

To all the Saints at Manatee Life,

SCRIPTURE:

Matthew 9:21 (MSG) – *larger reading Matthew 9:18-26*

She was thinking to herself, "If I can just put a finger on his robe, I'll get well." Jesus turned - caught her at it. Then he reassured her: "Courage, daughter. You took a risk of faith, and now you're well."

STORY:

Chuck Swindoll shares the following: There was a test conducted by a university where 10 students were placed in a room. 3 lines of varying length were drawn on a card. The students were told to raise their hands when the instructor pointed to the longest line. But 9 of the students had been instructed beforehand to raise their hands when the instructor pointed to the second longest line. 1 student was the stooge. The usual reaction of the stooge was to put his hand up, look around, and realizing he was all alone, pull it back down. This happened 75% of the time, with students from grade school through high school. The researchers concluded that many would rather conform than to be right.

OBSERVATION:

I lived with this woman from Matthew 9 all day one Monday. She haunted my every thought. She stalked me and wouldn't allow me to rest. This comment by Jesus wouldn't allow me to walk away. No matter how hard I tried I just couldn't escape Jesus' words to this struggling and hurting woman. "Courage, daughter..." Courage?!? Seriously?!? Where pray tell do I show that kind of courage? Courage to do what needs to be done? Especially in the face of those who would strongly disagree with me. To say what needs to be said? Then I read Dr. Swindoll's story and was wondering if I would have the conviction to raise my hand when no one else did?

Reading her story on the pages in the Bible is just a simple task, until we insert ourselves into the story and take on the role of the participating character. What would we do as the woman who had a real health crisis and was in constant pain ... for years? We normally would choose to play it safe wouldn't we, because we are not this woman. Normally we go along with the crowd, trying to fade into the background, not drawing attention to ourselves. Normally, out of fear of ridicule or ostracism our hand stays in our lap and our voices remain silent.

Where today need I have the courage of my conviction? I don't have a quick answer. Not until at least I am confronted. Until then I will dance around the issue and settle for a "sound good" answer... until confronted with the need to speak up... to have courage... to act... to raise my hand... to stand apart...

Would I have the courage to push through the crowd? Would I? I'm still struggling with myself as to what would I really do. How about you?

QUOTE:

Courage is doing what you're afraid to do. There can be no courage unless you're scared. – Eddie Rickenbacker

PRAYER:

I think that I would Lord until the time is before me and then ... who knows. Will I be too afraid to do or say what needs to be said?

And the faith journey continues, Pastor Jim
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