**North East Circuit of Independent Methodist Churches**

**Devotional for Sunday 10th May 2020**

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**Introduction**

* As the nation awaits announcements on when we will reduce social distancing and isolation remember they are not new.
* The Bible sets out regulations on separation for the protection of God’s people and to illustrate spiritual truths.
* For most of us our experience of isolation is short compared to that of many in the Bible and even some people in our own day, but we can reach out to God.

**Hymn: Be still**

Be still for the presence of the Lord the holy one is here
Come bow before him now with reverence and fear
In him no sin is found we stand on holy ground
Be still for the presence of the Lord the holy one is here

Be still for the glory of the Lord is shining all around
He burns with holy fire with splendour he is crowned
How awesome is the sight our radiant king of light
Be still for the glory of the Lord is shining all around

Be still for the power of the Lord is moving in this place
He comes to cleanse and heal to minister his grace
No work too hard for him in faith receive from him
Be still for the power of the Lord is moving in this place

**Bible Reading: Mark 5: 24 - 34**

**Jesus Heals a sick woman**

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. 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.

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?’ ”

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

**Devotional:**

* The unnamed woman’s condition meant that for twelve years she had been cut off from worship and from society (Leviticus 15:25-270).
* She had suffered greatly and spent all her wealth as she desperately sought a cure from doctors.
* Despite the failure of so many “cures” she believed that Jesus had the power to heal her.
* Note that it was not the garment that had the power to heal, Jesus felt the power flow from Him.
* The disciples, naturally, didn’t understand Jesus’ question. Only later did they realise the spiritual significance of that one touch.
* There were so many people in the crowd who had touched Him but only the one who believed felt that power flow to her.
* Imagine her joy, freed from so much suffering but also free to worship and rebuild her life.
* The woman may have been afraid of the crowd, they in turn may have been afraid that she had made them unclean, angry that she had slowed Jesus as He made His way to heal a very sick child or jealous that she had gained Jesus’ attention.
* She showed great faith in her actions and great courage in publicly declaring them, an inspiration to Christians to both believe and share their faith.
* What effect might this have had on the crowd?
* We do not know her name, but she is the only woman who Jesus is recorded as referring to as daughter, imagine how that made her feel.
* Do you know that you are a child of God? How does that make you feel?
* If you are do not know that you are a child of God, would you like to be? Ring one of the leaders of your Church to talk about it.

Oh, touch the hem of His garment,
  And thou, too, shalt be free!
His healing pow’r this very hour
    Shall give new life to thee!

**Prayer:**

O God, the source of life, we give thanks that You know all about every one of us. Grant that we may always know Your presence with us. Give to us the faith which reaches out to You and the courage to tell others of Your saving power. We pray that Your power will be displayed during this pandemic, that many will see and believe. We continue to pray for the front line and key workers, those working for our welfare and for all those deeply affected by the situation as we look forward to physically joining together in worship once more.

**The Lord’s Prayer**