to Jesus as broken; diseased; bleeding; dead people with no Hope. And being fully aware of their own Unworthiness- they will push through every Obstacle- and they will not be denied. And they will beg Jesus for a Salvation that they know they do not deserve. Now look again at **Luke 8:43 &44:**

43 And a woman who had a hemorrhage for twelve years, and could not be healed by anyone,

44 came up behind Him and touched the fringe of His cloak, and immediately her hemorrhage stopped.

This frail; weak; sick Woman, who has been in this terrible Condition for 12 long years, came up behind Jesus. And the reason she came up *behind* Him is that she was hoping to avoid being noticed. That's indicated down in verse 47 when the woman saw that she had *not* escaped Notice. She was trying to be as quiet and unnoticed as she could be- she tried to just blend in with the Crowd. And as Jesus walked by and this noisy Sea of Humanity was pushing on Him; and reaching out to touch Him; and calling out to Him. And His disciples were acting like Guards- pushing the Crowd back- and trying to make a Path for

Jesus to walk through- and in the midst of all this Confusion and Noise and physical Shoving and Pushing- there was this Woman. And right there- in the middle of the Crowd- a frail white weak arm stuck out- with trembling fingers reaching out to touch Jesus. She knew she was an Outcast and never thought in a million years that anyone with Jesus' Popularity would have wanted to spend five seconds to help her.

She is just like a Leper. And she just kind of works her Way through the Crowd- coming up behind Jesus just to touch the Border of His Cloak as He passes by.

Now according to the Old Testament Law- in **Numbers 15:37- 41** and **Deuteronomy 22:12**, God had ordained that in the Robe of a Jew there was to be woven a blue Cord to identify him as a Jew. And at the corners of the Robe there were to be Tassels made of that same Cord, hanging down. That was to identify a Jew. And Jesus wore such a Robe with Tassels hanging from it.

Now the Pharisees- who wanted to be viewed as the most devout of all people- made their tassels huge which you would expect. And **Matthew 23:5** says these false hypocritical religious Leaders actually *enlarged* those Tassels to give the false Appearance that they were more holy than anyone else.

And so, this Woman comes up behind Jesus and she grabs the fringe- the *kraspedon* in the Greek. Now the word "touched" here is a middle form of the verb, *hapto* or *haptomi*. And in the middle form- this verb means: *to fasten on to; to cling to; or to clutch with force or desperation*. So, this is not a light tap here- this Woman was literally *clutching* the fringe of Jesus' Cloak with Force and Desperation!

Now I want you to try to see this Picture. This is a desperate and sick Woman- who has been sick for twelve long years. And by this time- she is a total Outcast- not only from Society at large- but also even her own Family. She may at one Time have been quite wealthy- but she has spent her entire Fortune on Doctors and now she is probably on the streets begging for food.

And as an Outcast- she is not welcomed or invited to be around the religious "big shots". And she can't even go into the Temple. And here is Jesus passing by- and she risks *everything*- and goes against all Protocol and social Etiquette to do what she did. And she finally gets there- and this is her last final Hope! So, she reaches out in complete Desperation and she literally grabs His Robe and hangs on to it. And

this is the same exact Greek verb used in **John 20:17** of Mary Magdalene- who after the Resurrection grabs on to Jesus and clings to Him.

Now why did this sick woman do this? Because in **Matthew 9:21b** she kept saying to herself ...

... If I only touch His garment, I will get well.

So, this Woman believed that Jesus was God. And so, she knew His Power and she believed in Him. And so, she didn't need for Him to even speak to her or lay hands on her. She knew that if she could only grasped His Garment- she would get well! And this is in the imperfect tense which means that she *kept on* saying this to herself; just kept repeating it over and over to herself,

“If I can just touch Him; if I can just touch Him”

And she kept repeating this to herself- to give herself Courage to do what was a clear breach of the Law of Moses as well as the social Etiquette of 1st Century Israel. This Woman believed there was so much Power flowing out of Jesus- that if she just touched the Tassels of His Robe- she'd be healed. And you know there's some Truth to that. Jesus was never stingy with His miraculous Healing. It just gushed out of Him- to everyone around Him.

So, she reached out and grabbed hold and she clung to the fringe of His Robe- grasping it with Force and Desperation and clutching it in Faith that, because this Man was God- there was so much Power available- that if she just got that close and hung on- it would flow to her Body. And it did! She was right! She was absolutely right! And it says at the end of verse 44:

... and immediately her hemorrhage stopped.

Bang! Just like that! 12 long years of Torment was instantly removed from her! Now this is not Superstition- this is Faith in the Power of Jesus; and the Belief that as God in human Flesh- Jesus had such immense Power that just flowed out of Him. And this dear sick Woman was like a “broken reed”- she was a “flickering wick”- and Jesus

mercifully fanned the Flame; and restored her Song; and her hemorrhage stopped! And when that happened- Jesus immediately stopped and said,

Who is the one who touched Me?

... but Peter was incredulous that Jesus would ask a Question like that and he replied back to Jesus,

Master, the people are crowding and pressing in on You. (Luke 8:45b)

So, there were literally tens of thousands of people all around Jesus- crying out to Him. And all of them were pushing and shoving- trying to get near Him. And the Apostles were acting like Guards- trying to keep the people away and making a path for Jesus to walk through this literal “Sea” of Humanity. And Jesus suddenly wants to know who touched Him? I mean EVERYBODY was touching Jesus or at least trying to! So, how in the world are the men around Jesus supposed to know who touched Him?

But then Jesus made an interesting Statement in verse 46:

Someone did touch Me, for I was aware that power had gone out of Me.

So, the Reason Jesus was asking who it was that had touched Him was NOT merely to say that someone had *physically* touched Him. No, Jesus was aware that “Power had gone out of Him”. So, what, exactly, did that mean?

Many people have debated for hundreds of years just how much Jesus "knew" during His Time in His earthly Ministry. And this goes to the Reality that nobody has ever been like Jesus. Nobody has ever been truly and fully God and truly and fully Man; at the same Time; in the same Body- without Conflict or Contradiction. Nobody has ever had two Natures- Human and Divine- dwelling in a single fleshly Body. The “*Hypostatic Union*” has never been in anyone else- except Jesus. So, there is a lot about Jesus that we simply don’t understand.

For example, did Jesus- as truly and fully God- *always* have the Omniscience of God (**Mark 2:8**)? Or, as truly and fully Man, was He only aware of what His Senses determined; as well as what God the Holy Spirit inspired Him to know? And where there is a lot of Conjecture and

Guessing about all this- the Reality is that this is part of the Mystery of God.

If Jesus' Knowledge was limited as a Man, then the Question He asked the Disciples is Self-explanatory. However, if He already knew who touched Him, this is consistent with God's use of Questions throughout Scripture.

For example, in **Genesis 3:9**, while Adam and Eve are hiding from God because of their Sin of eating the fruit of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, God called to Adam, "*Where are you?*" Now that Question was *not* meant to gather Information that God didn't already have in fullness. God is Omniscient- so, He knew *exactly* where Adam was and *why* he was hiding. And that means that God's Question was meant to confront Adam about his Sin- by allowing both Adam and Eve to present themselves before God and be held Accountable.

And God repeated this Strategy with Cain when He asked, "**Where is Abel your brother?**" (**Genesis 4:9**). God already knew that Cain had killed his own Brother- so, He was causing Cain to confess his Sin- so he could be held to Account.

So, Jesus may or may not have known that the frail; sick; outcast Woman had touched Him. But if He did know- then the Question falls in line with the Way God asked other Questions when He already knew the Answer. Jesus wanted this Woman to come forward and be discovered. He wanted to bring this Woman to Account- NOT to rebuke her- but so that every person who reads these Gospel Records would understand the amazing Love and Mercy and Grace of Jesus toward a sick Woman- who had nothing to offer Him.

But this is in the Bible to also reveal to us- the absolute Authority that Jesus had- as God in human Flesh- over Disease; Disability; Demons; and even Death itself!

So, the Question accomplished the Goal. Jesus stopped walking; the crowd stopped pushing in on Him; and everybody got real Quiet. And while we don't know if anyone else was healed that Day- we know that Jesus felt the Need to address this Woman- specifically.

Now even though the Bible is unclear about Jesus' Source of Knowledge, the Gospels do seem to indicate that His miraculous healing Power came from God the Holy Spirit. Because in **Luke 4:14**, the good doctor wrote,

Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit,

... and in verse 18, as Dr. Luke quoted from the Prophet Isaiah, he told us that God the Holy Spirit *authorized* Jesus' Ministry. And **Matthew 12:28** seems to indicate that Jesus' Power to expel Demons came from the Holy Spirit as well.

Now it is very possible that what the biblical writers meant by attaching God the Holy Spirit to God the Son in His earthly Ministry- is that Jesus' Words and Works were done "in Accord" with the Will of God the Father; and that Jesus was perfectly led by God the Holy Spirit.

But when we read that Jesus was aware that the Power to heal miraculously had come out of Him- we should NOT think that this means that Jesus' Power was finite or limited. We should understand this as water flowing from a fire hydrant or springing up from the ground. So, while the Power to heal was moving out *from* Jesus to that Woman- it was NOT being reduced *in* Jesus! Now please read verses 47&48 again:

**47 When the woman saw that she had not escaped notice, she came trembling and fell down before Him, and declared in the presence of all the people the reason why she had touched Him, and how she had been immediately healed.
48 And He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace."**

Sir James Simpson (7 June 1811- 6 May 1870) was a very famous Scottish obstetrician and a very important figure in the History of Medicine. But aside from that- he was also a great saint of God. And as he lay dying, a friend wished to comfort him and said to him, "*Well James, soon you will be able to rest on the bosom of Jesus.*" But he replied, "*Well, I don't know that I can quite do that, but I do think I can take hold of His garment.*"

This Woman didn't want to be exposed- because for twelve years- she had lived as an Outcast. As we discovered last time- her "Issue of Blood" made her *untouchable*- even by her own Family. She couldn't go to the Temple in that Condition and couldn't even feel the Warmth of her own children or husband. In all respects, the social Stigma was even greater than the physical Problem that she had suffered for twelve

long years. And so, she was like a Leper- and had lived for 144 Months as a total Outcast.

So, she was used to hiding; and of living in the Shadows. But she had great Faith. And as I told you before- Faith; true Faith; biblical Faith- always is focused on God; on Jesus. Faith is NEVER a stand-alone Commodity. In other words- the Bible does NOT teach that we are to have Faith *about* anything; or *to* anything; or *for* anything. In the Bible- Faith always had God or Jesus as the Object of that Faith. And that means that this Woman had Faith to be saved as well as healed.

But in her Embarrassment and Shame- she just wanted to reach out and touch the fringe of Jesus' garment as He walked by. She never dreamed of being able to actually communicate with the incarnate God. She reasoned to herself that since there was so much Power in Jesus- all she had to do was to touch Him.

Now when it says that she thought she could touch Him, and then Jesus turned around, something happened in there that Matthew didn't elaborate on. **Matthew 9:22b** says,

... At once the woman was made well.

... but when you read **Luke 8:44** it says:

[She] came up behind Him and touched the fringe of His cloak, and immediately her hemorrhage stopped.

And somehow- Jesus knew the Difference between the normal pushing and shoving of the very fickle Mob of desperate people and the Grasping of a soul by Faith. He knew the Difference between somebody who bangs up against Him and is curious; somebody who's a "thrill seeker"; and somebody who hangs on in Desperation and Faith. He knows the heart that desires to connect with Him. He knows the person to pull out of the crowd, and say, "*You're the one.*" So, Jesus said,

Someone did touch Me, for I was aware that power had gone out of Me.

So, He could literally feel the miraculous Power flow out from Him. He felt the Power go!

Now normally, a Jewish man of the 1st Century would not enter into a Conversation with a Woman- other than his own Wife. But *especially* not when that Woman had an “Issue of Blood” that had made her ceremonially “Unclean” for twelve years! Yet we read that Jesus turned around and spoke to the Woman, who had just received an instantaneous Miracle of Healing. And when Jesus saw her- He said,

Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace.

Now the word in verse 22 that was translated as, “well” comes from a Greek word (*soezoe*; Strong’s #4982) which means: *to save; to deliver; to heal; to make whole; to preserve; to make safe from danger*. So, this word is used throughout the New Testament to talk about everything from Salvation to being delivered from an Enemy. So, it is very possible that this Woman was not only physically healed- she was also saved and rescued from God’s Wrath against her Sins!

Now try to remember the Context here. Jesus is on His Way to raise a very important Man’s Daughter from the Dead. And this Woman has delayed Jesus in going to the Synagogue’s Ruler’s House. And many Jewish men would have rebuked her for that. I mean, after all, she was an Outcast already. And some Jews would have said, “*Why is this Woman bothering me? She’s probably a wicked Sinner- or God would have healed her by now. I’m busy- and I’m on a Mission. So, why is this Woman touching Me?*”

Instead, the King of the Universe said,

Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace.

... and this is why I believe the Woman was saved and not merely healed. Jesus called her, “*Daughter*” as though she belongs to Him. And this is the Way God always works. Jesus *always* has Time for the weak and the sick and the poor and the unimportant people of the world, who have been gifted by God to come to Him for Mercy. Jesus *always* took time to speak and eat with people who had nothing to offer Him. People like you and me- the wicked Rebels of this World, who have sinned greatly.

Recently, I was teaching about the “*Doctrines of Grace*”. And I told the people about the Difference between the people who go to Hell and the people who go to Heaven. Many think that “Good” people go to

Heaven and that “Bad” people go to Hell. But that isn’t true- because ALL the people who go to Heaven are “Bad”, too. Everyone is a Sinner and so, everyone is “Bad”.

But when you boil it all down- there is only one Difference between the people who go to Heaven and those who go to Hell. And that is, before the Foundation of the World- before anyone was born; and before anyone did anything “Good” or “Bad”- God chose to magnify the Glory of His Grace on those who will be in Heaven; and God chose to magnify the Glory of His Justice on those who will go to Hell. That’s it! That’s the ONLY Difference!

And people will argue and say, *“No, that’s not right, Brother Blair! Those people are in Heaven because they love God; and they have repented and they believe!”* And I say, *“That’s exactly right! But WHY do they love God? WHY did they repent? And WHY did they believe? All of those Attributes were given to them by the Grace of God in the Miracle of the New Birth! And the ONLY Reason those Sinners have experienced that New Birth- is because God chose to “set His Love” on them- before they were ever born!”*

The people in Heaven are NOT “better people”. And the people in Hell are NOT “worse people”. That is NOT what the Bible teaches. The Bible teaches that, even though God didn’t have to save *anyone*- He chose to “set His Love” upon some of the fallen Race of Adam’s Seed. And He left the others to themselves. And here is what the Apostle Paul said about this very thing in **1Corinthians 1:26-31**:

26 For consider your calling, brethren, that there were not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble;
27 but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong,
28 and the base things of the world and the despised God has chosen, the things that are not, so that He may nullify the things that are,
29 so that no man may boast before God.
30 But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption,
31 so that, just as it is written, "LET HIM WHO BOASTS, BOAST IN THE LORD."

... so, the people of God are truly an unlikely Bunch.

And that is why Fredrick Buechner, an ordained Presbyterian

Minister (who never pastored a Church) said this,

“Who could’ve predicted that God would choose not Esau, the honest and reliable, but Jacob, the trickster and heel? Who could have predicted that God would put his finger on Noah, who hit the bottle? Or on Moses, who was trying to beat the rap in Midian for braining a man in Egypt. And if it weren’t for the honor of the thing, He’d just as soon let Aaron go back and face the music. Who could have predicted that God would choose the prophets who were a ragged lot, mad as hatters, most of them.”¹

And then the Welsh surgeon, Paul Brand added,

“The exception seems to be the rule. The first humans God created went out and did the only thing God asked them not to do. The man he chose to head a new nation known as God’s people tried to pawn off his wife on an unsuspecting Pharaoh. And the wife, herself, when told at the ripe old age of 91 that God was ready to deliver the son He had promised her, broke into rasping laughter in the face of God. Rahab, a harlot, became revered for her great faith. And Solomon, the wisest man who ever lived, went out of his way to break every proverb he so astutely composed.

“Even after Jesus, the pattern continued. The two disciples who did the most to spread the Word after His departure, John and Peter, were the two He had rebuked most often for petty squabbling and muddle-headedness. And the apostle Paul, who wrote more books than any other Bible writer, was selected for the task while kicking up dust whirls from town to town sniffing out Christians to torture. Jesus had nerve in trusting the high-minded ideals of love and unity and fellowship to this group. No wonder cynics have looked at the church and sighed, ‘If that group of people is supposed to represent God, I’ll quickly vote against Him.’ Or as Nietzsche expressed it, ‘His disciples will have to look more saved if I’m to believe in their Savior.’”

... so, who would have thought, as that fateful Day began, that the one person, who was in the *worst* Position from anyone else; the Woman, who had lived as an Outcast for 12 long years; the frail, sick emaciated Woman- who had spent all her Money on doctors- who would have thought that, out of all the Chief Priests, Scribes, and Pharisees; out of all the wealthy and sophisticated people; who would have thought that

¹ <https://www.newyorktimes.com/2022/08/15/books/frederick-buechner-dead.html>

this Woman would be the one- among all those in Israel that Day- to hear the incarnate God say to her,

“Daughter”!

Amen. Let’s pray.

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The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. Be watchful and quicken your pace. Soli Deo Gloria. For the Glory of God alone.