

Human Touch

Scripture: Mark 1:40 – 45

August 20th, 2023

Leprosy is a chronic curable disease today. But back in Jesus' day, leprosy was un-curable! Leprosy caused your skin to develop lesions and it would cause nerve damage. Leprosy was caused by a bacterium and it mainly affected your skin, eyes, and nose. It could spread by coughing on someone or touching someone. In the USA today we have less than 20,000 case a year. The main cause of leprosy was uncleanliness. Leprosy is now called Hansen Disease.

What must the leper have felt in our scripture story today? All the leper wanted was to be cured of this horrible disease. He wanted to be clean! All he expected was a miracle of some sort. For much of his life, he had been an outcast. He had been feared and shunned by everyone. When outside, he had clothing which showed others that he had leprosy. He had to cry out loud - UNCLEAN! – So that no one would come close to him. What a life!

Jesus, however, ignored the man's cry. Jesus went directly to him and touched him! Let me repeat that - Jesus went directly to him and touched him!

It was an experience the man would not soon forget! Each time the man told the story, he would end it by saying – 'He touched me!' Now, Josh Fisher will sing – 'He Touched Me'

Thank you Josh for your sharing!

Touch is the sense which love employs! Touch can communicate feeling and convey affection, no matter how slight or long. Touch can conquer distance. Touch can span social status. Touch can bind people together!

Yes, human touch can change social norms like when Princess Diana touched a person with AIDS in Africa. What a dynamic moment when Princess Diana sat on the bed of person infected with AIDS and she held his hand. Lady Diana was un-gloved. Human touch can make all the difference! What a moment!

We may be taking life for granted but human touch can change all that. We may find ourselves in deep water, but human touch can change all that. We may be being battered by mammoth waves of life, but human touch can change all that!

Human touch is a learned lesson and it is sometimes hard to understand. Human touch has within it a sense of compassion. Human touch can let the person touching know what they have suffered.

I recall a friend who was plagued by asthma, yet this friend was radiant and full of life. Though he breathed with much difficulty, he made others breathe easy by his touch.

The human touch is a gift of grace. It is filled with understanding and love. It knows how easy it is to fail and fall, but human touch makes life easier to live nobly and wisely. Human touch never makes quick and harsh judgements. It seeks healing without wounding. It gets to the heart of a situation as nothing else can.

Human touch knows no rank. Human touch knows no class.
Human touch knows no creed. Human touch knows no color.

It sees sorrow where it is bravely hidden and it sees virtue where it is least expected. Human touch is forever on the watch for those who need a helping hand. It is the Spirit of Christ in action.

We have landed men on the moon but we are estranged or alienated from one another. We have achieved nearness but we have not achieved community. We are very often like an island in the sea of humanity! We often seem to shout at one another across a sea of misunderstanding.

The tragedy of today is its impersonal character. The people are out of touch, out of patience, out of respect, and out of sympathy for each other. The world was never as full of strangers as it is seems now. Never before have people been so deficient in understanding, imagination, or compassion!

We need to come to grips with the Spirit of Christ in his church. We cannot expect mercy from God and refuse to show mercy upon others. When we turn our backs upon our neighbors, we turn our back upon God! The human touch is the hallmark of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Paul said – *‘Through love, be servants to one another For he who does not know love, does not know God.’*

So today let us end this message with the 'Laying of Hands' upon you if you wish.

Are any of you among those who are suffering? You should pray.

Are you among those who are cheerful? You should sing songs of praise.

Are you among the sick? You should call for the laying of hands upon you.

So this morning Rev. Kevin Munroe and I will be upfront here to have you come forward for us to place our hands upon your forehead or shoulder and pray for you. Please form two lines and come forward if you wish. This prayer will be a prayer of faith. It will raise you up to our Lord.

(Music)

(Greet each person who comes forward by name – if you do not know their name, ask them for their name. Place you hand on their forehead and say)

May the hand of the Great Physician, Jesus Christ, rest upon you now in divine blessing and healing. May the cleansing power of Jesus' life fill your whole life, body, mind, and spirit to strengthen and heal you. AMEN.

(Greet each person who comes forward by name – if you do not know their name, ask them for their name. Place you hand on their forehead and say)

May the hand of the Great Physician, Jesus Christ, rest upon you now in divine blessing and healing. May the cleansing power of Jesus' life fill your whole life, body, mind, and spirit to strengthen and heal you. AMEN.

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