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# BLEED OUT

STORIES OF CHRISTLIKE COMPASSION

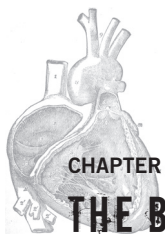
AARON MITCHUM

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## CHAPTER 5

# THE BLEEDING WOMAN AND THE BLEEDING BHUTANESE MAN

Have you ever noticed it's pretty hard to hear someone else when you are talking? Like when you are at the drive-thru and there is a delay in the intercom and you both end up talking at the same time. You never get the right order! Well it can be similar with hearing the Holy Spirit. If you are not listening and watching you won't hear what the Spirit is saying. Compassion happens when we slow our lives down and set the margins of our lives for the benefit of others rather than our own.

There have been times when I have been on my way to a meeting at church and passed people in need. This could be somebody asking for food or money, or my elderly neighbor getting groceries out of her car, or my wife needing help, or whatever. Now sometimes a person is justified, but I'm talking about the seasons of life where I notice that I am always too busy to stop and listen. I'm too busy trying to be busy, rather than allowing enough time trying to be available. This leads us back to competition. If I don't want to be perceived as lazy, or not wanted by others, I may try to load my life up to the brim. There is a big difference though between being lazy and having margins.

## *Mark 5*

After Jesus had performed the miracle of casting out the legion of demons from the man in Garasene, He got back in a boat and crossed the lake again. When He arrived on the other side of the lake a crowd gathered around Him. They explained that there was a little girl who was sick and dying. They begged Him to go and heal her.

I imagine that this news created urgency in the crowd around Him. Maybe an excitement grew because of the miracle they were about to see. A sense of purpose might have quickly permeated the crowd. So Jesus and the crowd set out on their way to the girl's home. All of a sudden Jesus stopped and said, "Who touched me?" His followers were sort of taken back by His statement. They said, Jesus EVERYONE is touching you; we're in a crowd! What do you mean, "Who touched me?" However, Jesus knew that some of His power had been siphoned off of Him. So he kept asking the question and looking around. I imagine that a few minutes went by and it got kind of awkward. Finally, a woman timidly stepped forward and said she was the one He was looking for. She knew because moments earlier she had been in the crowd waiting for Jesus.

This woman had been bleeding for years and had suffered at the hands of doctors who tried to solve the situation with painful remedies. Yet here she was still in pain and without money. She was a desperate woman. The stories about Jesus had flown around Israel. His miracles of healing were widely known and talked about. This woman seemed to develop an intuitive feeling that this was the man who could heal her. If He were as powerful as she had heard she would only need just to touch Him, or a part of Him, to be healed. So that was her plan. Seeing Jesus coming, she wormed her way to Him and reached through the crowd touching the hem of His robe. (Because was a Jewish Rabbi that hem

would have been a prayer tassel called the tzitzit.) Immediately, she knew that she was healed. She could feel it. One can only imagine the sense of relief that came to this woman who had been suffering for 12 years. Suddenly though, she is called out. You can imagine her sense of embarrassment, or maybe even guilt, as her action did not go unnoticed. Did she look around and feel the weight of her action? We do not know. However, we do know that eventually she revealed herself by saying she was the one who touched Jesus.

Now, remember the sense of urgency in the crowd for the little girl who was dying? Jesus could have been upset that this woman had interrupted the urgent journey to the girl who was dying. He could have called her selfish and a coward for not seeking him face-to-face. However, Jesus blessed her and included her in the family by calling her daughter. Jesus' compassion showed people they were a part of God's family.

The other day my sister-in-law showed me a great example of this Jesus-like compassion. It was around 9:30 p.m. on a Thursday night, I had just walked into the house after finishing a 20 mile bike ride and was pouring a glass of water when the phone began to ring. I picked it up expecting it to be my wife. However it was her sister, Lauren, and she was obviously upset. She was talking fast and you could hear the adrenaline in her voice. She was telling me that one of the Bhutanese refugees our faith community was helping to emulate into America had just been hit by a car while crossing the street with his 17-year-old daughter. Lauren asked me to go with her to be with the family. The margin in Lauren's life that existed in order for her to be heading to the other side of town at 9:30 p.m. hi-lighted her rhythm of life.

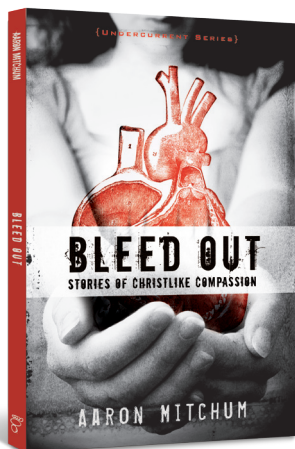
A few months earlier Lauren and her husband Drew had mapped out what they wanted their life to be about. They came to the conclusion that they wanted to live a life that showed their two

small children how much God loves people of different cultures. This led them to take a trip to Nepal (a place chalked full of Bhutanese refugees). There they fell in love with the people of Nepal and Bhutan. After they returned from their two-week trek they found out that there were Bhutanese refugees from Nepal living in Kansas City! They immediately figured out how to be involved with this community. They engaged with a group of folks and began helping teach them how to speak English, drive, get jobs, set up bank accounts, and so on. Lauren and Drew began to build margins in their life to be compassionate to these people. They became good friends with people they could hardly speak to in the same language. When they did, a bond began that was deeper than any language. It was built on the compassion of Jesus.

Lauren was one of the first people called by the 17-year-old daughter of the man hit that night. She had the margin to ask Drew to watch the kids so she could be with their friends. Drew asked her to call me to go with her since he couldn't. My wife Page, Lauren, and I arrived shortly after the man hit had been rushed to the hospital. His wife, daughter, and friends were still in the place where it happened, shocked. His daughter was weeping and his wife was distraught. The police seemed not to know what to do with these people who were dealing with this trauma. The moment we arrived, Lauren was out of the car and across the street on her knees embracing the daughter, crying with her. Not because she was hurt, but because her friend was. She was saying, "I'm so sorry you have to go through this." She didn't try to solve the situation, she was just simply there.

We loaded up the car with the wife, the daughter, and all of us and went to the hospital. There we sat; Lauren and a few others were in the room with them and we were in the waiting room. I cannot tell you how much it meant to her friends that she was there. At this moment these friends of Lauren are Hindu believers

# BLEED OUT: STORIES OF CHRISTLIKE COMPASSION



COMPASSION is often viewed as a secondary movement in the Christian life. Challenging that standpoint, *Bleed Out* is about hearing the compassionate voice of God in our lives, understanding that voice, and responding to it through our own Christlike compassion towards others. *Bleed Out* highlights some of the heroes often overlooked in the market-driven, socio-religious economy of Western Christianity.

Beginning with a foundation of understanding where compassion comes from, *Bleed Out* leads into a series of

stories that show the compassion of Jesus in the New Testament. These are followed by parallel stories of Christlike compassion that are happening today all over the world, ranging from students like you to the marginalized and others who may be nothing like you. Each section ends with opportunities for interactive reflection and a personal continuation of the themes addressed in that section.

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