

# Not Giving Up on You

Inspired by Mark 5:21-43

When Tabitha had crossed over the threshold from dependent to adulthood, a large crowd gathered around her to celebrate. There was what had become the norm of drinking and other substances at the party of which her parents did not approve. Seeing her, they fell at her feet and pleading earnestly with her saying, "Daughter, you are nearly at the point of death. Please come lay all of this down that you may get well and live.

She went off with them to rehab and a large crowd who had followed the same path pressed upon her. There was a counselor who had been afflicted with dependency for twelve years. She had suffered greatly, just like Tabitha at the hands of many doctors. Tabitha's parents had spent all they had emotionally, physically, and monetarily. Yet she was not helped, but only grew worse.

As the counselor spoke to their daughter, Tabitha's parents came up behind her and touched her. Her father wrapped his big arms around Tabitha and held her close. "I'll never let you go, my sweet girl" he whispered. Her mother held her hand and said, "You are going to be well. I just know it, my darling daughter." The counselor from the center cupped Tabitha's tear-stained face in her hands and held her gaze. Looking deeply into her hurting brown eyes now dimmed by all the struggles of her young 21 years, she spoke to Tabitha as softly and calmly as the mist of an evening shower that settles the dust of the day. "I will walk beside you all the way. I have been in your shoes, but I did not know the tremendous love of a father and mother. Know you have the three of us. If you but touch that spirit of courage and wisdom, you shall be cured."

Immediately her flow of tears dried up. She felt in her body the sincere desire to be healed of her affliction.

Tabitha, was aware at once that power had gone out of these people – Father, Mother, Counselor. She turned around in the crowd and said, "They touched me! They didn't let me go in shame. They didn't give up on me."

But her parents said to Tabitha, "You see how the crowd is pressing upon you, and yet you say, 'they touched me.'" Tabitha brushed back her matted black hair that had once shone like the silky reflection of the moon on still waters at night. She looked around to see who all had gathered, and to be sure it was her father's arms and mother's hands that held her.

Another young woman who had stayed off to the side pacing the perimeter of the room realized what had happened. She was small in stature, and at first glance seemed to be a mere child. But a closer look showed lines of hard living on her face. She shyly approached with eyes of fear and trembling hands. She fell down before then and told the whole truth of her journey. Tabitha's father released one arm and took her into their embrace of hope. He said to her, "Daughter, this spirit of truth will save you. Go toward that peace. Keep reaching out and touching those who are here to help you and be cured of your affliction."

While he was still speaking, people from the center's office arrived and said, "You're not his daughter, why trouble this family any longer. They have enough worry." Disregarding the warning message that was reported with good intentions for Tabitha and her parents. Tabitha's dad said to the program administrator, "Do not be afraid, just have faith. Do you not allow anyone to accompany these ones except father, mother, and brother?" The small, shy woman caught site of the officials and began weeping and wailing loudly. She was worried she had caused a commotion and would be separated from the others. One bystander who had remained stoic and silent through the entire encounter decided to speak up. "She really isn't so bad, in fact she's mostly asleep. And some began to ridicule her. Then the director took her out.

He took along Tabitha, her father and mother, and the counselor who was with them, and entered the room where there was calm and quiet. He took both young women by the hand and said, "Young ladies, I say to you, you have arrived!" The girls' spirits rose and they embraced each other. They were utterly astounded at their own transformation now that they finally felt touched inside their hearts.

The director gave strict orders that no one should interfere with this great progress and said they should be given something to eat.

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