

# Hanging By A Thread

## Deuteronomy 22:12

Thou shalt make thee fringes upon the four quarters of thy vesture, wherewith thou coverest thyself.

- A fringe was the ordinary mode of finishing a robe; the ends of the threads were left hanging to prevent unraveling.
- In the NT weaving methods changed, but the Jews still attached a little tassel made of twisted wool to their mantle or cloak to remind them of the law
- The year is approximately 1500 BC; the ten spies have just returned from the Promised Land with a negative report.
- Unbelief led to rebellion; they wanted a new leader, and even threatened to stone Joshua and Caleb!
- God was merciful in allowing the next generation to enter the land, and gave them some important commandments:

## Numbers 15:30-40

<sup>30</sup>But the soul that doeth *ought* presumptuously, *whether he be* born in the land, or a stranger, the same reproacheth the LORD; and that soul shall be cut off from among his people.

<sup>31</sup>Because he hath despised the word of the LORD, and hath broken his commandment, that soul shall utterly be cut off; his iniquity *shall be* upon him.

<sup>32</sup>And while the children of Israel were in the wilderness, they found a man that gathered sticks upon the sabbath day.

<sup>33</sup>And they that found him gathering sticks brought him unto Moses and Aaron, and unto all the congregation. <sup>34</sup>And they put him in ward, because it was not declared what should be done to him.

<sup>35</sup>And the LORD said unto Moses, The man shall be surely put to death: all the congregation shall stone him with stones without the camp.

<sup>36</sup>And all the congregation brought him without the camp, and stoned him with stones, and he died; as the LORD commanded Moses.

<sup>37</sup>And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

<sup>38</sup>Speak unto the children of Israel, and bid them that they make them fringes in the borders of their garments throughout their generations, and that they put upon the fringe of the borders a ribband of blue:

<sup>39</sup>And it shall be unto you for a fringe, that ye may look upon it, and remember all the commandments of the LORD, and do them; and that ye seek not after your own heart and your own eyes, after which ye use to go a whoring:

<sup>40</sup>That ye may remember, and do all my commandments, and be holy unto your God.

- The man gathering sticks received the heaviest death penalty (strangled, slain with sword, burned with fire, stoned – most painful)
- God was illustrating an important principle to the Israelites at the beginning of the dispensation of Law

- He would later give a very similar illustration at the beginning of the dispensation of Grace (through Annanias and Sapphira)

## James 2:10

For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.

## THE BRIDGE

- We were created to have a relationship with God.
- But because the human race rebelled and walked away from God's will, we are burdened down with sin.
- There is now a "chasm" between us and God that we cannot cross.
- We subconsciously spend our entire lives trying to bridge this distance (i.e. being a good person, being religious).
- But no matter how far we "jump" we still fall miserably short!

## Romans 3:23

For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.

- The bad news is that the penalty for falling short is death! It's already too late for every one of us, even if we only broke ONE of God's laws!

## Romans 6:23

For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

- The Pharisees in Jesus' day constantly wore fringes on their garments to remind themselves and others of the importance of even the MINOR COMMANDMENTS of God's law.
- The "message" they represented made people feel condemned; that's why sinners are uncomfortable around preachers! (story: Chuck Swindoll and smoker setting pants on fire)
- But even the Pharisees themselves were in trouble, because while they had "threads" on their garments, their spiritual lives were just "hanging by a thread!" They had religion, not reality!

## Matthew 23:5

But all their works they do for to be seen of men: they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments.

- It is now about 1500 years after Moses recorded God's commandments about "fringes," and the scene shifts to two houses in the small town of Capernaum on the Sea of Galilee
- In the house of Jairus, a female child is born; there is great rejoicing
- But around the same time, a woman returns to her lonely house with a distressing doctor's verdict – an incurable issue of blood
- Over the next twelve years, all goes well in the house of Jairus, but the lonely woman exhausts her savings looking for a cure
- Eusebius, writing three centuries later, says that the woman's name was Veronica (there is a statue in front of her ancient house)
- Life can throw curves at us quickly – these two vastly different people both found their lives "hanging by a thread" on the same day!

### Luke 8:41-48

<sup>41</sup>And, behold, there came a man named Jairus, and he was a ruler of the synagogue: and he fell down at Jesus' feet, and besought him that he would come into his house:

<sup>42</sup>For he had one only daughter, about twelve years of age, and she lay a dying. But as he went the people thronged him.

<sup>43</sup>And a woman having an issue of blood twelve years, which had spent all her living upon physicians, neither could be healed of any,

<sup>44</sup>Came behind *him*, and touched the border of his garment: and immediately her issue of blood stanch'd.

<sup>45</sup>And Jesus said, Who touched me? When all denied, Peter and they that were with him said, Master, the multitude throng thee and press *thee*, and sayest thou, Who touched me?

<sup>46</sup>And Jesus said, Somebody hath touched me: for I perceive that virtue is gone out of me.

<sup>47</sup>And when the woman saw that she was not hid, she came trembling, and falling down before him, she declared unto him before all the people for what cause she had touched him, and how she was healed immediately.

<sup>48</sup>And he said unto her, Daughter, be of good comfort: thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace.

- This woman had an issue of blood; she was weakening day by day as her life ebbed away.
- She had suffered for twelve years; this was not a temporary condition that would go away on its own.
- She had suffered many things of many physicians; she had faced the torment of others' opinions.
- She had spent all she had; there were no resources left.
- She was nothing bettered; there had not been even a slight change despite all of her efforts.
- She rather grew worse; all of her good plans had backfired.
- Her modesty forbid her to talk about the problem; she endeavored to deal with it privately out of embarrassment.
- But worst of all, her problem made her unclean and shut her out of the courts of the Lord's house!

### Leviticus 15:25-27

<sup>25</sup>And if a woman have an issue of her blood many days out of the time of her separation, or if it run beyond the time of her separation; all the days of the issue of her uncleanness shall be as the days of her separation: she *shall be* unclean.

<sup>26</sup>Every bed whereon she lieth all the days of her issue shall be unto her as the bed of her separation: and whatsoever she sitteth upon shall be unclean, as the uncleanness of her separation.

<sup>27</sup>And whosoever toucheth those things shall be unclean, and shall wash his clothes, and bathe *himself* in water, and be unclean until the even.

- Isn't that just like sin? Not only does it hurt us, but it bars us from having a relationship with God. It is the "ultimate sickness!"
- This woman's life was "hanging by a thread" – but your life is too, if you haven't dealt with the sin question!

- THERE'S ONLY ONE WAY TO DEAL WITH THE DESPERATE CONDITION CALLED SIN – GET DESPERATE WITH GOD!
- This is a bad day to bother Jesus; Luke says the crowds "thronged" Him (8:45) – "choking, stifling, suffocating"
- This is a bad time to attempt to get help; Jesus was in the midst of trying to help someone else (Jairus)
- Common sense says that she should not be here; she defiles everyone she touches (she sneaked in from "behind" – 8:44)
- The crowd does not want her here; there is always a "crowd" between you and Jesus (i.e. past sins, people, peers, etc.)
- BUT THE CROWD WAS CLOSE TO JESUS INVOLUNTARILY; THIS WOMAN GOT CLOSE TO HIM VOLUNTARILY – AND THAT MADE THE DIFFERENCE!
- She was so determined to touch the hem of Jesus' garment that she broke the Law to do it!
- All she got ahold of was a THREAD – but it was enough!
- The gospel may seem SIMPLE – but obeying it is life-changing!

### 1 Peter 3:18

For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God.

### John 1:12

But as many as **RECEIVED** him, to them gave he **POWER** to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his **NAME**

- THE CROSS BECOMES THE **BRIDGE THROUGH FAITH!** (only Jesus' sacrifice has the power to stamp out our penalty of eternal death)
- BUT WE **CROSS THE BRIDGE THROUGH OBEDIENCE!**

### Acts 2:38

Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

- The only question is: WHERE ARE YOU IN RELATION TO THE BRIDGE?
- If you are saved, but have a serious need in your life, the answer is the same: GET DESPERATE WITH GOD – HE RESPONDS TO HUNGER!

### Matthew 17:20-21

<sup>20</sup>And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you.

<sup>21</sup>Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting.

- Did you ever wonder what happened to that woman? Her testimony must have been effective – look what happened when Jesus returned to the area:

### Matthew 14:35-36

<sup>35</sup>And when the men of that place had knowledge of him, they sent out into all that country round about, and brought unto him all that were diseased;

<sup>36</sup>And besought him that they might only touch the hem of his garment: and as many as touched were made perfectly whole.