

***In Pursuit of Healing***  
By Dolvanya Mosby-Frith

***In Pursuit of Healing*** is a portrayal based on events highlighting the life of The Woman with the issue of blood. Through the play which takes place in Capernaum, we are introduced to The Woman weakened by chronic anemia; a woman once of means, capable of spending money on physicians for twelve years. We hear how she exhausted all of her resources and had been to every physician; tried every remedy, but to no avail. We see the rejection by her family and friends. She was down, depressed and destitute. She was facing a death sentence. She would not get better. Life was being drained out of her body day by day. She had no whereto turn except to the Master.

On the day that she reached out to Jesus, it was not the first time that He had been in town, nor the first time He had performed miracles. But it was the first time she had been desperate, hopeless and out of options. She was *In Pursuit of Healing* and willing to take extreme measures. Her cure would not depend upon her or her resources, but rather her faith in Jesus. She would neither control the situation nor obtain help in a dignified or socially acceptable manner. This time she would crawl for a chance at life. She would take a private issue and go public. This time her healing would come – through a simple touch. She would rise with her pride shattered, but her issue resolved and her health restored. Jesus could have kept her matter private, but His response was *Who's getting over an issue in my presence?* Her issue was one of blood. We ALL have issues in our lives. God brings us to a point of desperation where we have no place to go but to Him to resolve our issues and at times like these...all we can do is go for the hem!

Background: The story of the desperate woman with an issue of blood found in the three synoptic gospels, Matthew 9:20-22; Mark 5:25-34; and Luke 8:43-48 teaches us many different lessons that are applicable today. Biblical law considered her unclean and made her unworthy to come anywhere near the temple. Anything she touched was unclean, wherever she sat down was unclean, and whoever touched her was unclean (*Leviticus 15:1-13*). When she heard about Jesus, she came up behind Him in the crowd and touched his cloak, because she believed, "If I just touch His clothes, I will be healed." She was physically and emotionally drained, but she mustered up enough strength to get to Jesus. She didn't need or want the attention of others she just wanted relief. The healing of the nameless woman was apart of God's plan. God became a man, so He could die on the cross, (*Philippians 2:5-8*). He also became a man so that He could be touched with the feeling of our issues (*Hebrews 4:12*). He became a man so that He could identify with us and we with Him. He became a man so that we could touch Him!

**Characters**

Clarity	Woman 1,2
City Goer 1-8	The Woman
Jairus	James
Jesus	John
Peter	Physician
Voice	

**The Issue**

*(The stage is dim. There is only a small chair and table. The silhouette of a woman can be seen upstage right hunched over holding herself. She is dressed in full black, wearing a black veil, covered from head to toe. She sits rocking back and forth; her movements are slow at first and then a little faster; then she stops. She braces herself on a nearby table and tries to stand. As she does, she buckles over in pain and drops to the floor. The table falls and she begins to weep; only her trembling body indicates her brokenness. Her*

*cries are soft whimpers at first then gradually a wailing. Realizing she is alone with no help her cries stop. Moments later she gathers herself and pulls up to lean on the chair. She slowly glances upstage left as the lights slowly brighten to a time before. A pantomime depicts happier days; when she was amongst family and friends laughing and enjoying life. As she smiles, a sudden sharp pain snaps her back into reality causing her to buckle over. She wipes her face from the sudden burst of perspiration on her face. When she gathers her composure, she looks again and the vision is gone and she finds herself alone again.)*

The Woman: I have to get up from here. I have to get help. Oh, please give me strength.

*(Slowly she gets up and facing the audience and revealing her face. She is pale, worn and tired. She makes calculated movements slowly stepping down stage left to leave the room. After a short distance, she stops to regain her strength. Then continues until she reaches the doorway where she again attempts to regain composure. She hesitates at the threshold and looks back and forth several times.)*

DANCE *(Dance depicts the hustle and bustle of the world that she is about to enter. People are moving to and fro).*

*(She nervously steps across the threshold and onto the busy street where people have begun to walk pass. No one takes notice of her as they continue on their way. She takes a deep breath and begins walking down the street. Some who know of her condition move to the other side of the street allowing her to pass. As she reaches down the road a bit stumbling from time to time, she notices a man coming toward her. He does not notice her and it does not appear that he is going to move.)*

Woman – *(Barely audible)* Unclean... unclean... unclean... unclean... *(She reaches out to prevent the man from running directly in to her.)*

*(A passerby observes what is about to take place and intervenes to avoid contact with The Woman.)*

City Goer 1: *(Yelling)* Unclean! She is unclean. *(He pulls the man back as the two nearly fall.)*

City Goer 2: Ughhhhh! *(He looks himself over to see if he has been marked. Others look on as they continue to walk by.)*

City Goer 1: Did you not see her?

City Goer 2: *(The two move out of the flow of traffic)* No, no. I'm sorry I wasn't paying attention. Thank you my brother. Really, I did not know. I am new to the city. *(Pausing)* But how could I have known? Why is she out in the public anyway? She has no right to be on the street. She must know the law.

City Goer 1: I am not sure of what she does and does not know, but according to Mosaic law she must not touch anyone lest they become defile and unclean. Anywhere she sits is unclean. She can not go into the Women's Court of the Temple; instead she sits with the lepers. She is not allowed to share in the annual worship celebrations. She cannot sleep with a man. She lives in utter solitude.

City Goer 2: What is her issue?

City Goer 1: Rumor has it that it is a woman issue. I only know that she has no husband and her family has abandoned her.

City Goer 2: How long?

City Goer 1: I believe twelve years.

City Goer 2: What a long time to suffer. She must be lonely.

City Goer 1: I'm sure she is. Twelve years without the touch of a man, just imagine. She must deserve it though. She must have committed some terrible sin and Jehovah sees fit to punish her.

City Goer 2: You don't know that to be true. What a wicked punishment.

City Goer 1: I don't know, but better her than me.

City Goer 2: How true.

*(As the two men exit stage right, Clarity enters stage right. Clarity is dressed in full black and begins making the set change. He/she stops to address the audience.)*

Clarity: Historical records within the four gospels do not give us her identity by name. She is only known as The Woman with the Issue of Blood. If ever she had a family, they are no where to be found now. Anyone who came in contact with her would be made unclean. She was an outcast of society; plagued with an issue... of blood. She must have tried to keep it private at first, but as the years passed her private slowly began to wear on her and made itself public. For twelve years, 4,380 days she bled. She was the epitome of death both mentally and physically. But let us not focus totally on the blood. For if we focus on the blood then we limit the application of the message to those who are bleeding. The Woman had an issue, as we all do. My issue may be different from yours, but we all have one. Each one of us in a very REAL sense is the woman.

MUSIC

### The Rejection

*(The place is the kitchen of a relative of The Woman. It is a celebration. Several women are busy preparing food. The voices of several men talking and laughing can be heard in the background. As the women continue scurrying about they are pleasant as they exchange conversation...)*

Woman 1 - It's been weeks, have you seen or heard from her?

Sister: *(Shaking her head, but never looking up from her work)* I do not know of her whereabouts. She has moved several times.

Woman 1: Have you not even gone to look about her? She is your sister?

Sister: *(In disgust)* I would not know where to begin to look and furthermore my husband has forbidden me to speak to her let alone see her. The last time she came here I wanted so badly to hold her and let her know that it will all be alright, but my husband came to the door and ran her off. She was dressed in full black as if she were in mourning, but I knew it was only to disguise her condition.

Woman 2: Essentially she's already dead.

Sister: Oh, don't say that. *(Beginning to weep)* Don't say that. I pray everyday that Jehovah restores her. How I long for the day when I can hear her laughter and feel her touch again.

Woman 1 - Do you think she will come today? Do you think she has heard the news and will come?

Sister: I do not know

Woman 2: It must be something she did.

Sister: How can you say that? You don't know that. She has never done anything wrong from what I know and I have known her all of my life.

Woman 1: That maybe true, but I assure you, you don not know EVERYTHING about her.

Sister: That is true but who are we to judge. All of us have done something not pleasing in God's sight. If it is He who has caused this suffering in her life, then we should all fall down on our knees immediately and pray to Jehovah that the same does not befall us.

*(The Woman enters stage left. There is a faint knock at the door. The women look at each other knowing all too well who it is. The knock is heard again.)*

Woman 2: Don't open it.

Sister: *(Frightened by the suggestion)* What do you mean? I cannot let her stand there and just knock; she is my sister, MY blood.

Woman 2: It may not be your sister. What if one of OUR husbands finds her in here? They will not touch us because of her uncleanness.

*(The knock is heard again. Sister begins to quietly weep.)*

Woman 1: Open the door. We will deal with whatever happens.

*(Woman 2 opens the door and stands in the doorway blocking the entrance. The Woman appears. She puts her hands over her face and nose as if she smells a stench. The Woman braces herself on the door frame. She appears worn and tattered.)*

The Woman: Sister? *(The Woman reaches for her sister as Woman 2 moves back to avoid contact.)*

Sister: *(Ignoring the warnings of the others. The two women embrace.)* How are you?

The Woman: I had to come.

Sister: I know. I expected you. Do you need anything? *(Woman 2 begins to prepare food for the woman as they talk.)*

The Woman: No, no. I am fine. I just had to come and see you.

Sister: I understand.

The Woman: I will be going to another doctor in the morning. I'm told that he is the best in the land.

Sister: Do you need money?

The Woman: No, no, I have just enough. If this does not work, I'm finished. I feel I have no other hope. My time is drawing near.

Sister: Time for what sister? Time for what?

Woman 2: Enough of this! You can't stay here any longer. You must leave. Everything you touch will be unclean. Your issue is just...

The Woman: *(With very little strength)* ...Is what? You're no better than me. I can't hide any longer... you know my issue... everyone does. But what happens when yours becomes public? Be careful where you cast stones

Woman 2: Here take this food and go before anyone else notices you.

*(She quickly thrusts the food into her hands and pulls away. The woman stands still, lifeless trying to gather herself.)*

The Woman: I will go. I do not want to cause harm to anyone.

*(The Woman slowly backs out of the room clutching the food in her arms. No one in the room moves. She gives her sister a lasting look and closes the door herself. Once the door is closed, the two sisters stare at the once open door, Woman 2 continues on as if nothing has taken place. Woman 1 touches the shoulder of the sister momentarily and then returns to her work. Lights go to black.)*

Clarity: Blood IS thicker than water, but if we can't go to our families with our issues, who can we turn to.  
**(Incomplete)**

MUSIC

### The Last Attempt

*(The office of the physician is sterile looking and uninviting. A large table sits in the middle of the room along with three chairs and a smaller table. The Women slowly enters the physician's office and sits. She is looking around the room briefly when the silence is broken by the entrance of the physician. The doctor enters the room and places a bag on the table.)*

The Woman: Doctor.

*(The Physician nods his head. He opens the bag and pulls out a scroll.)*

The Woman: Please tell me you can help me. You're all I have now. I have spent all that I have going from physician to physician and instead of getting better, my condition seems to be getting worse.

Physician: I have studied your issue and have consulted with many other physicians.

The Woman: So you can help me?

Physician: Yours is a case like we have never seen before. It is not physically possible for someone to bleed consistently for one year let alone 12 years. We just don't understand.

The Woman: I cannot tell you how and why I have been spared. I just need to know that you can save me.

Physician: I am a physician and I will do what I can.

The Woman: Are you saying you cannot heal me?

Physician: I am saying that we have decided that the cure for your issue requires a several step process.

The Woman: I will do anything.

Physician: First you must take the gum of Alexandria the weight of a small silver coin; of alum the same. Let them be bruised together, and given in wine. If this does not benefit take three pints of Persian onions; boil them in wine, and drink, and say, Arise from thy flux. If this does not cure, go to a place where two ways meet, and hold a cup of wine in your right hand, let someone come behind and frighten you, and say, Arise from thy flux. *(As The Woman listens to the instructions she begins to shake her head. She begins to*

*gather her things together as the physician continues to explain.)* Finally, carry about with you a barley corn which should be taken from the droppings of a white she donkey.

*(The Woman stands to exit. She reaches in the bag she is carrying and pulls out a money bag. She extends it to the physician.)* I am not quite finished yet. There are a few things more that you must complete.

The Woman: *(Interrupting)* Will this be enough?

*(The physician motions her to place the bag on the table.)*

Physician: I'm sure this will cover everything. If I may continue... there are a few more things mo.....

The Woman: Thank you. That will be enough.

Physician: What will you do?

The Woman: I will make it. I will survive

*(She slowly walks toward the door. Lights go to black)*

Clarity: What a pity and a shame... to have soooo much power at you finger tips and not access it. You see, the power of God is inactive, passive, or inert until faith is exercised. But once God's power is activated, it will break every yoke. 2 Corinthians 12:9 says, But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness. Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

The way God works and the methods of God appear to be mysterious for some people, and gives them a reason not to believe. But we know that God through His power can turn sure defeat into victory or turn weakness into strength or an issue into an ease. When you are weak and humble, God is able to work through you. When you are proud and arrogant, God cannot touch your heart and you go your own way, not God's way. When you are weak, you are more willing to listen to God speak to you. When you are strong and arrogant, your own thoughts and your own voice drown out the voice of God. When a Christian is beset with hardships the first place a TRUE Christian SHOULD go is to the Lord, but how many seek answers through a friend or in some cases an enemy in disguise. When we turn to God, His power comes over us and although the hardship may remain, we are empowered by the love of God and we become strong in spirit. When we come upon an issue in life and feel that the issue will defeat us, our prayers to Christ heard and answered. If the issue is not removed, God's love brings out the hope and promise of your life so you can see a time in the future when the issue will be no more.

MUSIC:

### The Decision

*(As she enters the house she finds herself alone and in the same condition she was in when she left home. The room is dimly lit. She places her bag on the table and looks around the room and begins to weep. As she mopes around the room she hears a commotion from outside. She goes to the door and listens to what is going on. Two men are standing just outside her door.)*

City Goer 4: Have you heard?

City Goer 5: Heard what?

City Goer 4: Jesus is coming here?

City Goer 5: Jesus? What is He coming for?

City Goer 4: They say He will be healing the sick.

City Goer 5: Hmph, and you believe that.

City Goer 4: He cast demons out of a man on the other side of the lake in Gerasene.

City Goer 5: You don't really believe that do you?

City Goer 4: I'm not sure what to believe. I'm only telling you what I heard and what is causing so much confusion in the city. (The two men exchange a few more words and then go about their way. Inside the woman begins to think on what she has heard.)

The Woman: Jesus? Coming here? Healing the sick? Can He help me? Can he heal my issue? Jehovah, I have no place else to turn.

Voice: He can't save you. He's but a mere carpenter. He has no special powers. He's just a man.

The Woman: No, no. That can't be true. He's healed so many already. But how do I get to Him?

Voice: He won't dare touch you. You are unclean.

The Woman: There has to be a way. He is my only hope. If He really is the Messiah then he can surely heal me.

Voice: It won't work.

The Woman: It will and I'm going to get my healing. For so long I've hid, wanting relief. I've gotta go out. I've gotta get My miracle. I've tried every physician near and far. Could He not be the Great Physician. But he will become unclean if He touches me... How? How?

Voice: You will be disappointed. Jesus does not care of your issue and if He touches you He will be unclean as you are.

The Woman: (In a faint whisper) If only I touch his cloak, Through his hem I will be healed.  
(The woman gathers her things and prepares to see Jesus. Lights to black)

Clarity: There is a fountain filled with blood drawn from Emmanuel's veins;  
And sinners plunged beneath that flood lose all their guilty stains.  
Lose all their guilty stains; lose all their guilty stains;  
And sinners plunged beneath that flood lose all their guilty stains.  
God can erase the stain of any sin... any issue.

MUSIC

### The Touch

(On stage several pockets of people are standing and seated talking amongst themselves. Some of them appear healthy; others have been stricken with some type of illness. Someone runs in stage left ...)

City Goer 3: He's coming. He's coming.

(The people begin to gather themselves together as Jesus enters stage left with Peter, James and John. The people rush Jesus and surround Him.)

City Goer 6: Jesus, Jesus. Heal me My Lord.

City Goer 7: Perform a miracle now Lord.

City Goer 8: Mater. Master...

*(Jairus enters stage right clearing the path as he moves towards Jesus. Upon seeing Jesus, Jairus falls to His feet.)*

Jairus: *(Pleading)* My little daughter is dying. Please come and put your hands on her so that she will be healed and live.

*(Jesus turns to the disciples and whispers to them. Moments later He turns to Jairus indicating that He leads the way. The crowd continues to grow. They begin to crowd around and press against Jesus. The Woman enters slowly stage left. She hesitates going into the crowd. She pulls the covering over her head and slowly makes her way to Jesus No one notices her at first. She hears voices repeating the decision.)*

Voices: If I just touch his clothes...: If I just touch his clothes... If I just touch his clothes...

*(The Woman is pushed from side to side. As she reaches out to touch Jesus; she realizes that she is too far. In desperation she drops to the ground and crawls, each time reaching for Jesus. At the moment the Woman touched Jesus' hem all movement stops.)*

DANCE:

*(At once Jesus realizes that power has gone out from him. He turns around in the crowd)*

Jesus: Who touched my clothes?

Peter: What? You see the people crowding against you, and yet you can ask, 'Who touched me?'

*(Jesus ignores Peter's response and continues looking around to see who touched Him.)*

*(The Woman remains on the ground, head buried in her hands. She is frightened of what may happen if her identity is revealed. Jesus slowly scans the crowd with his eyes. As His focus moves toward the woman, her body trembles. She props herself up. The crowd begins to open up and move back. The woman stands up and tries to join in the crowd by scooting away along the ground. Lights slowly dim. A single spot light focuses on The Woman and Jesus. Once the crowd is peeled away Jesus and The Woman are in the clearing ... the woman stands before Jesus upright. She is aware of what has happened to her and slowly moves closer to Jesus. As their eyes lock, the woman falls to her knees with her head bowed and begins to tremble with fear.)*

The Woman: Master it is I who touched you. I was desperate. I had heard about how you had healed others and I thought if I... if I ... If I could just get to you, I would be healed. My Lord, I have no one and nothing. For twelve years I have had an issue of blood that has plagued my life. I have sought the help of friends and family, but it wasn't until I touched you Master that I have been made whole again. Master I know what the law says and if I must to be sto...

Jesus: Daughter, be of good comfort: thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace.

*(The Woman arises and backs away slowly. Jesus continues on with Jairus. Lights slowly dim.)*

Clarity: He has done it again! He has proven himself over and over and over again. And tonight we are reminded again of what God can do. It is NO secret! He has authority over all disease, sickness, sin and

ISSUES and can choose to heal whom ever He chooses, when ever He chooses, how ever He chooses and where ever He chooses. Proverbs 6 tells us there are six things the LORD hates--no, seven things he detests: haughty eyes, a lying tongue, hands that kill the innocent, a heart that plots evil, feet that race to do wrong, a false witness who pours out lies, a person who sows discord among brothers. Jesus deals with ALL sin and issues, issues of sex, drugs, stealing, gambling, lying, adultery, hypocrisy.... What ever your sin or issue, place it His feet.

What made her so special? On that day hundreds of years ago it was a touch accompanied by faith. Many people came not for the message, but a miracle. Many touched Him and walked away unchanged and unmoved, as they do today. Many come into His presence with physical, spiritual, and emotional needs and leave with their problems... ISSUES unresolved. Don't be one of those people who brush up against Jesus tonight and leave unchanged.

MUSIC