

PK's Perspectives ... "The Bleeders."

"Years ago, I was working on a book in Africa. I met up with some doctors who were treating women with obstetric fistulas. A condition prevalent in countries with limited medical care. Prior to birth, the baby gets stuck in the birth canal, dies, and in so doing tears a hole in either the bladder, the bowel, or both. After delivering a stillborn baby, the women are left with uncontrolled leakage of urine, feces, and blood. With no cure, the women eat and drink less to control the flow. Considered cursed by God, they are thrown out like lepers. Many sleep with the animals to keep warm. Suicide is common. The stench is significant. No, it's awful. I have walked among them so I am speaking from experience. The only thing worse than the smell is the shame carved into their faces. Few, if any, look you in the eyes. In colloquial language, these women are called "the bleeders."

For whatever reason, this tormented woman in the street was a bleeder. I wonder how much time passed before she took off that diaper? How long before she tore down the laundry line, burning every last rag? In my mind she stands alone in the street and screams at the top of her lungs, "He called me 'Daughter'!"

When I get to heaven, I want to find this woman and hug her neck. Her story knocks a few things loose in me, and I want to thank her. I want to thank her for her gumption. For her faith out of which she elbowed her way through a crowd that didn't want her. For despising her own shame. For, when all seemed lost, she reached out her hand and cried out to Jesus. Why, of all the saints in Scripture, do I want to find this one?

This woman believed the Word was more true than her circumstances.

Let that sink in. "Thy word is truth" (John 17:17, KJV).

We're all bleeders. You, me, that person over there. All of us. We are draped in shame, bleeding out, and yes, our bodies need healing. But it is our hearts that are broken and we are in need of hearing one singular word. If you think this is an isolated event in the life of a woman that didn't and doesn't pertain to you, let me lead you to Matthew: "And when the men of that place recognized Him, they sent out into all that surrounding region, brought to Him all who were sick, and begged Him that they might only touch the hem of His garment. And as many as touched it were made perfectly well" (14:35-36).

Some days, I find myself at the end of myself. As Isaiah said, my "filthy rags" are hanging in the backyard and blowing in the wind. I am bleeding and I am broken and I am getting worse. But I've heard the stories, and He is passing by. I bathe quickly, wrap on a diaper. Elbow my way through. Cling to His shirttail. Plead to God to have mercy.

And then He calls me forth, saying the thing I need to hear. "Son. Charles. I've missed you. I was hoping you'd find Me today. I'm so glad to see you." It's around here that Jesus hugs my neck and I weep on His. Smearing snot.

"See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us, that we would be called children of God; and such we are" (1 John 3:1 NASB).

Children. That is what we are! You and I are not disqualified by a decade of shame and pain. By nonstop blood. By stench and smell and filthy rags. We are not too dirty. We, each of us, and yes—that includes you—are welcomed in. Lifted up. Healed. Forever. From this very hour."

Copied from What If It's True? by Charles Martin. The author is commenting on the healing of the woman who had been bleeding for 12 years as recorded in Luke 8:45-48. Love you, PK.