

Sept 18<sup>th</sup> sermon: **Finding Your Power: Listening for Healing**

**Psalm 22:1-5; 25-26 & Mark 5: 24-34**

In her article titled, 10 Negative Thoughts We All Have and What to Think Instead, Kristin O'Donovan shares her struggle to overcome the self-talk she gave herself that was influencing her life in a negative way.<sup>1</sup> She further writes that in work as a therapist, she discovered many of us tell ourselves these negative sayings like:

I Can't Do It- she writes, "If you tell yourself that you can't, you are sending messages to your mind and brain that you can't, and so that will be your experience.."

Instead, O'Donovan suggested that we should tell ourselves, "I can do whatever I put my mind to." "While we all do have limitations", she writes, "believing in your abilities in the first step to achieving your short and long term goals in life".

I Don't Think I'll Ever... Whatever you believe will become your reality, you can sabotage your opportunities by limiting yourself with negative thoughts. How do we correct this?

The author encourages you to tell yourself, "I am confident I will..." Even if you don't *feel* confident in this moment, feeding your brain positive thoughts will slowly build confidence over time.

I Am Not Good Enough-When we feel that we aren't good enough, we tend to drown in this emotion of self-doubt and pity. Tell yourself that you are worthy of all you desire in this life, just like everyone else.

Mind over matter, right, what we hear, what we listen to, whether it's the voices of others or ourselves, can influence how we live our lives.

In our Scripture lesson today, a woman has been hearing negative words from others which influenced negative thoughts she had on her own, until the touch and kindness of Jesus heals her.

Here's the background. She had been suffering for 12 years, and to have what she had, she was considered impure according to the laws written in the book of Leviticus. *Anyone who bleeds is considered unclean, and cannot have any contact with others, nor can they go to temple for worship and prayer.* That means no one could touch her shoulder, or hold her hand, less they become unclean. And if they do, they end up having to be cleaned with rituals and time, and most would avoid that, especially since the law made it seem it was bad to be unclean, the *focus was to be pure by what they thought was God's standards. But were they?*

Would God want this woman watching people skirt around her to avoid the possibility of contact? She lived in isolation and would have been known for her uncleanliness. Imagine how lonely that would be. And imagine the shame she felt, she couldn't help it that she was considered impure. She tried desperately to change that, spending all her money on doctors.

But then she heard of Jesus and what he was able to do, the healings he had given to others, so she thought just touch his clothing, she will be made well. *She'd have to be careful*

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.lifehack.org/articles/communication/10-negative-thoughts-all-have-and-what-should-think-instead.html>

*though. People knew her and her condition, she would have to do this quietly and without being seen or else she would be in trouble.*

So she goes through the crowd, touches his cloak and is healed. But it wasn't his clothing, it was him, because he felt the healing power go to her and seeks to know who received this healing.

The text reads, *He looked all around to see who had done it. But the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came in fear and trembling, fell down before him, and told him the whole truth.*

Can't you see her, confessing her ignoring of the law because she was just so desperate, and tired, tired of the continual pain, tired of being cast out. And she knew, he was her only hope. To which Jesus said, "*Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace, and be healed of your disease.*"

Jesus meets her in this space—and does the opposite of what is expected. Instead of being repulsed or disgusted by her, he responds with peace. He responds with grace. He responds with understanding. *He calls her daughter. He accepts her.*

When it comes to healing from the Divine, it is a healing that is transformative, not restorative. God's healing power transforms us from those times we have felt shame or cast out. God's healing power transforms our pain and heartache and claims us as a child of the Beloved. So we are not the same. Just as this woman was not the same afterwards either. She was claimed by Jesus

Friends, when we talk about *Listen* in this sermon series, today we talk about listening to the positive, affirming, graceful voice of Jesus. It may not be as loud as the negative voices we hear or receive, but in this sacred space, today, I want you to hear this: You are a beloved child of God's. You are a special gift. And whatever gets in the way of you trusting and believing that, I want you to lay it down. Lay it down to hear God claim you, lay it down and feel the touch and love of God's healing power.

Today for our listening experience, I am going to invite you to write down the most prominent negative thought you have in your head, in your booklet. And next to it, write what you hear Jesus saying to you instead. Words that claim you, like daughter or son or child. And hear him say words of hope like peace, healed, and well. Or maybe hear offer a simple word of faith. Whatever it is, listen and write it down and be claimed by Jesus for healing.

Let us pray:

For cleansing what is stagnant and toxic, O God, we thank you,  
For continuing to heal our very souls, we acknowledge you.  
We join this prayer with all those offered during this time,  
and we pray together the prayer of Jesus: *[The Lord's Prayer]*

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