

# Come!

Who was in that crowd?  
(See Luke 8:40-56.)

Certainly, the disciples were there – at least Peter, James and John. There were probably many curiosity seekers and undoubtedly those who were attracted by the noise and potential entertainment. The seriously religious may have been in the flow or watching from the periphery. And there were the suffering who longed for help as well. Pushing, shoving, shuffling along – an excited throng of people surrounded Jesus.

The same could be said of the contemporary Christian community – that is, the Church in its entirety. The ‘crowd’ around Christ is a mix isn’t it? People gather around Jesus for different reasons.

They were headed far too slowly toward the home of Jairus. At least, that’s certainly what he felt for his 12 year old daughter was at death’s door. A short while ago, he’d fallen at Jesus’ feet and pleaded with Him to come. Now, he probably helped push friends and on-lookers aside to make way for the Lord. Time was of the essence. ‘If they didn’t get there soon, it would be too late.’

Jairus was an important man and a desperate man. Neither quality lends itself to patience. Thus, when Jesus stopped in his tracks, it surely perplexed the anxious father to say the least.

Jostling one another, the crowd worked to reposition (and to keep their footing!). ‘What’s going on?! What happened?!’ Jairus surely cried within.

“Who touched Me?” Jesus said as He looked around. Possibly, His eyes rested upon the startled, elated and yet somewhat frightened face of a woman. She may have been on her knees, but whether standing or no, she was not hidden amidst the mélange of characters. Around her, everyone hastily denied doing anything of the sort.

‘Who touched you??’ Peter probably wondered. *“Master, the multitudes throng and press You, and You say, ‘Who touched Me?’”*, he said.

The Greek word used in the text can mean a simple touch, but more literally it means a fastening or attaching to something, and that’s really what happened in the spirit.

But Jesus said, *“Somebody touched Me, for I perceived power going out from Me.”*

For twelve years, this dear woman had suffered a deplorable condition – a continual bleeding – which must have at least debilitated her. It was probably something that caused her to be socially ostracized and unmarried as well. Luke made it clear in his gospel that she was also penniless having spent all her savings to enrich the local medical community to no avail.

She may have been somewhat superstitious in seeking to contact Christ for she had touched the hem of His garment. In that day, the blue borders of certain rabbi’s cloaks were supposed to be ‘special’ if you would. Whether that was the case or that it was simply the press of the crowd and her physical weakness which positioned her to grab the bottom of His garment, she ‘touched’ Jesus. It is the same word

used by Jesus when He said to dear Mary outside the garden tomb after His resurrection, “Don’t cling to Me.” Spiritually, in humble faith, she clung to Christ and virtue flowed.

It is the only instance recorded in which someone ‘came in the back door’ so to speak with Jesus. That is probably because Jesus never said, “No” to a sincere person. He even reached into the lives of many who could not ask or didn’t know to ask for help. Such is our Lord. This woman had no petition as Jairus had. Neither had she anything to offer Christ.

Just think – a huge crowd all around Jesus and only one person ‘touched’ Him. Now, many teachings have been made on the mechanics of faith using this passage as a platform. And we know this dear woman had faith for when she *“saw that she was not hidden, she came trembling; and falling down before Him, she declared to Him in the presence of all the people the reason she had touched Him and how she was healed immediately. And He said to her, ‘Daughter, be of good cheer; your faith has made you well. Go in peace.’”*

Yes, she had wonderful faith. Nevertheless, let’s consider another aspect of the story -- the press. Not the press of the crowd but the press in the spirit. On the one hand there was this woman with 12 years of pain and despondency. On the other was Jairus, a man with 12 years of tender parental love and social privilege. Both were in desperate need and the picture in this passage, pregnant with meaning.

Both individuals came to Jesus. Both were at His feet. Both had a 12 year history that led to their desperate need. Both got Christ’s attention and help. Yet they stood in stark contrast one to another – Jairus, a leader of the synagogue was at the top of the social ladder while the woman was most definitely at the bottom; we don’t even know her name. And they both needed Jesus ‘NOW’. There was no where else to turn and time was running out. One broke, one probably rich – both pressed and broken in spirit.

Now, you can’t help but notice that the number twelve stands out and that’s not by ‘coincidence’. For those who put significance upon numbers in the Bible, 12 can point to divine or perfect government. However, I’ll suggest that it is perhaps more connected to the concept of heaven for it is mentioned frequently in that context for both the Jewish people and the mostly gentile Church. In Revelation 21, it is written that the heavenly city has twelve foundations bearing the names of the twelve apostles and twelve entry gates displaying the names of the twelve tribes of Israel. Twelve angels stand at its gates; within, the Tree of Life bears twelve types of fruit, and the city’s dimensions are described in the original language in multiples of twelve.

So what does heaven have to do with this story? Plenty.

Heaven is an actual tangible place – more real than any place you know. But it’s far, far more than a place. John tried to describe it in terms we could relate to – brilliant light, translucent gold, diverse

gemstones, and such. Nevertheless, beyond its beauty is its essence or quality. The very atmosphere is filled with intimacy – with He Who is Holy, Holy, Holy and with His family. There is an aroma of love, joy and peaceful security. There is a sense of unparalleled freedom along with exciting purpose. It all speaks of eternal Life. Heaven is truly an essence or quality of Life which is purely the result of God's presence. This story is about coming into His presence – about encountering heaven's maker – He Who makes heaven, heaven.

For twelve years, our dear nameless woman experienced a living hell. Apart from the physical pain and anemia, she was thoroughly shamed. No man would have her as a wife. Imagine someone having a highly contagious flu for twelve years and you can get a sense of how many friends she probably had – zippo, none, nada. No one took her to Jesus like the lame man in Mark chapter two. That's because she was unclean. And without two nickels to rub together, she was bottomed out. Her condition would even prevent her from being a prostitute. It was hell on earth, twelve years of it. Religious people who knew her would not even touch her. Isolated, abandoned, broken both physically and emotionally, she could never come to Christ like others did – so she thought.

So she approached Him from behind.

Her faith was in what He could do – not in Who He is. The previous

twelve years had postured her for desperate faith but as yet she did not understand the heart of God.

'He would never touch me,' she must have presumed. 'A great teacher, a great rabbi – surely he must remain clean.'

How shocked she must have been, not by the healing – oh, that surely elated her – but when Jesus said, "Who touched Me?" He was saying, "Who attached to Me." It was not at all what she had intended. She'd even tried to hide herself.

That's what life in this world has done to some. There are those of us who are so beaten up by this hellish world that we cannot imagine facing God – we're too filthy, too shamed. We believe in His power but cannot approach Him face to face. 'He must think of us as untouchable.' We'll come to Christ for what we believe He will do, for His power to save, but to have an intimate relationship – unimaginable.

But Jesus stopped. He turned and looked. His eyes met hers and that perfect soul gazed into hers with the revelation that she was whole and clean. He stopped everything to let her and everyone else know.

Meanwhile, on the 'other side' of Jesus was Jairus who was a godly man. As a leader of the synagogue, he had to be. His previous twelve years were certainly by comparison, pleasant and perhaps even blissful. Those of you with daughters can understand how sweet their unconditional love is. He was surely quite prominent in the community.

He came to Jesus desperate and in humility, falling at His feet.

But he approached Him head on.

Nothing in his background led him to think he couldn't do so. Some of us approach Jesus with this same confidence.

John wrote, *"For if our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and knows all things. Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence toward God. And whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight."* (1 John 3:20-22)

Jairus also approached Jesus for what He could do, but his estimation was far too limited. He esteemed Christ capable of curing his daughter -- but as a giver of life? That was a stretch. Some of us approach our Lord the same way. We are pressed. We come in brokenness and humility, even in desperation. We are confident of approaching Him, but we drastically underestimate Him.

Jairus must have feared, 'Too slow. Too late.' You know the story. *"While He was still speaking, someone came from the ruler of the synagogue's house, saying to him, 'Your daughter is dead. Do not trouble the Teacher.' But when Jesus heard it, He answered him, saying, 'Do not be afraid; only believe, and she will be made well.' When He came into the house, He permitted no one to go in except Peter, James, and John, and the father and mother of the girl. Now all wept and mourned for her; but*

*He said, 'Do not weep; she is not dead, but sleeping.' And they ridiculed Him, knowing that she was dead. But He put them all outside, took her by the hand and called, saying, 'Little girl, arise.' Then her spirit returned, and she arose immediately. And He commanded that she be given something to eat. And her parents were astonished, but He charged them to tell no one what had happened."* (Luke 8: 49-56)

Jairus had faith but not resurrection faith – the text says, he was astonished. Jesus astonished he and his wife. Dear friend, regardless of your faith, be it great or small, Life, eternal Life, will astonish you as well. Jesus will astonish you with the resurrection or rapture. Heaven will astonish you. Jairus thought Jesus to be a healer but the true healing is in heaven. Jairus met the Power of heaven amidst the grasp of grief.

The power to transform a hellish life of abandonment, misery and destitution with a divine touch and public approval is the Power of heaven. The power to raise the dead to new life is the astonishing Power of heaven. It is the love of God expressed in Jesus Christ.

Whether you must approach from 'behind' or are confident to face Him – you come. Come to the One Who knows you and loves you, to the One Who is far beyond your considerations. Come to Jesus in humility and He will respond. He will amaze you with redemption and astonish you with resurrection or rapture. Meet heaven's King.

Discover Who He is. Forget the crowd. You come.