

YOU'VE GOT TO PUSH THROUGH, IN ORDER TO GET TO... (Calven Celliers)

Read Mark 5:21 – 34.

The reality of life on this side of eternity, as you journey towards heaven, is that in order to get to, you have to push through. In order to get to the miracle God has for your life, in order to get the breakthrough you're so desperately waiting for, in order to get the moment of healing, in order to see the change, more often than not you are going to have to push through some pretty tough circumstances. Do not be deceived into ever believing that faith is in any way passive. True faith equals active participation. You've no doubt heard the phrase 'God's got this', and yes God is sovereign and in control of all things; God works through all things, including our problems, our trials, our tribulations, and our difficulties in order to develop us, to grow us, and to mature us in Christ. Yes, God's got you; yes, God's in control; yes, God will make a way, but that doesn't mean we can sit on our laurels and do diddly squat, you've got to work with God, and persist, you've got to persevere in faith. You've got to push through the barriers, the doubts, the difficulties, and the hard times. You've got to seek first the Kingdom of God above all else. You've got to get out the boat in the midst of the storm and keep your eyes on Jesus as you walk on the water in faith, while the waves crash around you and the wind threatens to blow you over. If life experience has taught me anything thus far, it's this: there will be times when you are going to have to push your way through the crowd, through the things in this life that seek to crowd Jesus out, and rob you of the miracle that awaits you. Faith demands active participation. Faith and determination are of great worth in the Lord's sight. For without faith, it is impossible to please God.

Straight after teaching His disciples how to pray, Jesus tells them this interesting little story – **Read Luke 11:5 – 10.** The phrase *"because of your shameless audacity he will surely get up and give you as much as you need..."* is a reminder that we are called to persistence. For the most part, the Bible presents persistence as a positive character quality. Persistence is linked closely with endurance and perseverance, and in this Scripture Jesus praises persistence in prayer. Persistence is positive when the goal is righteous. Persistence in prayer, in faith, and in doing good are all commended because the motivation is right. Despite how difficult things become, Jesus tells us in the Gospel of Mark that those who persist in faith, will be saved – **Read Mark 13:13.**

"It always seems impossible, until it's done." (Nelson Mandela)

Read Philippians 4:13.

Consider how this woman who had been subject to bleeding for twelve long, difficult years had to push through in order to get to. We rejoice in her miracle, but let us not lose sight of her journey to get there; there were many struggles that she needed to push through.

The story of this woman takes place within a larger story. Jesus is on His way to a synagogue leader's house to heal his dying daughter, when an unnamed woman causes an interruption to His progress. Although we don't know much about this woman's identity, what we do know is that she had a bleeding condition, and whatever the detail of the issue, it lasted for twelve years. That's a very long time. And let's give credit where credit is due, she had tried to get well. She had gone to many doctors over the years. She spent everything she had trying to be cured, and nothing had helped;

in fact, according to Mark the issue had only grown worse. And what's more, according to Jewish Law, this woman would have been declared ceremonially unclean due to her bleeding issue – Read **Leviticus 15:25 – 27**. She would not have been permitted to enter the temple for Jewish religious ceremonies, and anything or anyone she touched would be unclean as well. The fact that she was in the crowd pressing around Jesus means that each person who bumped into her would have become unclean, too. This woman was very alone. No one would have wanted to be around her. She couldn't go out in public. She couldn't be hugged by her family. Her normal existence would often have been spent watching people skirt around her to avoid the possibility of contact. No brushing or touching or sharing friendly gestures on the path. She lived in isolation. Twelve years is a long time to be quarantined, to suffer, and to be rejected. What she did, exposing others to her uncleanness was a crime, punishable by law. And so, it makes sense then that this is why she could not openly, and brazenly walk up to Jesus and ask Him for healing. Instead, she went out on a limb to access her healing secretly.

When Jesus asked *"Who touched me?"*, the disciples thought that this was a ridiculous question. After all, He was in a crowd. Everybody was touching Him. But to understand exactly what He meant, let's do a brief word study. The word touch comes from the root word *hapto* which means *to fasten to or to cling to*. So, when Jesus asked *"Who touched me?"* He was not referring to the act of someone jostling up against Him the crowd, or someone simply putting their hand on Him. In fact, the story did not even say she touched Jesus. Actually, she only touched his clothes. What Jesus really asked was *"Who clung to me with their whole being in unwavering faith?"* You see, this woman was in a desperate situation. And this was her absolute last option and opportunity to escape her situation. So of course she clung to God in faith. There's nothing passive about her faith in this moment. She was very intentional. Faith demands active participation. Many people in the crowd bumped up against Jesus, but this bleeding woman was the only one who truly touched Jesus heart. Her faith touched God deeply, and as a result power flowed from Him to her. It was a 2 Corinthians 12: 9 moment – in that moment God's grace was sufficient for her, and His power was made perfect in her weakness. But she had to push through in order to get to.

When you think of this lady with the issue of bleeding, one word immediately springs to mind. Perseverance. Perseverance is defined as being persistent despite the difficulties or delays we face. She never gave up. I'm sure there must have been times in her struggle that she felt like throwing in the towel, but from what we read she persevered in faith. "

"Perseverance means more than endurance — more than simply holding on until the end. A saint's life is in the hands of God like a bow and arrow in the hands of an archer. God is aiming at something the saint cannot see, but our Lord continues to stretch and strain, and every once in a while, the saint says, "I can't take any more." Yet God pays no attention; He goes on stretching until His purpose is in sight, and then He lets the arrow fly. Entrust yourself to God's hands. Is there something in your life for which you need perseverance right now? Maintain your intimate relationship with Jesus Christ through the perseverance of faith. Proclaim as Job did, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him" (Job 13:15)." (Oswald Chambers)

Faith is not some weak and pitiful emotion; it is a strong and vigorous confidence built on the facts of who God is. The Bible tells us that God's thoughts are not our thoughts, nor are His ways our ways. And so, it's almost a guarantee that there will be times in our lives when we will not understand why, or what, or when, or how, but we can always know Who. Faith is throwing yourself with abandon and total confidence upon Who God is.

God is greater than defeat. **Read Romans 8:37**. Many people think of victory as evidence of a trouble free, problem free existence.

But when the apostle Paul says “In all things” I suggest he means we can experience victory in spite of what is going on around us, in spite of what the world and the devil throw at us. For twelve years this poor woman had suffered, she’d tried and failed and persisted and all the Bible says is that she got worse. How many of you have ever tried and prayed, and prayed and persisted and all that seems to happen is that your situation gets worse? How many of you have ever been tempted to give up? Perhaps like this woman you’ve tried everything, spent loads of money, wasted hours on worry. And if that’s you this morning, I want you know that when you come to the end of yourself, God is only beginning to do the work that He wants to do in your life. If you’re not dead then God’s not done! No matter how difficult life can get, we need persistent faith to hold onto the truth that God works in and through all things for... for our good and His glory! One preacher once put it like this: When you’ve done everything possible, God will show you that He can do the impossible – **Read Luke 18:27**. Just like the woman in Luke 11, we need to make a decision to rise above our circumstances and to push through in order to get to.

In closing, be encouraged by these words of the apostle Paul – **Read Philippians 3: 13 – 14**.

Press on, persevere in faith, and push through, until you get to...