



A Woman with Issues

My Brothers and Sisters in Christ, lately, I've been dealing with some issues . . . I'm thinking maybe you've got some issues, too . . . Tonight, I just want to talk about a woman. A woman with issues.

First She Was Whole

- beautiful, family, loved the Lord, read her Torah, went to Temple, looked good, productive member of society
- her heart was beating strong
- God was blessing her

She's dwelling in the land of WHOLENESS.

Doctor's visits and scale from 0-10

1st page – physical aches, pains, complaints

2nd page

Have you felt like nobody loved you in the past 2 weeks?

0 – 10

Have you felt like your life is a failure in the past 2 weeks?

0 – 10

So, if this woman rated her life at this point in time, surely she'd put it at a 10.

The Enemy Strikes

But then, all of a sudden, out of nowhere, the enemy strikes. An issue comes. Anybody been here before?

- *That man, that woman, that boyfriend, that girlfriend left you*
- *Simple dx test - hospitalized*
- *Regular physical – cancer, HIV*
- *Went to work like any other day but in the envelope with your paycheck was a note saying you don't have a job anymore*
- *Man won't come home before daylight*
- *Fractured friendships, ruptured relationships*
- *You get that call from jail*
- *Or the call in the middle of the night to tell you that the one person you thought you couldn't live without has passed away.*



Breaking the Silence - Building Hope

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When the enemy struck this woman, I have to believe that her heart began to break, but she still believed. She still had hope.

She still had a strong heartbeat.

She wasn't helpless . . . dr referrals. . . . on her insurance . . . copay

She was a Romans 8:28 Christian. . . all things , , , grace out of disgrace .

. .

She's still got faith, but she's not whole anymore. She's got an issue.

She's living in the land of nothingness.

She's at an 8.5.

But that's not the end of the story. . . there's another chapter . . . turns the page of this book called life, something strange happens. Back in the day, people thought that illness was the result of sin: rumors start...What did she do to bring this on herself?

- -God don't like ugly. Rabbi Kushner, sometimes 'Bad Things Happen to Good People'
- Nobody's returning calls
- Even family is beginning to question her: Is it all in her mind?
- Friends don't understand
 - why doesn't she just get over it?
 - I know she lost her mother, but that was 2-3 months ago . . .
 - you begin to find out who your real friends are

Years are going by, and she's finding it hard to hold on.

She still remembers the good times.

Still has some good days; still has a friend or two who call her up . . .

Hair not falling out from the chemo

But when she looks at herself in the mirror, she's beginning to see the signs of sickness and strain on her face

Helpless, but not hopeless

She begins to question herself and to question God. Why me? On the life scale, she's fallen to a 6.5. - She's broke, downhearted, and disgusted.



She's dwelling in the land of helplessness.

But that's not the end . . .

- Reports have come in
- The enemy has taken his best shot and it begins to look like he's gonna win
- People have bailed
- Lights off, gas disconnected, car repo'd
- But she still has bread and syrup. She can still make her something to eat.
- She keeps telling herself that things could be worse, but she doesn't believe it.
- She's not so good looking anymore
- She's not what she used to be
- No more doctors, and even if there were, she couldn't afford to pay them.
- Insurance gone.
- Her heartbeat is not as strong as it used to be, but she still hears the Mighty Clouds of Joy saying, "There's a Bright Side Somewhere"
- Hey, I've still got a roof over my head, I've still got candles. God's still got a blessing with my name on it.
- She's dropped down to a 3, and she begins to feel the isolation and desperation of hopelessness.
- Now She's taken up residency in the Land of Hopelessness.

But that's not the end. . .

- home foreclosed
- no candles left . . . not matches
- She's in the dark
- Been to all the doctors

What do you do when darkness falls so heavy in your life that it feels like a physical weight?

The Psalmist said, 69:20

I'm broken by their taunts, flat on my face, reduced to a nothing. I looked in vain for one friendly face. Not one. I couldn't find one shoulder to cry on.
-gov denied her disability; food stamps cut off
-dwelling in the land of failure



- heart almost stopped
- too weak for a bypass . too weak to fight

It's midnight in her soul. She's pawned everything, she's alone.
She's at 0 on the scale of life. Living now in the Land of Nothingness.
401k-gone
pension-gone
sick and getting sicker by the minute
old and getting older by the minute.
Looked at her life, and looked at her hopes and dreams, and astonished at what
her life had become.

She's heartbroken, Church!

Everywhere she looks, she can't see a way out.

She needs a hug, a kind word, but the world has decided she's unclean.

She was sick and tired of being sick and tired. From wholeness, to brokenness,
to helplessness, to hopelessness, and now to nothingness.

All she's done for 12 years is fail. She's hit rock bottom, about to flatline.
She's living in the land of nothingness.

But that's still not the end of the story.

She was about to flatline, but she heard about a lifeline named Jesus.

- This wasn't the first time she'd heard about Jesus. Remember, this was a woman who loved God. . . .
- When she was whole,
- had faithfully attended temple
- But even when she couldn't go, she continued to study God's word
 - In her brokenness, she continued to study God's word
 - In her helplessness, she was faithful
 - In her hopelessness, she continued to study
 - In her nothingness, she was faithful

And as a reward God had placed something on the inside of her that just would not, could not, quit.



When she began to hear the people streaming past her front porch, she heard Jesus, Jesus, Jesus in the murmuring crowd

Then she saw the little epileptic boy, but he didn't have epilepsy anymore

She saw the blind man, who always begged for alms at the corner of Berry and Miller, but the scales had been removed from his eyes

She saw 9 ungrateful lepers and 1 grateful one with smooth, pretty, skin.

By this time, the murmur had grown to a shout: JESUS JESUS JESUS!

And she formulated the thought in her mind: I've got to get to Jesus!

- At the point of nothing, there was still some thing
- See, only God can take nothing and make something out of it.
- Only God can turn grace into disgrace
- Some call it faith, some call it tenacity, some call it perseverance, some call it discipline

All I know is there was something.

She knew that little becomes much when you place it in the master's hand.

A time will come in your life when you realize that you can't hold it all together... but you can hold on to his unchanging hand

Jesus will meet you in the crack house,
Jesus will meet you at the doctor's office , and at the courthouse.
Jesus will meet you at the club, at the bottom of the bottle,
on the whore stroll, in the back seat of a car.
he will meet you in your sickness
he will meet you when your grown children want to suck the life out of you
he will meet you when you're confused
he will meet you when you're downhearted
Take Heart! Your faith will heal you!

Maybe you didn't keep your goodies in the jar.



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He's still there. Take Heart! Your faith will heal you!

Maybe you're the girl or boy with the bad reputation. Take Heart!

Maybe you can't stop spending money you don't have.
He's still there. Take heart! Your faith will heal you!

Maybe you feel like you've made too many mistakes. Maybe you feel
you've got a little too much junk in your trunk.

He's still there.

We've all walked where we should not have walked
We've touched things we should not have touched
We've thought things we should not have thought.

But Jesus will never leave you nor forsake you.

Start tonight.

No height, no depth can keep you from his love, nothing that you can ever
do. There's no place so far that you are out of reach. No matter what the
world says, this still is true. No thing can keep his love from you.