

Commentary on the Gospel for Mon, Jul 8th 2013

The Touch

“If only I can touch his cloak, I shall be cured.” (Matthew 9: 21)

Jacob set out on a long journey to the land of his kinsman in search of a proper wife. It would be many years before he returned. In a dream, the Lord promised to stand by Jacob and his descendents.

Jacob's response was conditional: if the Lord keeps us safe and brings us home again, the Lord will be our God. Jacob speaks for his tribe. He wants God to deliver before he pledges his faith. Jacob demands proof.

The gospel reveals faith that is unconditional. His daughter had already died, but despite the ridicule of his neighbors, the official begged for help. He did not speak for a nation; his grief was personal but he trusted Jesus to care.

The sorrow of the bleeding woman stretched back years. The unending flow sapped her strength and isolated her. An object of fear, she contaminated all she touched. It took all her courage to reach out and touch Jesus. How fitting that this forbidden act brought healing. For Jesus, no one is an outcast; every sinner is beloved. Laws and customs that banish persons are ungodly.

We pride ourselves on how far we have advanced beyond the narrow horizon of our ancestors. But we pay a price for progress. The spiritual world lacks ready access for moderns. We typically situate God outside space and time; a chasm is said to separate the finite from the infinite. Jacob's dream reveals reality in a different light. There is no sharp divide between God and earthly life. A stairway connects us that is thronged with messengers. God is linked in and will not fade away.

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