

# *Missing Out*

*Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost (OS 21C)*

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## **Sunday, August 21, 2022**

Can you actually picture the situation. Jesus is going about his usual business: Teaching on the Sabbath the crowds that have gathered in the synagogue. The synagogue was the central point of the community and no doubt the officials were pleased with themselves that this Jesus of Nazareth who the whole nation was talking about was in their very own synagogue. They prided themselves on keeping the very letter of the law and as if this was some sort of reward for their diligence, He was here. They must have been so proud. All was going well and then the door at the back opened. They really didn't have to look, for they knew who it was. She would always come in during the time of teaching. Bent over, shuffling. They hoped that she would get to her place quickly – As a woman, she was at the back so maybe Jesus wouldn't notice. What an embarrassment!

But he did, and although they hoped that he might ignore her, he didn't. He called her forward and it took an interminable time. She shuffled forward till she was right beside him. Could it get any worse?

Well it did! He reached out and touched her. And as he did she straightened up. Talk about ruin their plans. The focus was now on her – And it was the Sabbath – Jesus had broken the rules healing on that day. And so they told him. He was not the teacher they were expecting.

But Jesus challenged them about their practices and the practicalities of the law. The crowd cheered which made them feel even worse.

The officials missed out on seeing God in action, because they were focused by their own principles, priorities and prejudices. God is not bound by our human understanding and will challenge us in areas that become barriers. In fact, I believe that God purposely challenges our points of prejudice so we may grow in our faith and knowledge of him.

We have the choice, to be open to God and the possibilities, or like the officials to attempt to limit God to how we perceive he should act. I remember the author and Christian Psychologist John White talking of gathering with a group of elders in prayer. In the time he became aware of God's presence among them as a cylinder of light. As he basked in the presence of the glory of God, he became aware that none of the others could see what he could. It was hidden because they were not open to the physical presence of God in their midst.

If we are not open to new possibilities, then we will also miss out on all that God has to give. Let us pray for this openness to come into our lives, that we might better know our God.

**AMEN.**