

THE REAL JESUS
A Series on the Book of Mark
“Desperado”
Mark 5:21-34
New City Church of LA
November 23, 2008
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Vision of New City

Welcome to New City. We’re a multi-ethnic, multi-socioeconomic come-as-you-are church in downtown LA. We’re a church where everyone is welcomed.

Vision statement: Focus on hanging out together, Thanksgiving Dinner gathering, and the retreat coming up!

We’re in the middle of a series called THE REAL JESUS. We’ve been going through the Book of Mark a passage at a time.

I. Introduction

The title of this message is “Desperado.” What do you think of when you hear that word? I know you’re thinking of Eagle’s song or Antonio Banderas’s movie.

I titled the message Desperado because I think there is an undercurrent of desperation in our culture. Most people think of desperation as something bad, but Jesus said, “Blessed are the poor in spirit.” In other words, he says: “Blessed are the desperate.”

I Googled the word desperate, guess what I got? Most of the hits were about Desperate Housewives. Did you know that Desperate Housewives were the number 2 show in Television during its first season? Did you know that there are more than 120 million people worldwide who view the show weekly? Personally, I don’t know very much about the show, but I was curious as to why it is called “desperate housewives.” In fact, the term has become a cultural phenomenon. Oprah and Dr. Phil have done shows about “real” desperate housewives. The thing that seemed to hit home about the show is that there is an undercurrent of desperation even in the beautiful suburbia, where everything seems perfect. Marc Cherry, the creator of the show said that he was inspired by American Beauty, a movie about the desperate side of a seemingly perfect American family in the suburbs.

II. I’d like to look at a story of a woman who was desperate. Look to see if you can identify with her.

- Mark 5:21-26.

21When Jesus had again crossed over by boat to the other side of the lake, a large crowd gathered around him while he was by the lake. 22Then one of the synagogue rulers, named Jairus, came there. Seeing Jesus, he fell at his feet 23and pleaded earnestly with him, "My little daughter is dying. Please come and put your hands on her so that she will be healed and live." 24So Jesus went with him.

A large crowd followed and pressed around him. 25And a woman was there who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years. 26She had suffered a great deal under the care of many doctors and had spent all she had, yet instead of getting better she grew worse.

- She suffered a great deal. She was probably suffering from some kind of menstrual or uterine disorder, and it was incurable.
- She was broke. She spent all she had on doctors.
- She was probably lonely and hurt. The ceremonial laws in Leviticus 15:25-27 tell us that she would have been ritually unclean and anyone who came in contact with her would have been considered unclean. So, she could not even participate in the religious life of the community. She was a social outcast.
- She was probably depressed as well, particularly because she was loosing blood all the time, and therefore, anemic.
- She was desperate.

I am not sure if you can identify fully with her, but I think many of us live lives with undercurrents of desperation.

- Maybe you're struggling financially—living paycheck to paycheck. Or, maybe you lost your job and have been having a tough time finding another job. Maybe your business is failing; losing money; possibly losing your house and your savings.
- Maybe you've been struggling with your relationships. Maybe there is anger, bitterness and resentment. You've been hungry for warmth and love and approval. But, it's going no where.
- Maybe you have been struggling with your singleness. You try to meet someone but you just have not been able to meet that someone special. You're beginning to wonder if you'll ever meet that someone. And you are even starting to ask yourself if you are lovable.

- Maybe you just broke up with someone or maybe you're going through a divorce. And you feel beat up and your self-image is in the gutter.
- Maybe it's an addiction in your life—addicted to chemical substance, addicted to sex and pornography, addicted to greed and pride, addicted to temper, and you've been hiding it but even though you don't want to be like this you feel like you're stuck in a vicious cycle that you can't get out of.
- Maybe you're so desperate for approval and love that it feels like you don't have a foundation for living. You just go from pleasing one person to another.
- Even if things are going okay, maybe you are feeling a sense of meaninglessness in your life, a sense of emptiness you can't seem to shake.
- *There is this undercurrent of desperation in our lives.*

If you feel like this woman, I am here to tell you that there is hope. There is hope in Jesus Christ.

This bleeding woman, when she heard about Jesus—that he can heal, that he really cares, she made up her mind to go to him for healing.

27When she heard about Jesus, she came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak, 28because she thought, "If I just touch his clothes, I will be healed." 29Immediately her bleeding stopped and she felt in her body that she was freed from her suffering.

- She didn't have enough confidence and self-respect to go up to Jesus and ask for healing. So, she thought I'll just try to get to him and touch the edge of his cloak.
- So, even though the crowd was almost completely surrounding Jesus (Luke's version of the story says "As Jesus was on his way, the crowds almost crushed him"), she pushed through the crowd and touched the edge of Jesus' cloak. Maybe she even had to crawl through people legs to get to him.
- It was a touch of a desperate woman longing for healing!
- Then, the Bible tells us that her bleeding stopped immediately.
- She was healed!

How about you?

- You've heard about Jesus.

- You heard stories of what he has done in the lives of many people.
 - You've heard that Jesus can heal you physically, emotionally, relationally, and spiritually and bring your wholeness.
 - You've heard that Jesus can free you from a vicious cycle of sin and pain, emptiness, meaninglessness.
 - You've heard that you can find a new life. He'll give you a new life filled with excitement and the power of the Holy Spirit.
- But, you have to take a step of faith just as this woman did.
 - It's not a giant leap of faith. Just take a small step of faith.
 - Do you know what it means to take a step of faith?
 - It is acknowledge that you are desperately in need of God in your life.
 - It is to acknowledge that you're messed up, that you're a sinner, and you can't put yourself back together, and that you need help from God.
 - It is to turn your head towards Jesus and make up your mind to seek his power in your life.
 - It means to cry out to God for his power in your life so that you can live in his power.
 - Taking a step of faith doesn't mean you create some sort of psychosomatic energy from which to be healed, meaning you try to psych yourself into believing something you don't believe in.
 - It is to merely open yourself up to the work and power of God in your life.
 - Are you ready to take that step of faith in your life?
 - When you try to take that step, let me warn you, there might be roadblocks just as there were roadblocks for this woman.

There were so many people crowding Jesus that she could have easily said, forget it. There's no way, but she decided not to let seemingly impossible situation get in the way of her getting to Jesus. She did whatever it took to touch Jesus. She might even have crawled through the legs of the crowd to get to Jesus.

- In the same way, you have to get up and seek out Jesus. You have to cry out to Jesus. You have to open yourself up for the Spirit of God to enter your heart.
 - You have to be desperate for Jesus. Desperado for Jesus.
- When we take that step of faith, the power of Jesus Christ comes into our lives.
- If we don't take the step of faith, the power of Jesus doesn't manifest itself in our lives.
 - Why? Jesus respects our dignity. He will not force us to accept his power. Only if we open ourselves up to him will he come into our lives with power.
 - Think about the crowd. All these people were touching Jesus, but they didn't experience the power of Jesus.
 - Are you like one of the guys in the crowd? You are so near to Jesus, but so far away? You might be curious about God, but you've never taken the step of faith. You are not going to experience the power of God unless you take that step of faith. None of the people in the crowd experienced the power of God. Only this one woman, who took the step of faith, experienced the power of God.

When she took the step of faith, what did Jesus do? When we take a step of faith, what does Jesus do?

First, Jesus did not allow her to remain anonymous. It says in verse 30ff:

30At once Jesus realized that power had gone out from him. He turned around in the crowd and asked, "Who touched my clothes?"

31"You see the people crowding against you," his disciples answered, "and yet you can ask, 'Who touched me?'" (Luke tells us that Peter said this—smart-aleky Peter)

32But Jesus kept looking around to see who had done it. 33Then the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came and fell at his feet and, trembling with fear, told him the whole truth.

- She may have thought that she was anonymous to Jesus and God, but she was not anonymous to Jesus.

- When you take that step of faith, you are not a number; you are not person in the crowd; you are not anonymous to Jesus. He cares for you. He reveals his love for you.

Second, Jesus brought salvation to her life.

34He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your suffering."

- The word here that is translated as “healed” in NIV is translated as “saved” in NRSV and many other translations. It is the Greek word: *sozo*.
 - Almost all the time that it is used, it means to “save” in the sense of rescue from danger or divine salvation. The NIV Bible translates this as “healing” but I think it is more than mere healing of the body that Jesus is talking about here.
 - There are other words that Luke could have used to say healing—like *therapuo* and *iomai*—which were more common words to use to indicate healing from physical ailment.
 - This woman just wanted healing from her illness; what Jesus had in mind was far more than just physical healing. He wanted to bring true wholeness to her life.
 - You see, sometimes when we take the step of faith, we do it because we think God is going to bring healing of a certain physical disease, or bring us freedom from a certain pain or loneliness, or bring us a certain blessing in our lives—maybe material blessings or maybe relational blessings, but we come to God asking for a particular thing. All of these are great things to come to God for.
- But what Jesus has planned for us is so much bigger than what we pray for. Here’s what he brings:
 - He brings us to a relationship with him. He wants us to come into his family. That’s why Jesus calls her, “Daughter.” He wants her to know that she is a part of the family of God and her position in the family is that of the daughter of God. He takes someone who is anonymous to someone who is a princess of God. That’s what Jesus wants to do for you.
 - He brings *shalom* into our life. When Jesus said to her: “Go in peace,” he probably said it in Hebrew: *Shalom!*

This word doesn't just mean inner peace; it means wholeness, a complete healing physically, emotionally, spiritually, relationally; and it means peace not only with God, but also with your family, neighbors, and even nations.

- You see, God has so much more for us than what we seek him for.

IV. I want to ask you one more time:

- Do you feel desperate like this woman? Broken? Messed up. Need healing? Maybe it's not as explicit as this woman, but is there an undercurrent of desperation in your life?
- Do you want to do something about changing that? Would you take a step of faith and come to Jesus?
 - I invite you to raise your hand and touch the edge of the cloak of Jesus.
- When you do that, Jesus will come and bring you into a relationship with God and Shalom in your life.