

THURSDAY, MARCH 4

Matthew 9:18-34

Throughout this passage in Matthew, we see Jesus impacting the lives of many different people. There appears to be a strong contrast in socioeconomic status between the synagogue leader Jesus first meets and the woman who touches his cloak. Even so, both are desperate for his help. The Gospel of Mark says that this bleeding woman has spent all her money on doctors without ever improving. She believes that just touching Jesus's cloak will heal her. His response to her touch is remarkable: "Daughter, your faith has healed you." Jesus values this woman no differently than the daughter of the synagogue leader, which he demonstrates by calling the woman "daughter." Even after living for 12 years in pain, this woman still has faith in Jesus's power to heal, and he responds to this kindly.

Additionally, we find Jesus healing two blind men as well as a man who is demon-possessed and mute. Jesus acknowledges the blind men with the same response: "According to your faith, let it be done." This phrase is interesting. It implies that our job is merely to believe, to have faith in Jesus, not to become tied up in legalistic matters to earn anything from him. No matter who we are, where we come from, or what we have done in the past, we find healing in Jesus. This may not mean that God will immediately give us anything we ask for, but we know we find rest in a God who is working all things for good in the end.

This Lenten season is a time for reflective repentance, reorienting ourselves back to God in the midst of anything we may be experiencing now. We must turn to Jesus, just as the bleeding woman and blind men did. Our reality as sinners is that we have no other hope. It feels these days like busyness and strict schedules are inevitable, even desired. Throughout this time, we must not forget to turn to Jesus, resting in his love for all people.

Prayer:

Gracious God, turn us back to you. Give us the discipline necessary to rest, remembering who you are and who we are in you. Let us not hold tightly to the materials or matters of this world, but rather use them for your glory. Help us to let go of anything keeping us from getting closer to You. Provide healing for those in need, and give us the strength to be all you have called us to be. Amen.

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