

Joined By Faith

Intro. Even though we live in a big world, I find that sometimes it is very small. In the parish of St. John in Chiefland one Sunday, I asked if there were visitors. The parish was so small we knew we had visitors among us. A hand finally went up and someone said they were from Ohio. There was an immediate stir from the other end of the same pew when the visitor announced the city. Then we heard a gasp as the man from the other end of the pew recognized the visitor as a nurse who had taken care of him some years before in Ohio. Hundreds of miles away and they ended up in the same small town, in the same small church and in the *same pew!* It is possible the man and the woman in the gospel belonged to the same synagogue. They might have passed each other in the marketplace. Because she

could afford doctors to treat her illness, she was probably known in the community as was the man.

I. It is not mentioned whether the synagogue leader supported or opposed the Lord. We know he was in agony for his daughter who was dying. Whatever career or authority he had in the synagogue no longer mattered. He was willing to do anything to save her, including getting on his knees to beg Jesus of Nazareth to help him. The man's request was immediately answered and the Lord was quickly on his way to the man's home.

A woman who was also looking for a healing joined the crowd following the Lord. For years she had suffered with no hope in sight. Now her life was slowly slipping away. The paths of these two people converged on the same street that day, both desperately looking for the same thing. The crowd

that followed the Lord gave the perfect opportunity for the woman's plan to be healed. Slowly she worked her way through the crowd. She was about to violate all kinds of rules. As a woman, she was not supposed to touch a man not her husband. Because of the hemorrhage, she was religiously unclean and not supposed to be around other people, making them unclean. A tough choice: to be finally healed and free but suffer the consequences of the religious law or give up and die. She pushed ahead. Instantly she felt something; a shiver or a surge in strength. The Lord felt something too. He *knew* who touched him. The woman thought she might be shamed for what she did; rather the Lord lovingly called her his "Daughter" and praised her for her faith [M. McGlone, *NCR*]. Like others in scripture who

showed faith, she got more than healing; she found *salvation*.

Concl. A man and a woman who in better times may have known each other from church, found themselves on the same street of despair. Both were brought to their knees by terrible events in their lives. Because of their faith in the Lord they received the gift of healing. We don't know what happened to them after this. Maybe the synagogue leader returned to his position and supported the Lord or gave it up and joined with the woman as witnesses to the power of God present in the Lord. Every day we meet each other on a variety of "streets," at school, work, at dance studios and ball fields. We search for many of the same things – happiness for us and for our children, healing for our ills, new life and faith. If we have the *courage* it

took for the man to reach out to the Lord and the
strength it took for the woman to touch the Lord, we
might allow the Lord to touch us and heal us of our
fears.