

BGCC Community Group Guide



Take Heart

October 18th

Just A Little Faith

Matthew 9:18-22

Main Idea: Jesus sees us in our suffering, welcomes us when we feel unworthy to approach Him, and has the authority to make us clean. Even when our faith feels small and our burdens feel too great, we can take heart because Jesus cares for us, understands our suffering, and has done what we could never do for ourselves through His death and resurrection.

When You Feel Unseen

Some suffering is visible to everyone around us, while other struggles remain hidden. We may carry physical pain, loneliness, shame, anxiety, regret, or a burden that we are afraid to share with anyone. Over time, these struggles can make us feel isolated and unworthy of being in God's presence. We may even believe that we need to clean ourselves up before we can come to Jesus.

In Matthew 9, Jesus encounters two people in desperate situations. Jairus, a synagogue leader, comes to Jesus because his daughter is dying. While Jesus is on His way to help, a woman who has suffered from bleeding for twelve years reaches out and touches the edge of His cloak. She has exhausted her resources, suffered under unsuccessful treatments, and lived with the social and religious isolation associated with her condition. She approaches Jesus quietly, hoping to be healed without drawing attention to herself.

But Jesus does not allow her to remain unnoticed. He stops, turns toward her, and speaks words of reassurance: "Take heart, daughter." In a crowd full of people, Jesus sees someone who believes she has every reason to hide unseen and untouched. His response shows us that no person's suffering is insignificant to Him and no burden is too shameful to bring before Him.

Significance in the Biblical Story

Matthew presents Jesus as the promised Messiah, emphasizing His authority over sickness, sin, and the forces that hold people captive. The surrounding stories reinforce that Jesus came not merely to perform miracles but to bring people into the healing and restoration that only He can provide. Earlier in Matthew 9, Jesus declares that He came for the sick and sinners, comparing His ministry to that of a doctor caring for those who need help.

The woman in this passage would have been considered ceremonially unclean because of her ongoing bleeding, as described in Leviticus 15. Her condition affected more than her physical health; it also placed significant restrictions on her participation in religious and social life. Her approach to Jesus is an act of desperation and hope, even though she fears the consequences of being discovered by the crowd all around her. She approaches Jesus timidly.

Jesus' response reveals His compassion and authority. He heals her, addresses her personally as "daughter," and assures her that her faith has healed her. She does not earn His favor through perfect knowledge, religious performance, or personal merit. Jesus is the One who heals and restores. Ultimately, this points to the work He would accomplish through His death and resurrection, providing the forgiveness and cleansing that no human effort could secure.

Section 1 – Even Small Faith Can Reach a Great Savior

Matthew 9:20–22; Mark 5:25–29

"If I only touch his cloak, I will be healed." — Matthew 9:21

Summary

The woman in this story has suffered for twelve years. Mark tells us that she visited many doctors, spent everything she had, and continued to grow worse. She has tried to find relief through every means available to her, but nothing has worked. When she hears about Jesus, she sees one more possibility: if she can only touch His clothing, perhaps she will finally be healed.

Her faith is imperfect. She doesn't seem to understand everything about Jesus, and she may believe that touching His garment has some special power. Of course, though we shouldn't assume so, it did! Yet she has enough faith to reach out to Him. Jesus responds, and she is immediately healed. Her story reminds us that the power of faith does not come from how strong we feel or how much we understand. It comes from the One in whom we place our faith.

We often measure our spiritual condition by our own feelings. When we feel close to God, we assume our faith is strong; when we feel distant, discouraged, or uncertain, we may wonder whether we have enough faith to come to Him. But the better question is not how strong we feel. It is whether we are trusting the Savior who is strong, loving, and able to save. Even a small amount of genuine faith can lead us to the One who is sufficient for our deepest needs. Often faith is better understood as a 'knowing confidence.'

Group Question: Why is it encouraging that Jesus responded to this woman's imperfect but genuine faith? What does her story teach us about where the power of our faith comes from?

Personal Relevance

You do not have to understand everything about Jesus or feel spiritually strong before you approach Him. You can come to Him honestly, even when you are discouraged, uncertain, or struggling. Faith is not confidence in your own ability to believe; it is trust in Jesus and His ability to save and restore.

We should be encouraged because Jesus exhorts faith in us and clearly rewards it when it is seen. Not always in the way we expect...but sometimes it is.

Flow Question: When you feel spiritually weak or distant from God, are you more likely to approach Him or withdraw? Why?

Reflection Question: Is there an area of your life where you feel your faith is too small to make a difference? What would it look like to bring that struggle to Jesus anyway?

Section 2 – Jesus Sees Us When We Feel Alone

Matthew 9:18–22; Mark 5:30–34

“He turned and saw her. ‘Take heart, daughter,’ he said, ‘your faith has healed you.’” — Matthew 9:22

Summary

The woman does not approach Jesus publicly or ask Him to stop and help her. She comes up behind Him, hoping to receive healing without anyone noticing. After twelve years of suffering, she has likely experienced significant isolation. Her condition made her ceremonially unclean, and anyone or anything she touched could also become ceremonially unclean. This would have made ordinary relationships, worship, and daily life difficult. She had physical suffering, but she also carried the weight of exclusion and shame.

When Jesus realizes that someone has touched Him, He stops and asks who it was. The disciples are confused because the crowd is pressing in on Him from every direction. Yet Jesus refuses to treat this woman's healing as an insignificant interruption. He continues looking for her until she comes forward, trembling with fear, and tells Him the whole truth.

Jesus does not shame her or send her away. He speaks tenderly to her, calling her “daughter.” After twelve years in which she may have felt unwanted, unclean, or forgotten, Jesus acknowledges her personally, invites her into a previously unrequited singleness, and assures her that she can take heart. He wants her to know that she is not in trouble and that her healing is real. His compassion restores more than her physical health; His public acknowledgment

gives her reason to hope for restored relationships and a renewed place in the community. He healed her physically, spiritually, and socially. This encounter shows us that Jesus is not too busy for us.

Jairus's daughter is in a desperate situation, and Jesus is on His way to help her. Yet He also stops for a woman whose suffering might have been overlooked by everyone else. Jesus does not rank people by social standing or decide that one person's pain matters while another person's does not. He sees us, knows our struggles, and cares about what we carry, even when no one else understands.

Group Question: Why do you think Jesus stopped to speak with the woman instead of simply allowing her to be healed and continuing on His way to Jairus's house?

Personal Relevance

Loneliness can convince us that we are forgotten or that our problems are too insignificant to matter. Shame can make us believe that we should stay hidden and low-key (out of the way). But Jesus sees us even when we feel invisible. He invites us to come to Him rather than assume that our suffering makes us unwelcome in His presence.

Flow Question: What kinds of struggles tend to make people feel isolated or unseen, even when they are surrounded by others?

Reflection Question: Is there something you have been carrying privately because you feel embarrassed, unworthy, or afraid of being a burden? How might remembering that Jesus sees and cares for you change the way you respond?

Section 3 – Nothing Is Too Broken to Bring to Jesus

Matthew 9:21–22; Hebrews 4:15–16

“Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.” — Hebrews 4:16

Summary

The woman approaches Jesus in secret because she has every reason to fear how people might respond to her condition. Her plan is to be healed quietly and return home without anyone discovering what happened. Instead, Jesus brings her out of hiding and meets her fear with compassion and heals her publicly.

Her story challenges the belief that we must clean ourselves up before coming to God. We may think our struggles are too messy, our sins too serious, or our failures too embarrassing to bring before Him. Sometimes even longtime Christians feel this way. We may know the truth about God's grace but still hesitate to confess a particular sin or admit that we need help. We can

begin to think that because we should know better, we should be able to handle everything ourselves. We can just continue on on our own.

Hebrews reminds us that Jesus understands our weaknesses. He was tempted as we are, yet He did not sin. Because He is our great High Priest, we can approach God's throne with confidence, knowing that we can receive mercy and grace in our time of need. We do not have to hide from the One who already knows us completely. We can come honestly because Jesus is able to meet us with compassion and help.

This does not mean that sin is unimportant or that we should ignore the need for repentance. It means that our failures are not a reason to avoid Jesus. He is precisely the One we need when we are struggling. His holiness, authority, and grace—not our ability to fix ourselves—make the way for us to approach God. His invitation is not to pretend that everything is fine, but to bring Him the truth and receive the help only He can give.

Group Question: Why do we sometimes hide our struggles from Jesus even though we know He already knows everything about us? What does Hebrews 4:15–16 teach us about approaching Him?

Personal Relevance

The invitation to receive grace is not only for people who have never followed Jesus. Every Christian needs His mercy and help continually. You do not have to wait until you have overcome a struggle to pray about it, confess it, or ask for help. You can approach Him with confidence because of who He is and what He has done.

Flow Question: What is the difference between being ashamed of your sin in a way that drives you away from Jesus and being convicted of your sin in a way that drives you toward Him?

Reflection Question: What might you be afraid to bring before Jesus right now? What would it look like to approach Him honestly and ask for His mercy and help?

Section 4 – Jesus Has Done What We Could Never Do for Ourselves

Matthew 9:22; Hebrews 4:15–16

“Your faith has healed you.” — Matthew 9:22

Summary

The woman hoped that touching Jesus' clothing would heal her and allow her to return to life without anyone knowing. But Jesus does more than quietly heal her. He turns toward her, speaks to her, and publicly assures her that she has been healed. She does not have to remain

hidden or wonder whether she is still unwelcome. Jesus has addressed her condition, and His words give her reason to take heart.

The sermon connects this encounter to the larger work of Jesus. The woman might have hoped to complete the purification process and offer the required sacrifices, but those actions could not provide the ultimate, lasting solution for sin. Jesus came to accomplish what human effort could never achieve. He has the authority to make clean, forgive sins, and restore people to God. Our hope does not rest in performing enough religious acts, correcting every failure, or proving that we deserve mercy.

Jesus' compassion is costly. He knows what it means to suffer, be rejected, be misunderstood, and endure injustice. Ultimately, He went to the cross and bore the burden of our sin. Through His death and resurrection, He made the way for us to receive forgiveness and reconciliation with God. The grace we receive freely was not cheap; it came at the cost of His life.

That truth changes how we respond to our struggles. Rather than continually trying to repair ourselves through our own strength, we can put our faith in Jesus. We still confess sin, pursue obedience, seek help, and take responsibility for our actions, but we do so in response to His grace rather than as a way to earn it. We can take heart because Jesus has done the work we could never do for ourselves. He is enough for our sin, our shame, and our deepest need.

Group Question: Why is it important to understand that Jesus—not our efforts or religious performance—is the One who makes us clean and provides forgiveness? How should that truth change the way we respond to our failures?

Personal Relevance

It is easy to fall into the habit of thinking, “If I can just do better, fix this problem, or prove myself, then I will be okay with God.” But the foundation of our hope is Jesus' finished work. We pursue holiness because we have received His grace, not to convince Him to give it to us.

Flow Question: What are some ways Christians can unintentionally begin relying on their own performance instead of resting in the grace of Jesus?

Reflection Question: Are you trying to fix something through your own strength that you need to surrender to Jesus? How can you respond to His grace with both trust and obedience this week?

Conclusion

Matthew 9:18–26

The story of the woman who suffered for twelve years reminds us that Jesus sees those who feel forgotten, welcomes those who feel unworthy, and provides what we cannot accomplish for

ourselves. Her faith was imperfect, but she trusted Jesus enough to reach out to Him. He responded with healing, compassion, and words that gave her reason to take heart.

1. **Even small faith can reach a great Savior.** Our hope rests not in the strength of our faith but in the greatness of the One we trust.
2. **Jesus sees us when we feel alone.** No person's suffering is too insignificant to receive His attention and care.
3. **Nothing is too broken to bring to Jesus.** We do not have to hide our struggles or clean ourselves up before approaching Him.
4. **Jesus has done what we could never do for ourselves.** Through His death and resurrection, He has made the way for forgiveness, cleansing, and restoration.

The gospel reminds us that Jesus did not wait for us to become worthy of His love. He came for sinners and sufferers, people who could not rescue themselves. He understands our weaknesses, sees what we carry, and invites us to approach Him for mercy and grace. We do not need to keep hiding or trying to earn what only He can give. We can bring Him our pain, our sin, our shame, and our failures because Jesus is enough.

As you reflect this week, consider these questions:

- Am I measuring my faith by how strong I feel or by the One in whom I trust?
- Is there an area of suffering where I have begun to believe that God has forgotten me?
- Am I hiding a struggle?
- Where am I relying on my own effort instead of trusting the work Jesus has already done?
- Who around me might feel isolated or unseen, and how can I show them the care of Christ?

The woman came to Jesus hoping to touch His cloak and quietly slip away. Instead, He stopped for her, looked at her, and called her “daughter.” She was not an interruption, a burden, or someone too unclean to receive His attention. She mattered to Him. The same is true for us. Whatever you are carrying, bring it to Jesus. You can take heart because He sees you, He cares for you, and His grace is greater than your need.