



Dear Friends,

Earlier this week, I was reading Mark's gospel with a friend. He read out loud the story of the woman with a bleeding disorder in Mark 5. The woman had suffered for years. Even though she had spent all her money seeing doctors, she got worse instead of better.

The woman, out of desperation, looks for Jesus to heal her. She maneuvers her way through the crowd to reach Jesus. But rather than speak to him, the woman simply reaches out to touch his cloak. She responds, "If I just touch his clothes, I will be healed." (Mark 5:28). And that is precisely what happened.

That is not the end of the story. Jesus realizes that power has gone out from him. So, he turns to the crowd and asks, "Who touched my clothes?" The disciples respond by saying something like, "Do you see all these people around you? How is it possible to know who touched you?"

But Jesus is intent on knowing who touched him. He keeps looking to find the person. Eventually, the woman comes and falls at Jesus' feet and tells him what happened. Jesus looks at her and says, "Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your suffering" (Mark 5:34).

My friend is deeply moved by the story. While he reads, his voice quivers with emotion. His response makes me realize that I have become too familiar with this story. His visible emotion evokes my own emotional response.

I am especially moved by how intent Jesus is to see this woman. I wonder whether she chose to simply touch Jesus' clothes rather than speak to him because she saw herself as invisible to others. Or because when others saw her, they labelled her as "the sick woman."

Jesus sees this woman. This woman is not invisible to him. He relates to her with tenderness. He calls her, "daughter." He speaks words of love, blessing and healing. And in the context of Mark's gospel, she is a model of faith in Jesus, unlike the disciples and those in Jesus' hometown (see Mark 4:35-41; Mark 6:1-6).

This story teaches that God sees you and me. When God sees a person, he wants to know them. He sees people as whole persons. He sees us because he wants a relationship with us. He sees us because he loves us and wants to save and bless us.

I have just finished reading a book about how blind we are to one another in this cultural moment. David Brooks writes:

We live in an environment in which political animosities, technological dehumanization, and social breakdown undermine connection, strain friendships, erase intimacy, and foster distrust. We're living in the middle of some sort of vast emotional, relational, and spiritual crisis. It is as if people across society have lost the ability to see and understand one another, thus producing a culture that can be brutalizing and isolating.[1]

If we grasp how God sees us in Christ, as his beloved child who he deeply cares for and blesses, we will be able to see and understand others. Not just those like me. But others different from me. And when we see others to know and understand them, we may find they are more like us than we realized. Because what we all share in common is that God created us to love him and one another.

God Bless,
Mark Adams.

[1] David Brooks, *How to Know a Person: The Art of Seeing Others Deeply and Being Deeply Seen*, (Dublin: Allen Lane, 2023), 97.