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Encouragement In The Dark Days of Life - Part 3

Introduction

With a careful reading of Matthew it is observed that he will emphasize the thought of “gathering”. He was a tax collector, a gatherer, and God will use that characteristic of the man in the writing of his gospel account. For instance, chapters 5-7 he gathers the sayings of Jesus; in chapters 8-9 he gathers the miracles of the Lord, and in chapter 13 he gathers the parables of Jesus. In his enumeration of miracles he includes the miracle of the woman and her issue of blood (Matt. 9:20-22).

This is a miracle which brings to the fore the simplicity of salvation, for there is brought to our attention an individual who has a disease which is humanly impossible to cure and which only the Lord can heal. This miracle is one of the great foundations for the gospel message. This miracle is remarkable not because it happened en route to Jairus’s house, but draws sharp similarities and contrasts.

a) Similarities

- i) Both have to do with females.
- ii) Both had physical problems, one acute and one chronic.
- iii) On the same day as the woman was healed, the little girl was raised from the dead.

b) Contrasts

- i) Both had lived for 12 years, one with a physical ailment and the other as a little girl growing.
- ii) One came directly to the Lord the other had a representative to plead her cause before the other.
- iii) One came and touched His garment and was healed. In the case of the little girl the Lord touched her (*He took her by the hand*) and she immediately received life.
- iv) No one saw the miracle on the woman being performed but several saw the miracle on the little girl performed.

The Woman

Several years ago I lay in hospital for five weeks. There was a definite physical ailment but the doctors, despite trying their best, could not for the first four and a half weeks determine the best way to treat my body. The dark hours of countless tests, hoping something would be found, and still no betterment or sureness of what was happening in my body. Even with that I cannot imagine how this woman felt having suffered for twelve long years, going to countless doctors, hoping somehow someone somewhere would find a cure. But, it was more than a physical problem, it made her, according to the law, “unclean” thus she had a double defilement, one physical and one moral.

- a) When this is applied to the sinner he also has a double problem, one physical and one moral. The first is his physical problem for while sin manifests itself in the outward activities of the human body, it is because we are children of Adam. We all have a physical problem, not because of what we are, but because every one of us was born with a defective gene called sin. This results in the body being under the domination of sin inherited from Adam. This sin in the body is a moral defilement in the spirit of the individual which results in the individual being blinded by Satan and having a deceitful heart.
- b) No amount of physicians, good works, penance, church going or good intentions can give relief from the knowledge that, like the woman, as we grow older this “sin” in each of us grows worse. There is no betterment in trying to keep the law, it simply shows how far I fail. The law is a mirror to show me my sin, not to get rid of it.

The Miracle

In the three gospels which record this miracle all emphasize the words of the Lord exactly, Daughter be of good cheer, “thy faith hath made thee whole” (Matt. 9:22; Mk. 5:34; Lk. 8:48). Mark and Luke add, “go in peace,” and only Mark adds, “and be whole of thy plague”.

Having heard of the Lord Jesus and His power to heal, possibly with wondering if her malady could and would be healed, she came straight to him. No one else knew why she was coming or the faith that was in her heart. For

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whatever reason, she came from behind Him and touched the hem of his garment (Matt. 9:20; Mk. 5:27). Mark adds a word easily missed “she *but* touched” (Mk. 5:28), that is, it was not a grab of the garment but the slightest touch.

- a) I have spoken to numerous individuals who have questioned, “Was my faith strong enough?”, “Did I have enough faith?” etc. It is not the amount of faith, it is what was expressed in her touch, the belief that He could heal. Immediately she was made whole. Faith is not a work, but if she did nothing she would have died in her sickness. One must exercise their faith, swap their faith in their human endeavors for the finished work of Christ. It is not how much faith the individual has, it is the dependance on the substitutionary sacrifice of the Lord. He alone can provide the remedy for cleansing.
- b) Some years ago I was walking along the pier at White Rock, British Columbia when a couple of young men approached me. They began to talk to me about getting right with God. When I asked them if I was correct in saying that their message for salvation had four steps and all four had to be fulfilled before one could be really sure of heaven, they agreed with this. I then asked, “What if someone over a period of time fulfilled steps 1-3 but died before the fourth step was completed, what then?” The response was that there was no hope in such a case. I then told them the salvation I had was given to me in a moment of time without works! Thank God salvation and spiritual healing is instantaneous, no duration of time is needed, no baptism is needed, and no keeping the rituals of a church. As with this woman who was healed, it is an act of faith, an all or nothing, all depending on the finished work of the Lord and nothing else.
- c) She touched the hem of His garment. This carries a deeper truth than that which appears on the surface. Many years before this incident the men of Israel were told to have a fringe on the hem of their garments. Among other truths, it indicated a finished work. Thank God that when our Lord suffered the penalty for our sins He said, “It is finished” (Jn. 19:30). Nothing can be added to it, nothing needs to be added to it. He has provided an eternal salvation and on that foundation God can say to every individual who depends wholly on the finished work of Christ, “Be of good cheer, go into peace”. What wonderful news for the sinner. There is not a sin we have committed, are committing, or ever will commit that the blood of the Lord cannot forgive or cleanse. He will forgive all thy transgressions. What a blessedness. “Go in peace” is better said, “Go into peace”. Never worry again about if my sins have been forgiven, never again be concerned about being cast into hell for God has procured peace through the work of His son. Man can be reconciled to God forever from this point on and live in the peace of conscience which the Lord gives through the finished work of Christ (Acts 13:38; Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:14).

Making the woman come and confess what had happened

Why did the Lord command the woman to come forth? It was to acknowledge that which had been done for and to her. Her idea was to get healed and then slink away and not say anything to anyone. But there must be an understanding that this was a miracle of God’s power for others to be aware of. So today, one cannot be a non-confessor of the grace and power of God. The scriptures say, “That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation” (Rom. 10:9, 10).

Many years ago I used the three steps to illustrate the way to salvation.

- a) Step 1, I am a guilty helpless sinner
- a) Step 2, Christ died and bore my sins penalty on the cross
- b) Step 3, I accept Jesus Christ to be my all sufficient Saviour

At that meeting was a gentleman who, on the way out, told me, “Tonight I took the third step”. By the grace of God he was forgiven by God. I told him that he should tell the folks but he said he was too shy. So I left it and he went out into the foyer, then I heard loud rejoicing, he had told those with him that he had got saved. He had made a confession.

. . . Rowan Jennings