



## The Nourishing Vocation Project

### Engaging the Living Word

*The Woman with the Hemorrhage* [Matthew 9:18-26](#)

#### What is this particular text?

- Healing story
- Story within a story
- Theology
  - Centers one from the margins
  - Jesus' redefinition of "clean and unclean." The "unclean" woman touches he, and she is healed
  - Jesus' power of sickness
  - Expansive inclusiveness of Jesus' mercy. Jesus raises from the dead the daughter of a synagogue leader, *and* Jesus heals a lowly, sick woman
- Personal encounter with Jesus, story

#### How does the text function within the scriptural story?

- Shows who Jesus is
- Expands the understanding of who receives Jesus' mercy
- Demonstrates the embodiment of Jesus' mercy
- Amplifies voice of one who is marginalized
- First of four successive miracle stories
- Contributes to the spreading of Jesus' fame

#### How can this text function in the church today?

- Calls us to center the voices of the marginalized
- Reminds us that faith is embodied
- Challenges us to ask who we exclude from Jesus' mercy today
- Encourages us to tell personal stories about our encounters with Jesus

#### What does the text do to you? How do you react to the text? What feelings does this text engender in you?

- Taps into my own longings
  - Makes me think of my own "if only" experiences
- Reminds me of my personal "long suffering" experiences
- Evokes empathy
- Awareness
- Sympathy
- Concern – both personal and collective

#### What do you have to say to the text?

- I wish this story could be told in her voice
- I wonder how the woman heard about Jesus
- I wonder what the woman had heard about Jesus

- I wonder what came after this story
- Given cultural norms, the woman put herself at great risk
- Healing/miracle stories are both beautiful and hard
- Healing/miracle stories can be both good news and bad news
  - Not everyone is healed
  - Translating healing stories into every day, human experiences can be challenging

**What do you see through this text from the story itself?**

- Longing is both personal and universal
- Longing can lead to vulnerability and risk
- Embodied need requires an embodied response
- Centering marginalized voices is transformative

**What do you see from within your church/community/world? (2022)**

- Desperate personal need moves to act
- Some voices of need get marginalized
- Holding space for specific human need is important
- Wondering who among us is suffering in silence can lead to more engaged ministry
- Crises of our current time
  - Virtual ministry raises new challenges and new imaginative possibilities for embodied ministry
  - Black Lives Matter – longing that demands action
  - Mental health concerns

**What do you see within yourself?**

- My “if only” experiences
- Those whose “if only’s” I have not heard or tended to
- Personal need for embodied responses to embodied need

**What is the context – textual and historical?**

- Follows the call of the last disciple – Matthew
- Precedes the given of authority to the disciples
- Precedes the naming of the 12 disciples
- Precedes the mission of the 12
- Set within the story of the raising of the synagogue leader’s daughter from the dead
- Immediately follows teaching about fasting
- Immediately precedes healing of two blind men and a person who was mute

**What questions does this text raise for you?**

- How would the woman tell her own story?
- How do we deal with healing stories when people are not healed?
- In a world where we are aware of the dangers of touch, how do we elevate and embrace healing touch?
- What happened to her after this story?
- Is it her touching Jesus’ cloak or Jesus’ words that heal her in Matthew’s telling of this story?
- What is the significance of the two stories told, enfolded together?
- Who was this woman, what was her name, what was the rest of her story?



### What words/themes seem of particular import?

- Suddenly
- Suffering
- Touched
- If only
- Seeing her
- Take heart
- Longing
- Need
- Vulnerability

### What is the Gospel / transforming Good News within this text?

- Jesus sees
- Jesus heals
- Interrupting Jesus is good and right
- Jesus takes time for human need

### What is the as-over-againstness of this text?

- Suffering can last a long time
- Not all human need is healed
- Vulnerability can be dangerous
- Human need can make one an outsider
- Human need can create fear
- Unfulfilled longing can lead to desperate actions

### Who does this text say that Jesus is, or if not Jesus, then who does this text say that God is? What does this text say about God?

- Jesus sees individual people in their specific need
- Jesus cares
- Jesus erases the boundaries between clean and unclean
- No one is outside of Jesus' care

### What have others said about this text?

- [Should I touch him? The pain of stretching.](#) Pushing my way through. Touching. Touching just his dangling tassel. No one will know. No one needs to know. No one knows. No one knows what it's like to be me. No one knows what I've been through. No one knows the shame. It's the blood. Not like the rest. Not every month or so. All the time. All the time! And you know what that means! Yes it means unclean, unclean. William Loader
- [Both of these women are daughters.](#) The first is born the daughter of a synagogue leader who comes beseeching Jesus on behalf of his beloved child. The second is *called* daughter by Jesus, restored to health and wholeness and commended for her great faith. David Lose

### What will I teach or proclaim?

- It is good to name your longings out loud
- Your suffering and longing matter to Jesus
- Jesus sees you in your longing
- Jesus cares for you in your vulnerability



- Jesus is not too busy for you
- Jesus brings the outsiders in
- Name that human longings are not always filled, and wrestle with what that means

