

## YOU ARE NOT INVISIBLE TO GOD

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Series: God Is Love  
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Luke 8:43-48

Everyone wants to be seen. The crazy thing is when some of us were kids if you asked us what superpower we would want to have if we could so many would say invisibility. But the truth is, no one ever wants to be passed up. If there is a party that you could have been invited to and you only hear about it the next day, that can really hurt. What your friends communicated is that you were invisible or at least so it seems.

Now, it hurts when people we love to act as if we do not exist and that kinda makes sense. But it is interesting to note that if we are left out even by people whom we do not like or by people we possibly even look down upon morally or whatever, it hurts too.

Okay here is an example, have you ever heard 2 people talking about someone they probably do not like about him or her not including them? Like two friends going, "Oh did you hear, that she had a party? I would never have gone." Well, why does it matter to you that she had a party then? Usually, when we feel excluded even by people we do not hold in very high esteem it hurts. And we use words like, "It hurt my feelings that you did not call" It hurt my feelings that you never say hi to me", "it hurts my feelings that you never text me"

And here is another interesting fact, the pain receptors in our brain that are fired up when we are in physical pain, are the very same receptors when we are in emotional pain for being treated as if we are invisible. So much so that if you took panadol it will make you better after.

See, we all want to be seen, for our names to be known, at least by those to whom we matter or hope to matter to. And sometimes we are in relationships and even in those relationships, people feel invisible. And for some people just being told thank you for the food you ate will make them feel visible, some people, taking time to actually eat with them makes them feel visible, for some people giving them a hug makes them feel visible. Unfortunately, so many people walk around feeling invisible right from home and then they get into the world and feel like they are lost in the sea of faces.

You know what that means, for all of us the question of whether God actually sees us becomes very real? One of the questions I get often is, "Does God hear my prayer?" It's sad that so many people sometimes feel so invisible. Does God know my name, hear my voice or even love me from a sea of people?

And you see, for our father in heaven we are not just faces, we have names, we have a story, we have unique personalities and histories and each a future in him with him.

### **Let's Pray**

Jesus always had a way of seeing someone even in a crowd of people. And we will look at a story today where does that. And this story is not the only place Jesus does this. Actually, before we go to that story let me tell you another example in passing. One day a very wealthy person goes to ask Jesus about what he should do if he was to inherit eternal life. Now, this is in a crowd and this person is very very wealthy. Jesus answers him and he self righteously declares that he has done all that. What the story records is that Jesus looked at him and loved him.

In a crowd on a busy day. Someone who ends up not agreeing with Jesus at least at that point in the recorded story as we know it. Jesus turns to him and sees him and loves him. And this was a culture for Jesus. In the middle of an open-air meeting, a healing conference a great sermon you name it. The busiest he can be doing God's work Jesus would stop to see one person even if that one person was challenging him. Jesus would stop to heal one person even if that one person has interrupted the whole program.

People who needed Jesus' attention always left feeling heard and seen. It's like Jesus spoke the very language they needed to hear. Each person though very different from each other found acceptance and an audience in Jesus' eyes. And isn't one of the biggest measures of love someone's undivided attention? To know that someone could stop their whole world to speak to your fears and concerns in a way you understand?

Okay, let us get to the story I was hoping we would talk about today

### ***Luke 8:43-48 The Message (MSG)***

***In the crowd that day there was a woman who for twelve years had been afflicted with haemorrhages. She had spent every penny she had on doctors but not one had been able to help her. She slipped in from behind and touched the edge of Jesus' robe. At that very moment, her haemorrhaging stopped. Jesus said, "Who touched me?"***

When no one stepped forward, Peter said, "But Master, we've got crowds of people on our hands. Dozens have touched you."

Jesus insisted, "Someone touched me. I felt power discharging from me."

When the woman realized that she couldn't remain hidden, she knelt trembling before him. In front of all the people, she blurted out her story—why she touched him and how at that same moment she was healed.

Jesus said, "Daughter, you took a risk trusting me, and now you're healed and whole. Live well, live blessed!"

Lets again think about this story that some of you might have known from being to church before. I don't know what the equivalent of what the woman was going through would be. But whatever it was allowed her community to legally and openly shun her. She was not allowed around people. Now today we all agree that the life of Jesus changed civilization as we know it and there is a lot happening here. For one, they lived in a w world where because of an illness people could legally be shunned and discriminated against. Now, we know that that still continues in our society but it is not entrenched in our law anymore and neither can it be considered a godly practice. People who still pick and choose who is welcome into the community are not considered heroes anymore. I must confess, that is, unfortunately, changing all across the world. Which is a shame.

The other thing is that this is a woman. Even for the 21st-century woman who still has to fight for justice this woman lived in times of crazy levels of discrimination against women. Again, encounters of women like this with Jesus informed and continue to inform our conversation about Justice for women and men alike. Women were not very respected in this society. If today women have to work twice as hard as men to get recognition, in that time it would only take a miracle to have a woman respected.

Possibly she has lost her husband if she had one at this point because she had been considered unclean for any kind of relationship for 12 years. And had no prospects of being married. Which for some women in our society is not a big deal. But in her society, it was a big deal. She had lost all her money. I have a hunch that to even be in this crowd she had to disguise herself or maybe she went into a crowd in a town that did not know her story. My point being there was everything working against her.

Now imagine being sick for a month, it begins to mess up with how you feel about yourself and how you feel about God. Now imagine being sick for 12 years. It takes a lot to remain in a posture of confidence in God and yourself. So I picture a woman with a torn and battered self-esteem. She is invisible and has begun to probably believe that she belongs there, in invisibility.

So this particular day she joins the crowd to touch Jesus. She probably heard about all the people that Jesus had healed. Now, most people just went up to Jesus and asked for healing but she was at a point where I think she was so damaged she could not dare show up to Jesus and ask for healing. Don't forget all the other things working against her. One

she is a woman. But there were stories about Jesus being kind to women. She is unclean because of her blessing but there were stories about Jesus touching the unclean. But put these together she must be feeling that even in a heap of the unlearn and the rejected she must rank lowest. So she decided to do something that apparently was not so strange. In this time people believed that the edge of the cloaks of rabbis had mystical powers.

It would give her just enough time to get healed or not get healed and quietly sneak away from the crowd without being noticed. But something happens she is healed. Now at this point, I wanna ask you, if you are unwell and you need healing especially if any part of this story stands out for you, please come for prayer after the talk. I think there is something special about the things God bring to our attention and sometimes it is his declaring that there is power available to heal specifically for issues that he is raising up in the stories we share as a community.

So when she gets healed her hope is to quietly disappear but Jesus stops. Again. Jesus stops for yet one more person. Jesus had been so fond of telling people whom he healed not tell anyone but this time he asks out loud who touched him knowing too well that would be a public declaration of her being healed.

I like what the disciples tell him "How do you ask that knowing there are too many people touching you." But of all the people touching Jesus He was looking for a very specific person. Who is to say that other people did not get healed from touching Jesus? But for some reason from everyone touching him and possibly receiving different things or healings Jesus could isolate one particular touch. Of a woman so torn down that she felt too embarrassed to show herself.

Look at the gentleness of Jesus when talking to her. He calls her a daughter out in public. For people in the crowds, Jesus was a respected teacher and for those with the revelation and for us today the son of God, stopped the whole movement just to call this woman his daughter and reassure her. From the fringes of society, from nothingness, she was now at the centre of God's whole world. The eye of the sun of God was looking into her face and his voice speaking to her.

She is being restored physically through the healing, she is being restored spiritually by the son of God having a conversation with her, she is being restored in the community by the declaration that she is no longer unclean and even the most important person stopped for her. I think she just became the most sort after business partner, friend and even potential wife to many that stood there.

Who do you work with? "You remember the lady that Jesus called his daughter? Yeah, that's my business partner."

Who is your fiancé? Ahh, the lady that was healed by Jesus.

Her whole life just changed. And isn't that amazing? In a busy day, Jesus still would stop for you. In a crowd, Jesus would not only spot you but wait for you, just you. While everyone is touching Jesus, while everyone is calling on God's name, while everyone is pressing in, your touch does not go unnoticed. Your call does not go unheard. He is not too busy to turn around and say, who touched me and stand there everything in a halt until you show up.

You are God's favourite. Some of us have felt like we are in the fringes of our community. Maybe we are the least in our family because we did not make it as big as the rest did. Maybe it is because your marriage failed and everyone thinks it's your fault and so what if you had something to do with it. Some people think you are not Christian enough. O maybe you have just been hurting far too long. You have been sick for a long time and it is coming in between you and doing life. You are God's favourite and your unique call, your unique touch reaches his heart.

And you know the thing is we all have unique love languages. Ways in which we primarily give and receive love. Which makes human beings very very complicated. It's like buying a flower for a lady who prefers going out to coffee with you or a guy who prefers to hear you compliment him. It's ridiculous. It's like speaking Chinese in the deep heartland of Kenya where people barely even speak Swahili. There will be no communication.

And some relationships run into that trouble. Where people in relationship with each other miss each other's cues. They fail to learn what the other's love language is. And even when you do, people are always growing and changing. It's simply complicated. But I think God exactly knows what speaks love to us. Imagine she touched Jesus and then instead of getting healed she goes home and her water has been turned into wine for business. I mean that is a great thing but it's not what she needed. Imagine she just got healed and Jesus never talked to her. I mean still would be a great thing but she would go back to a society that would probably still not buy it.

Jesus showed love to this woman in exactly the language she needed to hear them.

I enjoy the music at Trinity Vineyard. There was once an old lady who was part of our church but she hated our music. Loved our talks but not our music. I just could not get her. Who would not like the band? You see, I am wired to experience God's presence in music. Now sometimes I experience God in nature. But it is not my primary way. But some of you do. Some of you find God in nature, in the silence of morning or hiking. God knows this and is willing and ready to meet you.

I love history and I have told this story twice before. In 2016 which by the way is when I was given a prophetic word about leading this church, by that time I did not know that of course I

was in the UK and I just had a love overload. Started at out at an amazing worship conference where the Holy Spirit specifically said to me, sit down.

"Do not sing, do not lift your hand. Just sit."

And I could feel God's love wash over me over and over and over. I could barely speak. For those who have fallen in love, you know that crazy emotion that just sits on your chest. So heavy you almost want to cry and laugh at the same time. I had the feeling for days. I was careful not to talk much lest I break down.

And here is the thing. I did not do anything. I just sat there. Because sometimes we think God is good too as repayment for what we do. We think we experience God's prescience when we pray louder or sing louder or all that. I did not sing, This was God singing over me. I simply sat down. Then in the next few days, I toured the City of London. Old buildings, gold and treasures that have been borrowed from all around the world or maybe more accurately taken forcefully. Not the point. I was walking through history. And as I was crossing the road at Trafalgar Square in London, I heard the Holy Spirit say, "I am just spoiling you". God knew how I love great worship music and how I love history and he gave them both to me in one experience. If you are wondering, Yes, I am expensive to love.

God knows exactly how to speak love to us. God knows exactly how to speak love to you. You see in my dark days, I remember such goodness of God and I know that he has spoilt me just because he loves me. And sometimes it could be silly. It could be rain. There could be something about rain that reminds you that God loves you. It could sound weird for some people but you will be the crazy person walking and dancing in the rain.

It could be a hot shower at 6 am. I know that category would have very few men but still. It could be seeing little children play or looking into the eyes of your loved one or hearing the singing of birds. It could be finding coins. Or it could be intellectual for you. Just seeing the argument in the Bible and being convinced of God's love for you. Whatever it is embrace it. Embrace it because that is what may keep you going in. You see, I always feel like there is a war in my mind. I love thinking and investigating and debating. So you can imagine not very many things are settled in my mind. Ideas are always shifting. Some growing others being torn down. So for me, my mind is not a good place for experiencing love. It's a lab. If I were to dare rely on my mind as the primary way for me to receive God's love, I would lose my faith. But even as I investigate ideas faith, the Bible in my head and it feels like a war zone, every time I am a room with worship music, or its raining, I just feel a calmness of God's love embrace me. So I kind of hold on to that.

Now someone would say, well God would not just bring rain for you. It's raining on all of us. Or why should a shower be special? We all have to get one at least between one and four

days. But you see that is the problem of the human story listening to the voice of doubt. Let me bring you to what we are more familiar with.

We have no idea why people receive love in the different ways they do. They just do. It's God's thing. We have no idea why some people prefer physical touch. So you could buy them tons of gifts but if you do not touch them, you do not love them. Some want acts of service, so if you do not do small acts of service while complimenting them from high heaven it does not work. People receive love in different ways and it's okay. If someone does not get it, that is their business.

Embrace God's love for you. When it rains on everyone one everyone for you, it's just for you. Because you are not invisible to God. When there are tons of tourists in London all given the opportunity by our God to visit the city, that day it was just my day with God. When birds are chirping they are probably trying to get a mate or ask for food or God knows what else, but for you God has you sitting right there to hear them because he loves you and you are not invisible to him.

### **Closing Prayer**