

## Authority and healing

This is a short drama based on Matthew 21:23-32 and Matthew 9:20-22, with a reference to Exodus 17:1-7. It would be best to read Exodus and Matthew 21 before the drama, and Matthew 9 directly afterwards.

The mother here cannot be the woman from Matthew 9, since this drama is set after Matthew 21 (and in the same place) - but her story allows us to imagine that other people may have had similar encounters with Jesus.

## Characters

**Mother** is not the woman from Matthew 9 (also Mark 5:25-34 and Luke 8:43-48), but a very similar woman in Jerusalem . For 10 years she has had bleeding - she would have been unclean for the entire time and this would have restricted her socially (aside from the consequences of her illness!)

**Father** is her husband

**Daughter** and **Son** are their children - both old enough to be out on their own and taking an interest in the world, but not yet married. They are living with their parents. Daughter does most of the housework since her mother is unwell.

## Script

*Mother is sitting alone in her chair, working at knitting (or another homely, sedentary pursuit). She looks towards a clock or window. A table with kitchen things is there.*

**Mother** Where are they? It's getting late...

*Father, Son and Daughter enter together, discussing their day*

**Son** He really knows what he's talking about (*Sees Mother*) Mum, I wish you could've seen it!

**Daughter** They were so confused – but he was still so nice about it!

**Father** (*laughing*) You need to start at the beginning!

*The son and daughter compete to tell the story*

**Son** So we were over by the temple today, that new preacher guy was there

**Daughter** Jesus, he's called - from Galilee

**Son** Yeah, Jesus. And the high ones came in with their sneaky questions, looking to get one up on him.

**Daughter** But he showed them up

**Son** Yeah, they didn't dare answer him!

**Mother** What did they ask?

**Son** They wanted to know who gave him authority - daft question, it's so obvious he's from God

**Daughter** They wanted to trick him into saying it though

**Son** Yeah, but he asked them something about John instead, and they couldn't figure out how to answer

**Mum** Isn't John a prophet? You told me about him a while ago. Something about baptising folk?

**Daughter** yeah, but they didn't want to admit that. You remember we told you they weren't so keen on him? Jesus asked them if John's baptism was from God. They wanted to say no. But the crowd would've gone for them if they'd said that.

**Son** I saw a few folks picking up rocks

**Daughter** (*nodding*) they knew it too - I heard them talking about it. Eventually they said they didn't know, and Jesus was all nice and just said well I won't answer your question either. It was a clever way to deal with it.

**Father** He certainly did handle it well - nothing like some of the schemers we have here, but also not quite like I imagined a prophet would. But he's definitely got authority, that's for sure. And not the sort that stomps all over folk. (*looks outside*) Anyway - it's getting on. Come on son, I said we'd help next door with their roof.

*(Father and son exit. Daughter begins working with the kitchen things. Mother goes back to her knitting)*

**Daughter** I think father is on to something - Jesus definitely has authority... You remember the story of Moses hitting a rock with a stick and getting water out? I bet Jesus could do the opposite for you, if you know what I mean

**Mother** I don't unders— (*looks shocked as she realises her daughter is referring to her bleeding*) What!? No, I can't ask him about that! He's a MAN !

**Daughter** He could though - he's healed other people. And you've asked plenty of other folk - doctors, and (*sceptically*) "healers" over these last 10 years

**Mother** They all came here though, and that's their job. And besides - what if he won't?

**Daughter** And they all charged you plenty, and you wore yourself out doing what they asked even when it was nonsense. He's different. I think you'd be glad you met him.

*(Silence, both continuing their work)*

**Daughter** (*placing her things down on the table, preparing to leave*) And anyway - we'd still love you, no matter what.

*(Daughter exits. Mother pauses, then places her knitting in her lap as she thinks it through)*

**Mother** Perhaps if I just touched his cloak...

*(Mother exits, carefully but purposefully)*