

Renewing Strength: When Life Makes Us Anxious

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Mark 5:24-34

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We are mostly English-speaking American Gentiles living in a modern era with access to the greatest medical resources in the world. We need help understanding the background this hopeless woman experienced 2,000 years ago. Leviticus 15 gave strict instructions about women like her. There was also great significance that she touched the hem of his garment (Numbers 15). It makes us wonder what part of Saul's robe David cut off (a tassel) at Engedi? The tassel represented God's covering and protection, so when David cut it off, Saul "got it." This poor woman had exhausted her money to remedy her health issue over a twelve-year period. She had spent all her money on doctors and was not only still sick but was broke. She was stuck in a chronic pattern of discomfort. This is another glimpse of the magnificent and noble Jesus of Nazareth. He never ceased to amaze His disciples. No wonder they followed Him – seeing these things would make us echo Peter's words, *"You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God."* Sometimes people had faith in the Gospels. Sometimes they didn't. Sometimes Jesus marveled at faith. At other times He supplied the faith. There is no magic faith formula in the Gospels or the New Testament. The miracles are always different. Sometimes we resist change until we have exhausted all other remedies and can no longer put it off. Our problems can be incentives to change. Just as ambition can be godly, I believe normal anxiety can be good when it forces us to get up and try something new.

APPLICATION: Normal anxiety is a fleeting reaction to stressful situations, such as a test, interview, or starting a new job. When we have an anxiety disorder it is ongoing and can cause us to feel anxious almost all the time, even when there is no obvious stressor. According to statistics, anxiety disorders affect over 40 million adults and 25 million children. Only about 36 percent of sufferers receive treatment (nearly half the people diagnosed with depression are also diagnosed with an anxiety disorder). It is important to know if you are dealing with normal worry or something more serious. If you think you are suffering from an anxiety disorder, seek professional help to get the treatment you need.

Sermon Journal intro for Better Together.

Mark 5:24-34

And there was a woman who had had a discharge of blood for twelve years,²⁶ and who had suffered much under many physicians, and had spent all that she had,

and was no better but rather grew worse. ²⁷ She had heard the reports about Jesus and came up behind him in the crowd and **touched** his garment. ²⁸ For she said, "If I **touch** even his garments, I will be made well." ²⁹ And immediately the flow of blood dried up, and she felt in her body that she was healed of her disease. ³⁰ And Jesus, perceiving in himself that power had gone out from him, immediately turned about in the crowd and said, "Who **touched** my garments?" ³¹ And his disciples said to him, "You see the crowd pressing around you, and yet you say, 'Who **touched** me?'" ³² And he looked around to see who had done it. ³³ But the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came in fear and trembling and fell down before him and told him the whole truth. ³⁴ And he said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace, and be healed of your disease."

It's hard to describe her awful life. This has been going on for 12 years. Where were you in 2008. Imagine being on this trajectory for this long. She was physically anemic – in a weakened state. She was fiscally bankrupt from spending all her money on doctors and cures. Socially, she was cut off from everyone. Her family and friends couldn't touch her, else they might catch her disease. She could've been homeless – like living in a leper colony. Would she ever be well? Would her life always be like this?

²⁷ She had heard the reports about Jesus and came up behind him in the crowd and touched his garment. "Maybe Jesus can help me." She touched the hem of His garment. She was healed.

³⁰ Jesus, perceiving in himself that power had gone out from him, immediately turned about in the crowd and said, "Who touched my garments?" ³¹ And his disciples said to him, "You see the crowd pressing around you, and yet you say, 'Who touched me?'" ³² And he looked around to see who had done it. Variations of "Touch" is used 4x here.

³³ But the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came in fear and trembling and fell down before him and told him the whole truth. ³⁴ And he said to her, "**Daughter**, your faith has made you well; go in peace, and be healed of your disease." "Daughter" – a term of endearment Peace was the result. This isolated, separated and disconnected woman was reconnected again. Here's an image of the beautiful painting of this scene from the **Magdala Center**.

3 observations

Genetics. Some are more genetically predisposed to it.

Anxiety is **Normal**. Expect it. Life is full of anxiety for good reason. If we don't have anxiety, something is wrong with us. We can have too little or too much– it's a matter of finding the right measure. We will always have something that makes us anxious. There are many causes.

Circumstances. Health, finances, relationships, spirituality. She had every right to be full of anxiety.

8 ways to deal with Anxiety:

Do something. Take action. Come up with a plan. To her credit, the woman with an issue of blood did something. She wasn't passive.

Exercise. Eat right. Exercise your body. Exercise your mind. Read/study. Read Perception books 😊 Exercise your sense of humor. Lower your intensity.

Communicate. Talk about it. Be careful who you talk about it to, however. Not everyone is trustworthy. Not everyone will be helpful. (My story) "You're Only as sick as your secrets." **Listen** to others (shut up). Instead of always talking about you....Learn from others.

Self-Talk We are what we eat. We are also what we think. "Self-talk" is what we think but do not say. What we say comes from what we are thinking. It's been estimated we have 70,000 thoughts per day. The wheels always turn. Negative self-talk is often framed dramatically: "*I'm such an idiot. I can never do this right. I just made a fool of myself.*" We are often our harshest critic. We end up with catastrophic thinking, blaming, ruminating, rehashing or rehearsing what we will do next. Our inner critic can seize our minds. Can you imagine what her self-talk would have been?

Some helpful self-talk for me: "**Self-differentiation**" and "**have a calm, non-anxious presence.**"

Philippians 4:4-7 *Rejoice in the Lord always; again, I will say, Rejoice. Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*

Philippians 4:11-13 *Not that I am speaking of being in need, for I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content. I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need. I can do all things through him who strengthens me.*

Faith. Lean in to the Kingdom of God. Learn scripture/prayer. Memorize scripture. Find Christian community. Sing. Listen to Christian music.

Serve. Help Others Follow Jesus. Sign up for Day of Service.

Lower your expectations...raise your commitment. Your anxiety will never completely go away. Cut yourself some slack. I just read Paul's admonition to rejoice, yet HE had anxiety: *And, apart from other things, there is the daily pressure on me of my anxiety for all the churches. Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is made to fall, and I am not indignant?* **2 Corinthians 11:28-29**

Know who you are in Christ: A Daughter – beloved. This is the only time in the gospels Jesus called someone a “daughter.” This one who had been abandoned and disconnected, was now brought back into the family and was beloved. Jesus’ presence changes everything. That’s why we are “Helping Others Follow Jesus.” He forgives our sin. He gives us a mission and a message in life. We have something to say and something to live for. And I say “we” because He gives us the power of community through the Holy Spirit and the community of believers, His church. No matter what else happens, he gives us eternal life.

Lord of my darkest place – let in your light
Lord of my greatest fear – let in your peace
Lord of my most bitter shame – let in your word of grace
Lord of my oldest grudge – let in your forgiveness
Lord of my deepest anger – let it out
Lord of my loneliest moment – let in your presence
Lord of my truest self – my all; let in your wholeness