

Thoughts of Jesus

How Well Do You Know Him?

PICTURE a throng of people on the shore of Galilee near Capernaum. They have been waiting since early morning for the return of Jesus. As He steps from the boat in which He has been sailing, the eager expectant multitude presses close upon Him. Curious, they follow Him into the village to the home of Matthew.

While the people stand in the crowded street, wondering what this new day will bring forth, Jairus, the ruler of the synagogue, appears, and calls upon Jesus to come and help his daughter, who is at the point of death.

Now Jesus comes forth as He responds to this plea. He walks along beside the ruler as best He can with the people surrounding Him. In that throng is a poor afflicted woman. She has spent all she had on many physicians, but was "nothing bettered" and "rather grew worse," as the Sacred Record states. She has heard of the healing power of this great Man of Galilee. She has summoned her waning strength and joined the crowd as they wait for Him.

Now, how can she possibly get near Him? The press of the people almost suffocates her. It seems that she will fail of her purpose.

But wait! The heart of this woman thrills as she sees Jesus coming toward her. He seems to be seeking her out! Yes, He is almost at arm's length! Daring not to speak to Him, she says to herself, "If I may but touch his garment, I shall be whole." What a faith is this! There He is before her. She may never be so close to Him again. So stooping quickly, she puts forth her hand and touches His garment as He slowly passes by.

At once the woman feels a thrill go through her body. Triumphantly she stands up and turns aside, not daring to attract attention by speaking to Jesus. But the Great Physician knows what has taken place. Indeed, the deep longing and simple faith of this poor woman draw Him closer to her so that she might have an opportunity to touch Him.

Now Jesus speaks. "Who touched me?" He says. As usual, the impetuous Peter, not knowing what is going on, but wanting to say something, speaks up, "Master, the multitude throng thee and press thee, and says thou, Who touched me?"

Jesus replies, "Somebody hath touched me: for I perceive that virtue is gone out of me." Then turning to the timid woman, He says, "Daughter, be of good comfort: thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace."

This inspiring chapter in the life of Jesus reveals His thoughtfulness and compassion for the weak and lonely, those lost in the crowd. We like to read it again and again. But let us not overlook the most important lesson there is in it for us.

Many in that throng were pressed close to the side of Jesus as they drifted along with the crowd, but only one consciously, voluntarily, hopefully touched Him and obtained the blessing she needed so much. There was no virtue in her touch. That would be superstition. But the faith that prompted the touch, the deep longing that urged the woman on, brought her healing. Yes, just one deliberate touch was

sufficient to release her from her ills and answer her prayers. What a difference there was between the casual touch of the crowd and the conscious touch of this poor sick woman!

“Just one touch as He moves along,
Pushed and pressed by the jostling throng,
Just one touch and the weak was strong,
Cured by the Healer divine.”

“The Savior could distinguish the touch of faith from the casual contact of the careless throng.” “To talk of religion in a casual way, to pray without soul-hunger and living faith, avails nothing. A nominal faith in Christ, which accepts Him merely as a Savior of the world, can never bring healing to the soul.” - The Desire of Ages, pages 344, 347.

Two persons may attend the same service. One will come away blessed; the other will experience no special uplift. The first will talk of the spiritual lessons brought out by the speaker. The other will refer to his oratory, his appearance, and say, perhaps, “Wasn't that a wonderful sermon?” but remember little of its content.

Two persons will be observing the same scene. One giving it a casual look will say of the trees, “How beautiful!” But the other sees the trees and much more, and besides, thinks of the Creator who made them all for our enjoyment.

Would you like to know Jesus better? Casual contact with Him will be of little help. To see Him in the throng of some great meeting, to read about Him in some book, to listen to others talk about Him, will not give you the personal, conscious contact with Him that you must have if you wish to truly know Him.

The frail woman of Galilee could have seen Him at a distance, and thrilled at the sight, but she never would have been healed if she had not pressed close to Him and in conscious faith touched Him.

The thoughtless contact of the multitude drew no virtue from Jesus. Being near to Him that day did not bring the deep satisfaction and fullness of joy to most of those people that it might have done. So it may be with us who would know Him better. We may meet Him in prayer. We may see Him revealed in the Scriptures. But unless the heart is in these devotions and the mind attentive to them, we will receive no healing balm.

The thoughtless repetition of prayers and the indifferent perusal of Sacred Scripture may leave us as barren as the hills of Gilboa. What a pity that we do not consciously tap these reservoirs of blessing and clear the channel into our souls for receiving the water of life.

“Prayer and preaching, without the exercise of living faith in God, will be in vain. But the touch of faith opens to us the divine treasure house of power and wisdom. . . . This living faith is our great need today.” Testimonies, volume 5, page 288.

It was the conscious, deliberate touch of faith that wrought such great blessing for the woman of Galilee. Though she was one of a multitude that followed the Lord, it was this that separated her from others and brought her the release from pain that they missed.

It was not great faith that she possessed, only enough to say as she approached her Lord, “If I may but touch his garment, I shall be whole,” and to act upon it. Can we not do as much?

Would you like to receive the help, the comfort, the joy, that others are finding in Jesus? Then you must feel your need of the blessings that only He can give you. You must have more than a nodding acquaintance with Him. You must deliberately and hopefully search Him out and cultivate His friendship.

This is the only way that we learn to know our earthly friends. How could it be otherwise with this heavenly Friend?

Now, open your Bible with a new and prayerful purpose. Peruse every detail that describes the life of Jesus. Study the prophecies and promises that relate to Him. Read the Bible as the life record of a Person. Learn all you can about Him as Creator, as Leader and Deliverer of Israel, as Son of man, as Substitute and Mediator, as coming Redeemer and King. There is so much to learn about Him. And the better you know Him, the more you will love Him.

JESUS, THE VERY THOUGHT OF THEE

Jesus, the very thought of Thee,
With sweetness fills my breast;
But sweeter far Thy face to see,
And in Thy presence rest.

No voice can sing, no heart can frame,
Nor can the memory find
A sweeter sound than Jesus' name,
The Savior of mankind.

O hope of every contrite heart!
O joy of all the meek,
To those who fall, how kind Thou art!
How good to those who seek!

But what to those who find? Ah! this
Nor tongue nor pen can show:
The love of Jesus-what it is,
None but His loved ones know.

Jesus, our only joy be Thou,
As Thou our prize wilt be;
In Thee be all our glory now,
And through eternity.

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