

**Lent Series Listen: Hearing That Still, Small Voice-Finding Your Own  
LENT 4 “Finding Your Power: Listening for Healing”**

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4<sup>th</sup> SUNDAY IN LENT

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The New Testament lesson is from Mark’s gospel, chapter 5, verses 24 through 34. [A] large crowd followed Jesus and pressed in on him. Now there was a woman who had been suffering from hemorrhages for twelve years. She had endured much under many physicians, and had spent all that she had; and she was no better, but rather grew worse. She had heard about Jesus, and came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak, for she said, “If I but touch his clothes, I will be made well.”

Immediately her hemorrhage stopped; and she felt in her body that she was healed of her disease. Immediately aware that power had gone forth from him, Jesus turned about in the crowd and said, “Who touched my clothes?” And his disciples said to him, “You see the crowd pressing in on you; how can you say, ‘Who touched me?’”

He looked all around to see who had done it. But the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came in fear and trembling, fell down before him, and told him the whole truth. He said to her, “Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace, and be healed of your disease.” This is God’s word for God’s people.

Let's pray together. God we pray blessing on the hearing, reading, and understanding of your word today. Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of our hearts be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, our rock and our redeemer. Amen. Peace be with you!

Prayer—it might be #1 on your list of spiritual practices, especially during Lent. Prayer for some is like breathing. For others, it's more challenging. And for many of us, there are those moments we struggle to even create time to pray.

We may battle a routine grocery list of items spoken at God and then checked off, not feeling the connection, having doubts about prayer's power. But, we all long for that intimate and effective prayer time alone and connected to God.

To pray can be a time that needs to be taken by force feeling like spiritual warfare. We create the time when we thought it wasn't even there. We steal the time, take the phone off the hook, go to bed earlier, eat our lunch in the car at work and then pray. We make do our best to make space and look forward to the time when everything—stops—and comes to a standstill—*except*—you and God.

People say the mechanics of prayer involves a kind of energy that's funneled toward and through a focal point. We call on the Holy Spirit's presence because we don't always know how to pray. We relax and listen to the spirit's gentle influence and our spirit bears witness with God's spirit. We sense the Spirit's power within, and we listen for the healing God provides.

Now, let's take a look at the gospel reading. The lesson spoke of a woman with an issue of blood. She was hemorrhaging constantly. She'd spent every penny she had seeing physicians for twelve years. Still, her condition grew worse; it was a physical *and* a financial strain. She heard about Jesus, and knew, if only she touched his clothes she'd be healed.

She knew it was a big risk. It was unlawful for her to be around people because of her illness, and for a Jewish woman, her particular issue was a curse. She was *continually* unclean. She couldn't enter the temple. She was a social outcast and ceremonially unclean but, she was willing to take the risk. And there she was, right in the middle of a huge crowd that was pushing, bumping, butting in front of and doing everything they could to rub up against Jesus, a main attraction.

That's the nature of crowds. People want to touch and push trying to get next to the one they've heard about. The entire crowd wanted to get close to Jesus to have contact *outwardly*. But the woman with the hemorrhaging was hoping for an effectual touch *inwardly*. A touch that wasn't *incidental*, but *intentional*.

For the woman to touch Jesus' clothes may have been more of an act of love rather than an act that sought her healing. Twelve years she had prayed. Perhaps at first, she prayed primarily for a physical healing. And then, after many years, she developed a deep love for God—valuing the relationship more than anything else—and not actually caring whether she'd be healed.

The woman spent years with the illness, no doubt she became more tolerant and was humbled by such an isolated life. She became so entangled with God that the acceptance and peace of her illness became her greatest gift.

When we engage with God consistently and intimately, valuing His presence in our lives more than anything else, our prayers have great power in their effects and with all those we come in contact with. We seek the relationship first not so much what we think our ultimate need in life may be.

In the crowd, the woman trembled with fear worried that she might be exposed for her uncleanness. When Jesus felt healing power go forth from him, he looked down and saw the woman at his feet. Jesus said, “Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace, and be healed of your disease.”

Prayer may not give us what we want, when we want, but when we listen and pray, faith will do what is right for us. Take that risk and pursue a relationship with Christ. Value the time you spend with your Healer. Amen.