

Reflections for 27th June 2021

4th Sunday after Trinity

The healing touch

In the story that forms the central part of this week's gospel reading, we find Jesus, as he often was, in the midst of a crowd that pressed close around him. But this time something was different, because Jesus suddenly looked around and asked, 'Who touched my clothes?' The disciples responded as if to say, 'What? Are you joking? We're stuck in the middle of this crowd. Who *hasn't* touched you?' But Jesus insisted that something particular had happened, and a woman slowly came forward, trembling with fear, and fell at his feet.

She was fearful because she shouldn't even have been in that crowd, as she had been suffering from a form of bleeding for twelve years. In the Jewish culture of that time, anyone who was bleeding was thought to be ritually 'unclean', and should have kept their distance from any religious gathering, and from other people – so that she could avoid touching them and making them 'unclean' as well. But, having heard about Jesus, she was so desperate to get to him and to seek healing that she joined the tightly packed crowd, and reached out to touch even the edge of his cloak – and that touch was enough for her life to be changed.

When he heard her story, Jesus' response was to say to her, 'Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your suffering.' And her physical healing also meant that her isolation as someone 'unclean' was brought to an end, and she could be restored to the shared life of her community.

So may we be ready to follow her bold example, and to reach out in faith to seek the touch of God's healing and peace in Jesus Christ, and so may we know in our hearts and lives the truth of Jesus' words to this woman:

Go in peace and be freed from your suffering

Revd John Waller

O Christ for whom we search,
our help when help has failed,
give us courage to admit our need
and to ask to be made whole;
that, being touched by you,
we may be raised to new life
in the power of your name. Amen.

Bible readings: Lamentations 3. 23-33; 2 Corinthians 8. 7-24; Mark 5. 21-43

Story: 'The woman who wanted to be healed' (based on part of the gospel reading)