

## 18. The Touch of Jesus

One Sunday morning while welcoming visitors and guests, a pastor ended his little greeting with the encouragement, "Just put out your hand and someone will grab it." The pastor was thereby encouraging something beyond a nod, a few words and a smile. He was encouraging us to use the God-given sense of **touch**. In the explanation of the First Article of the Apostles' Creed we confess: I believe that God has made me and all creatures; that He has given me my body and soul, eyes, ears, and all my members, my reason and all my senses, and still preserves them." As the ability to hear, see, taste and smell are special gifts of God, so also is the sense of **touch**.

I want to draw your attention to the Scriptures which reveal somewhat of a touch-magnetism that went on between our blessed Savior, when he walked here on earth, and the people. In fact, our Lord seems to have relished touching and being touched. As we scan the Gospel of Mark, one of the sidelights and details which he presents concerns the "touch" of Jesus.

- For example, Mark tells of the incident when a deaf-mute was brought to Jesus for healing. We are told, *And they brought to him a man who was deaf and had an impediment in his speech; and they besought him to lay his hand upon him. And taking him aside from the multitude privately, he put his fingers into his ears, and he spat and touched his tongue.*
- Another incident in which Mark pictures our blessed Savior as extending His hand to touch was when He took the mother-in-law of Peter by the hand and healed her of a fever. We read, *And he came and took her by the hand and lifted her up, and the fever left her; and she served them.*
- And then there was the leper whose plea, *If you will, you can make me clean*, moved the Savior to compassion. We are told that Jesus *put forth his hand and touched him and cleansed him of his leprosy.*
- Jesus entered the death room of Jairus' daughter, took her by the hand, and raised her from the dead. Mark records that Jesus was so hindered by unbelief in Nazareth that he could do no greater works than to *lay His hands upon a few sick folk and heal them.*
- When Jesus came down from the Mount of Transfiguration, they brought to Jesus a demoniac boy. While the lad was writhing in the grip of the devil, Jesus, *took him by the hand*, lifted him up and completely freed him of demon possession.
- When mothers brought their children to Jesus, *He took the children up in His arms, put His hand upon them, and blessed them.* The frequent repetition in the gospel of Mark that Jesus "touched" people certainly accents the importance of Christ's "touch."

Why did Christ touch these people? Mark doesn't explain, and we can only cite the obvious. Certainly he wanted to teach that all help comes from Him; that all things are in His hands; that He has all power over sickness, sadness and death itself. Furthermore, Christ's "touch" expresses tenderness, pity, sympathy; it assures us that He is true Man, and while HE was without sin, He is touched by man's infirmity and expresses His tenderness, kindness, compassion, and solicitude by touching the needy whom He came to seek and to save. His "touch" expresses the swift sympathy and heart of compassion that Jesus had for all human suffering, and still has for our suffering today.

Not only does the "touch of Jesus speak to us of a Savior who is true Man, but who is also true God. And as the true God, with a heart full of love He bends down from His throne and extends His hand to clasp us to Himself; to cure us of the fever, the leprosy of sin and to give us spiritual health, sight and life. His pity and compassion will not permit our spiritual foulness to turn Him away. He continues to come to us and with outstretched arms He bids us to come to Him that He might touch us.

# The Touch of Jesus

## We Begin

L: As we begin, dear Lord, touch us.

R: Touch us with your Word and your love.

## We Search Scriptures - Mark 6:53-56

When they had crossed over, they landed at Gennesaret and anchored there. As soon as they got out of the boat, people recognized Jesus. They ran throughout that whole region and carried the sick on mats to wherever they heard he was. And wherever he went --into villages, towns or countryside --they placed the sick in the marketplaces. They begged him to let them touch even the edge of his cloak, and all who touched him were healed.

### We Meditate

Follow this outline as the meditation is presented

- Just put out your hand
- The Gospel-writer Mark describes the touch of Jesus
  - √ the deaf mute
  - √ Peter's mother-in-law
  - √ the leper
  - √ Jairus' daughter
  - √ a demoniac boy
  - √ the children
- The touch of the true Man
- The touch of the true God

## We Respond

L: Lord, when I seem so worried about things in life

R: Touch me with your assurances.

L: Lord, when I hurt in my body, mind or spirit

R: Touch me with your healing.

L: Lord, when it seems like I have no one to talk to that understands me

R: Touch me with your invitation to talk to you..

L: Lord, when my last days give me moments of doubt

R: Touch me with your resurrection.

## We Pray

O Lord Jesus, how wonderful it must have been for those people who received healing through Your touch of love! How special those children must have felt when You took them up in Your arms, put Your hands on them, and blessed them! We might wish, "If only Jesus would touch me like that!" Remind us, precious Savior, that indeed You do touch us today. You heal us through doctors, medicines, surgeries. You bless us through the loving touch of our families and friends. Best of all, You touch us through the Holy Spirit. As we hear Your Word our hearts are touched. As we taste Your body and blood in Holy Communion, our souls are touched. We praise You for reaching out to us constantly with Your love. Keep touching us, Lord, keep touching us. Amen.

