

Luke 8:43-48

Sermon: **Let's show them with our gaze that God loves them**

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BELIEVE THAT JESUS IS THE "CHRIST"

1. In John it is written that the signs (miracles) were recorded so that we may believe that Jesus is the Christ.¹ And this is the key thing we must understand: the Gospels were not written to bless our life here and now; they were not written to show us *one* of many ways to become spiritual; they were not written so we could choose the Christian faith instead of Islam, Judaism, Buddhism, or Hinduism.

1.1 All religions have their sacred books, but what they do not have is: Jesus Christ. The Gospels were written—as John himself said—so that we may believe that Jesus is the "Christ," and believe in everything that His title "Christ" carries with it.

1.2 And all the miracles we have studied so far, and the ones we will study in the future, were written for only one reason—I repeat—so that we may believe that Jesus is the "Christ."

HOW TO CONTROL A CROWD

2. In the passage before us, we have Jesus who decided to go with His disciples to Jairus—the synagogue official—so that He might heal his daughter from a severe illness.

2.1 I decided to first interpret the event that happened along the way, while Jesus, the disciples, Jairus, and a large crowd were walking toward Jairus's house. It is the event in which a woman touched Jesus' garment and was miraculously healed, and afterward we will return to Jairus and his daughter.

2.3 (Luke 8:43–48) **And a woman who had a hemorrhage for twelve years, and could not be healed by anyone, came up behind Him and touched the fringe of His cloak, and immediately her hemorrhage stopped. And Jesus said, "Who is the one who touched Me?" And while they were all**

¹ John 20:30-31

denying it, Peter said, "Master, the people are crowding and pressing in on You." But Jesus said, "Someone did touch Me, for I was aware that power had left Me." When the woman saw that she had not escaped notice, she came trembling and fell down before Him, and declared in the presence of all the people the reason why she had touched Him, and how she had been immediately healed. And He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace."

2.4 All right, let us compare this text with Mark.

2.5 **(Mark 5:24–34)** And He went off with him; and a large crowd was following Him and pressing in on Him. A woman who had had a hemorrhage for twelve years, and had endured much at the hands of many physicians, and had spent all that she had and was not helped at all, but rather had grown worse—after hearing about Jesus, she came up in the crowd behind Him and touched His cloak. For she thought, "If I just touch His garments, I will get well." Immediately the flow of her blood was dried up; and she felt in her body that she was healed of her disease. Immediately Jesus, perceiving in Himself that the power proceeding from Him had gone forth, turned around in the crowd and said, "Who touched My garments?" And His disciples said to Him, "You see the crowd pressing in on You, and You say, 'Who touched Me?'" And He looked around to see the woman who had done this. But the woman, fearing and trembling, aware of what had happened to her, came and fell down before Him and told Him the whole truth. And He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace and be healed of your disease."

2.6 All right, let me repeat: Jesus set off with Jairus toward his house, and during the walk a multitude of people followed Him. Not only did they follow Him—they were pressing against Him.

2.7 As I reflected on this event, I came to the conclusion that the disciples, during Jesus' ministry, had to practice how to manage and control a crowd of people. They certainly had some kind of formation—who stood where. Those who were strongest were probably positioned closest to Jesus, while others were placed farther out to get a broader view of the situation.

2.8 Perhaps some of them were positioned on rooftops in order to warn the others if Roman soldiers or someone else was approaching. It is also likely that an escape plan—in case of potential trouble—was prepared, if they had the time for such preparation.

2.9 We know from the biblical accounts that Jesus' travels were often unpredictable, so it was not possible to plan in detail everything they desired. They often had to deal, on the spot, with the event in which they found themselves at that moment.

BEING UNCLEAN

3. All right, let us continue. Before the sick woman touches Jesus, I want to speak a little about her. When we read what she endured for twelve years, our reaction should be: *"Oh my, how sorry I feel for this poor woman!"* — bleeding, going to various doctors, perhaps even to pagan healers, losing her entire possessions just to be healed, rejection by her own community, constant pain along with the bleeding... a tragedy, nothing else.

3.1 What I personally can do is in some way identify with this woman, but we will not speak about me—you have already heard enough in previous sermons about my situation.

3.2 Yet perhaps my situation gives me a better insight into how this woman felt during the course of her illness.

3.3 The first thing I want to share with you is her culture's perspective on the disease she carried. According to the Levitical Law, she was unclean. Everything she touched was unclean; if you accidentally brushed against her while passing by, you became unclean. If you happened to touch something she had touched before you—you were unclean.

3.4 And what did it mean to be unclean? It meant that you had to wash all the clothes you were wearing, you had to go into a room where no one else was—in isolation—and then spend seven days there. Only after seven days could you leave the room.²

— Of course, the entire process of the ceremonial ritual — let us call it that — was supervised by an official from the religious leadership of that time. —

3.3 In connection with this, considering the commandments of the Levitical Law, can we imagine what one day of this woman's life looked like? We cannot, I believe! This was a woman whom her entire people looked at with suspicion, she was rejected by everyone, perhaps even by her own family.

ONE DAY

4. Regardless, let us try to imagine what one day of this woman's life looked like. Perhaps we should begin with a simpler problem... the hygienic challenge.

4.1 She knew, poor woman, that she had to go daily to wherever there was water so she could wash her clothes—because of the continual bleeding—but she had to search for a location where no one was present or wait until everyone left so that she could wash her garments. Very likely she was often driven away by others who did not want to wash their clothes where she washed hers... for they would become unclean if they did so.

4.2 Let us imagine... how many cloths she had to wash daily in order to stop the bleeding from showing on her garment or, God forbid, that someone else might see it. *"That would be a great shame,"* she said to herself throughout *the day*. Let me now ask all of us: was this a simple problem for her—hygiene? Of course it was not!

4.3 Let us mention one more problem before continuing with the text: the psychological and spiritual challenges. Not to mention those—they were surely at times terrifying for her: loneliness, confusion, depression, bitterness, constant inner battles: *"Why me, God?"*

² Leviticus 15:19-32

4.4 With that said, we do not know what she was like as a person—was she shy by nature, or was she an extroverted person?

A FIRM DECISION

5. Whatever the case, before us now stands a lonely and sick woman who said within herself, *"If I only touch His garments, I will be healed!"*

5.1 She sounds very confident as she thinks this to herself, doesn't she? I wonder: is this yet another desperate attempt on her part, in the sense of, *"I have tried everything else, what do I have to lose? I have already lost everything: money, friends... I will go and touch the garments of this man called Jesus, and whatever happens—happens"*? Or is this a matter of genuine faith, where she, encouraged by the testimonies of those who were healed in a similar way when Jesus gave His Sermon on the Mount, decided to believe that Jesus could truly do this.

5.2 It is difficult to answer which of these influenced her more. If I had to choose, I would say both examples played a role in the firm decision she made. What stands out to me is the manner in which she did it. She took advantage of a situation that was, to put it mildly, chaotic.

5.3 Let us remind ourselves: the multitude was pressing against Him and following Him, and because of all this I believe that at some point she said to herself, *"I do not know whether this Teacher would receive me, after all, I am unclean, but I know He can heal me—I have heard of His works and the miracles He performed—I will use this crowd, I will approach Him quietly from behind, I only need to touch His garments and I will be healed, and He will not even notice that I touched them."*

5.4 Does this sound like a possible scenario to you? To me personally, yes. And why yes? Traumatized by daily rejection—*"She is unclean, stay away from us!"*—I believe the sick woman, as the years passed, accepted that no one wanted to be near her—perhaps not even Jesus. When I think about it, her attitude is very similar to the attitude of the leper who approached Jesus with the words, *"Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean!"*³

5.5 Whatever the case, the moment she touched Him, she felt that she had been healed. A beautiful moment for her personally. In excitement, in joyful disbelief at what had just happened to her, she slipped quietly through the crowd with the intention of disappearing—she was used to doing that often, I believe—slipping through the crowd unnoticed.

5.6 But she did not succeed. Jesus cried out loudly, *"Who touched My garment?"*

5.7 Naturally, the disciples were amazed at their Teacher's question: *"What do You mean, who touched You? Look around You—there is no one who hasn't physically touched You in this massive crowd pressing around us."* In other words, they thought to themselves, *"Why ask that question when the answer seems obvious?"*

³ Luke 5:12 — an explanation of what the leper meant by that statement can be found in sermon no. 27, §§2.–3.

5.8 But Jesus knew why He was asking... He likely repeated the question loudly several times. And when everyone stopped and grew silent, He looked at her—the healed woman who wanted to hide. He looked at the traumatized woman who for twelve years, twelve years, had been rejected by every human being who encountered her.

5.9 And when she realized she could not avoid answering, trembling from the excitement of what had happened, and in fear of what Jesus would now say to her in front of everyone, she fell before Him and before them all poured out everything she had carried in her soul for twelve years. He then said to her, *“Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace, and be healed of your disease.”*

5.10 Although she may have doubted that Jesus would reject her like everyone else, He proved to her and to others that He would not. In other words, had she come to Him directly and asked Him to heal her, He would have done it.

5.11 I cannot even imagine what Jesus' acceptance meant to this woman. For the first time in many years she did not feel alone in the world; for the first time in a long time she felt the love of God.

FINALLY WASHING CLOTHES WITH OTHER WOMEN

6. All right, let us continue. “Your faith has made you well”—I have already spoken about this in previous sermons.⁴ So you may repeat it to yourselves if you wish.

6.1 Jesus addresses her with: “Daughter...” As far as I know, Jesus used that expression only one other time during His ministry, just before His crucifixion... when He said, “Daughters of Jerusalem...”⁵ I thought that perhaps Jesus in this way confirms who His brother, daughter, father, or mother is.⁶ In other words, if Jesus calls someone by these titles, He confirms that he or she is chosen to inherit the kingdom of God. But I decided not to go that far; perhaps it was simply a manner of speech that Israelites used in certain situations.

6.2 “Go in peace”—and she certainly needed peace, my dear friends. I believe she enjoyed for months the joy she had received from God. But I also believe this happened at some point: although Jesus did not literally say to her, *“Go and show the priests that God has healed you and offer a sacrifice in gratitude”*... I believe she eventually did that, because only then was she publicly clean.

— In other words, people finally greeted her, and at last others wanted to wash their clothes beside her. —

A CRUEL LAW?

7. Before I finish, I want to share with you a struggle that is presently within me. It concerns the Levitical Law. This law was nothing short of cruel toward this woman, was it not?

⁴ Sermon no. 45, §§5.-5.9

⁵ Luke 23:26-28

⁶ Luke 8:19-21

7.1 How can one show the Image of God toward another human being when God's own law forbids it? Is God not contradicting Himself in this case? These are difficult questions to answer, but I will try.

7.2 The Old Testament has helped me greatly to understand what is actually happening here. Without the Old Testament, we cannot understand why Jesus, in certain situations, appeared—at first glance, even to His own disciples—contradictory to the Law of Moses. But was He truly contradictory?

7.3 With that said, let us go to the Old Testament so I can show you what I mean by the statement above.

7.4 After Yahweh brought His future chosen people out of Egypt, He said to them in Exodus 15:26: "And He said, 'If you will give earnest heed to the voice of the LORD your God, and do what is right in His sight, and give ear to His commandments and keep all His statutes, I will put none of the diseases on you which I have put on the Egyptians; for I, the LORD, am your healer.'"

7.5 Let us read another part of a passage found in Exodus 40:34–38: "Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. Throughout all their journeys the cloud of the LORD was in the tabernacle by day, and there was fire in it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel."

7.6 All right, now I will try to answer the questions mentioned above. If you have read the Old Testament, then you know that Israel as a nation never earnestly kept the moral part of God's commandments. And you also know that at one point Yahweh decided to depart from Israel for that very reason. After He departed, He spoke to them through the prophets, but never again—until the coming of Jesus Christ—did He literally dwell among His people as the cloud of the LORD.

7.5 Unfortunately, through the woman's disease, through the leper's disease, and through many others... Israel as a nation had a visual proof that they had not fulfilled the conditions they were required to fulfill as a people in order to be blessed by Yahweh. Because of their disobedience, God allowed diseases to come upon them, just as He had said He would.

7.6 But where the Israelites failed, I believe, is in this: they did not look upon this woman with eyes of sorrow, in the sense of, *"We as a nation are cursed by God, and rightly so; throughout our entire history we have been a stiff-necked people, a people disobedient to our God. Please, God, forgive us and give us hearts that love You and Your law. This woman and all the others are proof to us that You have departed from us; please return and dwell among us."*

7.7 And had they thought this way, they would have known that the Levitical Law was not prescribed to show who was God's child and who was not. And that is what they believed in their hearts because of the leaven (teaching) of the Pharisees by which they were fed.

7.8 And so they treated this woman, the leper, and all who were considered unclean according to the oral tradition of that time. Unfortunately, they did not understand the message that God was sending through these people, which was that they—as ordinary folk, and the Pharisees, and the priests, and the Sadducees, and the scribes... all together, meaning... were "morally unclean" before their God.

7.9 Had they understood and believed that, they would have treated the sick woman differently; they would not have rejected her, and they would have known that the Levitical Law was not, and could never be, in first place.

7.10 In first place are the Moral Commandments of God, and one of the most important is this: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." The Israelites knew how to recite God's commandments by heart, but they did not put them into practice; for if they had... the sick woman, the leper, and many others—though they would have carried their illness through life—would not have carried it alone; the people would have carried it with them.

7.11 Their nation would not have abandoned them as it so often did.

7.12 Can we imagine how different the life of the sick woman would have looked if her people had put into practice: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself"?

7.13 Furthermore, one of the reasons the Levitical Law was prescribed in that time (Moses' era) was to visually distinguish the reasonable ceremonial practices of the Israelites from the insane and irrational practices of the pagans.

7.14 To put it vividly: one of the pagan rituals was offering their own children as sacrifices to their gods in order to please them. If they did that, then what must their practices concerning hygienic handling of sexual uncleanness have looked like? I cannot even imagine.

7.15 All right, I conclude the following: I believe it was man who was cruel toward the sick woman, not God. And why? Because man misinterpreted God's commandments. Likewise, God is not contradictory to Himself; He clearly and consistently communicated to His people that His moral commandments stand above the ceremonial commandments. And therefore they were entirely free to show the Image of their God toward the sick woman.

GOD IS A GOOD GOD

8. All right... but the question arises: *"Isn't it God, Danijel, who gave sickness to everyone — to this woman and to the leper? And if He did, how then can He be a good God?"* My answer would be: yes, God gave this woman her illness — but for what purpose? A simple answer would be:

1. So that the Israelites would see that they were not on the right path, and that they still had time to return to their God.
2. And what did this illness mean for the woman? Considering my own experience, my simple answer would be: so that she might see the Glory of God that came upon her when she touched His Son, Jesus Christ.

8.1 In connection with that, let me just say: even though I have not been healed, ever since I touched Jesus, my life has been turned upside down; every day I see the Glory of God in my own life, and in the life of my wife and my children.

8.2 All right, let me return to my attempt to answer the question mentioned above. What I believe is this: in both cases we see God's mercy and patience, not His evil nature. His plan is crowned with the promise that the end will be good for all who love Him... I repeat, the end of this age in which we all live, not the journey we are currently going through.

8.3 The Bible teaches us that God is not evil, but it is up to us in our free will to decide whether God has the right to do in His own reality whatever He wishes in order to accomplish His purposes.

8.4 I personally believe that this is where the greatest human problem lies; we do not want to accept that we are "creatures," and that He is our "Creator." And that His title as Creator gives Him the right to guide His reality according to His plan, not according to our plan.

8.5 In other words, the question, "Is God truly good?" is not the main question we must ask ourselves as human beings. The main question we must ask is: "Do we truly accept that we are creatures who by nature ought to be subject to the will of our Creator, or do we want to be our own creators?"

— I would say that most people want to be their own creators. That is where our greatest problem lies; and sadly, it leads us to destruction. —

8.6 Before we reach the very end, let us see how Jesus viewed the (ceremonial law of God versus the moral law of God). According to the text, He receives the sick woman, He heals the woman, and by that gesture He shows all those present this, I believe: *"You were supposed to carry this woman's burden together with her, not reject her. My dear Israelites, you were supposed to see through this woman that you are morally unclean before your God and repent because of it... but no, you exalted yourselves in your hearts and said: 'We are God's, while this woman is not.' Do you know what the greatest irony is? She, through her faith — though ceremonially unclean — has shown that she is morally clean, unlike you who are morally unclean. Stop believing the Pharisaic leaven. Who gave them the right to say, 'We know what Yahweh is saying to us through the Scripture'? Who gave them that right? Is Yahweh our God among us? Is Yahweh literally present in the form of a cloud in His dwelling as He was in the days of Moses? Is that not enough proof for you that the Pharisees, the priests, and the scribes have taken for themselves the right to interpret Scripture however they wish... and that such interpretation is not from God. My dear Israelites, wake up from your sleep, return to God and believe that I am the Son of God who has come to teach you how the Scripture must be interpreted, and finally, how one must behave — what values an Israelite must possess who will inherit the kingdom of God."*

8.7 All right, that would be all for this event.

8.8 Finally, let us not allow our own assumptions — the teachings we received while growing up within the culture to which we belong — to paralyze us. In other words, let us look into the eyes of those who are rejected and show them, through our gaze, that God loves them. Let us say to them: *"My dear ones, we are here for you if you need us."*