



Like the story of this dear woman, the salvation stories of great Christians are intriguing. One such story is that of the great and beloved minister and biblical commentator, Matthew Henry. In the early days of the founding of our country, Matthew Henry's Commentary was almost as commonplace in the households of America as the Holy Bible. Born to a Anglican minister of the Gospel at Broad Oak Manor in Wales in 1662, Matthew was an exceptional biblical scholar even at the age of three years and, according to Bickerton's *Life of Henry*, he could read the Bible with distinctness and observation at that early age. At age nine, he could read Latin and Greek, and was fluent in French. Though he heard his father's sermons each week, his first abiding convictions in religion came with a sermon his father preached on Psalm 51:17: "*The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.*" Though his commentaries cover the entire Bible from Genesis to Revelations, it was this single verse by which he was drawn to repentance and conviction. Here is an excerpt of his commentary on this text:

Those who are thoroughly convinced of their misery and danger by sin, would spare no cost to obtain the remission of it. But as they cannot make satisfaction for sin, so God cannot take any satisfaction in them, otherwise than as expressing love and duty to him. The good work wrought in every true penitent, is a broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart, and sorrow for sin. It is a heart that is tender, and pliable to God's word. Oh that there were such a heart in every one of us! God is graciously pleased to accept this; it is instead of all burnt-offering and sacrifice. The broken heart is acceptable to God only through Jesus Christ; there is no true repentance without faith in him. Men despise that which is broken, but God will not. He will not overlook it, he will not refuse or reject it; though it makes God no satisfaction for the wrong done to him by sin. Those who have been in spiritual troubles, know how to pity and pray for others afflicted in like manner. David was afraid lest his sin should bring judgements upon the city and kingdom. No

personal fears or troubles of conscience can make the soul, which has received grace, careless about the interests of the church of God. And let this be the continued joy of all the redeemed, that they have redemption through the blood of Christ, the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of his grace. — Matthew Henry Concise

*20 And, behold, a woman, which was diseased with an issue of blood twelve years, came behind him, and touched the hem of his garment: 21 For she said within herself, If I may but touch his garment, I shall be whole. 22 But Jesus turned him about, and when he saw her, he said, **Daughter, be of good comfort; thy faith hath made thee whole.** And the woman was made whole from that hour. (Matthew 9:20-22)*

One of the greatest barriers to faith in Christ is in knowing WHO Christ is. Many today consider Him in the same sense as a *genie* who grants our every wish, or as a good teacher of ethics and morals; but how many in the modern churches truly know Jesus to be Lord and Savior in more than a mere vocally expressed sense? He is our Lord and King. He is our Savior and Redeemer...and He is God! This last part seems to be the hanging point for many pseudo-religionists. Jesus is literally God the son and acts with the same power and authority of the Father – for both are One with the Holy Ghost!

Jesus has just been conversing with the followers of John the Baptist and reveals to them that He is the promised Bridegroom of the Church whom they seek, but unknowingly: *“**Can the children of the bridechamber mourn, as long as the bridegroom is with them? but the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken from them, and then shall they fast.**”* (Matt 9:15) It is unlikely that these disciples understood the meaning Jesus spoke to them until much later. He had, on this same occasion, forgiven the man stricken with the palsy of his sins, and sealed the miracle of forgiveness with His second miracle of physical healing. We now take up the text:

20 “And, behold, a woman, which was diseased with an issue of blood twelve years, came behind him, and touched the hem of his garment.” We are told more detail of this woman in the Gospel of St. Mark: *“And a certain woman, which had an issue of blood twelve years, And had suffered many things of many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse, When she had heard of Jesus, came in the press behind, and touched his garment.”* (Mark 5:25-27) Clearly, this woman, too, had only one hope of healing and that hope was Christ! She wasted away all of her savings on physicians, but grew only worse. Now she will come to the Great Physician who is able to heal body AND soul! How often do we, friends, struggle helplessly with our problems until they grow to immense proportion. Then we run to Christ for our solution! The woman had great difficulty approaching Jesus for the press of the crowd so close to Him on all sides. There were many who rubbed shoulders with Jesus that day, but only ONE who touched Him with faith. Just claiming the name of Christian does not avail to make us Christian unless we have the faith to match our convictions. *21 “For she said within herself, If I may but touch his garment, I shall be whole.”* It is the touch of faith that heals and not the material garment itself. *22 “But Jesus turned him about, and when he saw her, he said, **Daughter, be of good comfort; thy faith hath made thee whole.**”* Here

again, St Mark adds touching details that Matthew omits: *“And straightway the fountain of her blood was dried up; and she felt in her body that she was healed of that plague. And Jesus, immediately knowing in himself that virtue had gone out of him, turned him about in the press, and said, **Who touched my clothes?**”* (Mark 5:29-30) Jesus felt healing power being transferred to another. His question, *“**Who touched me?**”* is profound, for Christ KNEW who touched Him. So many in the crowd had touched Jesus in the bustle of the street, but none with the faith of this poor woman. We may call on Christ in vain if our faith is dead, but if our faith is real – even if small – the touch will bear fruit. Jesus gave comfort, not only to the body, but to the soul of the woman by telling her that her faith had made her whole – whole in every sense of the word. Not just whole in body, but whole in soul as well for Christ does not work half-way miracles. *“And the woman was made whole from that hour.”*

What are the most prominent points that we must take from this miracle of healing?

1. **IMPORTANCE OF PREACHING:** The woman had, at least, HEARD of Jesus. Unless we hear first, we cannot come by faith to Christ. *“So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”* (Romans 10:17) The woman had heard the report and, though she may not have known Christ deeply, she hung onto that faint hope which just the hearing made available to her.
2. **RECOGNIZE OUR DIRE NEED:** The woman had a serious health problem but, greater still, is that deadly disease that afflicts every child born of woman – SIN! She recognized her need, and she recognized that the need could be satisfied in Christ! The Woman had spent all of her savings on doctors who had not helped her in the least. The world cannot satisfy our want, but Jesus can. She had only ONE hope left – the Lord Jesus Christ. So do we if we only will admit it.
3. **DREW NEAR TO THE SOURCE OF OUR HEALING AND SALVATION:** The woman, though frail and suffering, dragged her diseased body to Christ. She did not come proudly or arrogantly, but fell in behind the crowd seeking to draw near enough as to only touch the hem of His garment. Those nearest to Jesus almost prevented her from approaching, but she allowed no impediment to her coming to Christ. We, too, must have that **persistence** once we know our need, and the source of its satisfaction in Christ. We cannot worship Jesus from a distance – we must TOUCH His heart with our own hearts. We must communicate our need in prayer whether by act or word.
4. **HAVE THE FAITH TO ACKNOWLEDGE THAT CHRIST CAN SUPPLY OUR NEED:** *“For she said within herself, If I may but touch his garment, I shall be whole.”* We do not come to Christ with reservations. There are no if’s involved in faith except the IF expressed by the woman – *“If”* I can draw so near Him as to touch only His hem, I shall be healed.

5. **NO ONE APPROACHES JESUS IN FAITH WITHOUT HIS KNOWLEDGE:** *“But Jesus turned him about, and when he saw her, he said, **Daughter, be of good comfort; thy faith hath made thee whole.*** The one in greatest need and want among the crowd was the one whose TOUCH Jesus felt. She came in faith out of her need. Should we all not recognize our own depravity and need in coming to Christ rather than simply walking in His Presence for the benefit of our pride?

6. **IT IS THE WILL OF JESUS TO HEAL US OF OUR DISEASE OF SIN AND ALL OTHERS:** There is no delay in granting forgiveness to those who call upon Him with earnest heart. It is the influence of sin that brings sickness and disease upon the world – even among those who are otherwise innocent such as babes and little children. But if we have no faith in Jesus, He will not heal us. He is our healing medicine. If we do not take Him into our hearts, how can the medicine have its desired effect? *“And the woman was made whole from that hour.”*