



# Links Players

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## The Madness of Crowds

At once, Jesus realized that power had gone out from him. He turned around in the crowd and asked, “Who touched my clothes?” (Mark 5:30 NIV)

At Troon in 1962, thousands of fans managed to bypass admission gates and flooded the fairways to watch Arnold Palmer win his second Open. The crowds overwhelmed the outnumbered course marshals, and Palmer had to wait to play every shot on 18 due to the converging masses.

At the Waste Management Open in Phoenix in 2022, people began to line up at 2 AM to sprint for a good seat at the par three 16th hole—the gates opened at 6:45 AM. The 16th seats 20,000 raucous fans who shout and scream while enjoying libations throughout the day.

After repeated delays in 2022 due to beer cans in the area of play, the PGA has considered erecting nets to protect players and caddies from objects being launched by the 20,000-plus attendees.

While crowd motivation and behavior can vary, mass emotion and irrational behavior are often contagious in crowds. Anonymity plays a significant role too. People are less restrained in crowds because it is unlikely they will be exposed.

At the height of Jesus’ public ministry, crowds became a problem. Like the course marshals at Troon, the disciples found themselves trying to hold back the masses. The curious, the politically motivated, the religious, the needy, and the broken began approaching Jesus in large numbers. The excitement was palpable. Tensions were high.

In Mark 5, Jesus steps off a boat and into a crowd on the eastern side of the Sea of Galilee. As Jesus begins to respond to the needs of the people, the crowd presses around and then in on Jesus. Amid the suffocating chaos, Jesus asks a baffling question: “Who touched my clothes?” (Mark 5:30)

The disciples, confused, state the obvious—everyone! Jesus, unaffected by the madness of the crowd, searches for the anonymous person who has drawn life from his body with a single touch.

Finally, a girl steps forward. The young woman believed she would be healed if she could touch Jesus’ clothes. She suffered from a condition of hemorrhaging. For twelve years, she had been treated with disdain by physicians, labeled unclean by her community, and bankrupted by medical expenses.

Now, healed from touching Jesus' robe, trembling with fear, she reveals herself to Jesus. The crowd can see and knows her as the unclean girl who bleeds. Jesus says to her: "Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be free from your suffering." (Mark 5:34)

Today, crowds are monolithic and overwhelming, and madness prevails. Stereotypes define, castigate, and cancel. Group thought is commonplace, and ideologies are in opposition to free-thinking individuals. But like the girl, Jesus calls out the hidden, the hurting, and the anonymous.

He identifies the humble and the desperate ones who will believe him and believe in him. He separates, and he heals. Those who come to Jesus are no longer defined by their maladies, mistakes, or who they were with or against. They now have new identities; daughters and sons of their Father, The Most High.

And these newly identified people are a growing community—the Kingdom of God—which is so expansive with energy that the crowds, and even the gates of hell, will not prevail against its coming.

**Prayer: May I step out today in faith and trust in you, Lord.**

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Boo Arnold  
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