

“The Healing Touch” - Mark 5:24-34- Rev. Jeffrey B. Childs

Healing touch – often in the gospel healing stories we see that touch when Jesus reaches out to touch and heal someone. But here it goes the other way. A woman believes that if she can just get close enough to touch Jesus, or even the hem of his robe, that would be enough! She would be healed. We might not really believe that, but we seem to think the same sort of thing happens. If we hang out with the right people some of it will “rub off” on us and we will be smarter or more popular or whatever we are hoping to get by association or osmosis or whatever. And maybe we think the exact opposite happens as well as we keep a distance from some people, so we don’t catch something from them. Like during the pandemic with masks and gloves and social distancing! Back in the day, when Jesus was walking around, those who were diseased were to stay their distance from people who were healthy. Lepers would congregate in colonies at the outskirts of the village and beg for help from a distance.

In this story the woman has been bleeding for twelve years. You can imagine no one wanted to get near her or catch whatever she had and would have avoided her – like the plague! She had been seeking treatment from many doctors, but the bleeding continued. She would have known better than to push her way into a crowd of people and maybe infecting some. But she believed that if she could just touch the hem of Jesus’ robe, she could finally be healed. And with that determined faith she pressed on. She reached out, she touched; she was healed.

When have you felt a healing touch? One of the hardest things for people during the pandemic was to be unable to reach out and touch one another. But before that you remember the feeling of someone rubbing your tired shoulders or feeling a loving and caring hug.

Healing faith – Let me point out that in this story, Jesus acknowledges that it was not the magic touch that healed her, but her faith! This is more than wishful thinking or even the *Power of Positive Thinking* of the Rev. Dr. Norman Vincent Peale. I believe this is even more than the placebo effect – you know, when patients think they are receiving a prescribed medication and start to feel better even though what they actually receive is just a “sugar pill.” Something happened here that both the woman felt, and Jesus felt. She maybe felt zapped, and Jesus felt sapped of some power. But it never would have happened if she did not have the faith to get up close and personal with Jesus – to reach out and touch him! So let me ask you, are you afraid to get too close to Jesus? Do you have faith to overcome that fear? Today Jesus is inviting us to get up close and personal. And notice like in this story when you get close to Jesus you do get close to others trying to press in and get close too. We get close to people when we get close to Jesus and vice versa. Have you noticed that there are some who do not have much contact with people? To whom might you reach out and share faith in Jesus?

Healing food – I shortened the reading for this morning. There are actually two miracles in this chapter of the gospel of Mark and this story is in the midst of another story. A man named Jairus asked Jesus to come and heal his daughter. Then as they are going, this story happens along the way. And then when they finally get to Jairus’ house, we find out the

little girl has died, but Jesus goes to her and takes her by the hand and raises her from the dead. Talk about a healing touch! And what do you suppose he does then? He tells them to give her something to eat! In my ministry there have been people who have been awfully sick and sometimes weak and malnourished because they had not been able to eat or keep anything down. And then as they heal, what do we sometimes remark? “She was able to sit up and take nourishment!” There is something healing about healthy eating. We may have heard and believe, “An apple a day keeps the doctor away” or “Chicken soup is good for what ails you.” I have often found in various churches that I have served there are a few people who seem to have a ministry of “comfort food.” When someone is sick or grieving, or maybe just having a rough time, there someone shows up with food to nourish the soul! Has someone done that for you? Here at Mt Carmel the Care Team does that for people. They have frozen meals in the freezer in the kitchen to be delivered and they will make more when any of those are shared with someone.

One of the ways we come to touch Jesus through healing food is when we come to the communion table. We touch the bread and taste from the cup – we receive forgiveness and healing of our sins. For the woman touching the hem of Jesus’ robe, she immediately felt healing in her body. Each time we come to take communion; might we feel that healing in our souls? I invite you to come to Jesus, reach out and touch, and be touched. May your soul be healed. What healing do you need in your life? Are you willing to bring that need to Jesus? Can you see yourself reaching out to him and asking? And then when we are touched and healed? How might we then share our faith and our testimony to help others? As you have been touched, reach out to touch others. Alleluia and Amen.

Lord, I Want to Feel Your Healing

(tune: Lord, I Want to Be a Christian UMH 402)

Jeffrey B. Childs 6/24/21

Lord, I want to feel your healing,
in my soul, in my soul.
Lord, I want to feel your healing, in my soul,
in my soul, in my soul.
Lord, I want to feel your healing, in my soul.

Lord, I want to share the healing,
in my soul, in my soul.
Lord, I want to share the healing, in my soul,
in my soul, in my soul.
Lord, I want to share the healing, in my soul.

Lord, I want to be forgiven,
in my soul, in my soul.
Lord, I want to be forgiven, in my soul,
in my soul, in my soul.
Lord, I want to be forgiven, in my soul.

Lord, I want to be forgiving,
in my soul, in my soul.
Lord, I want to be forgiving, in my soul,
in my soul, in my soul.
Lord, I want to be forgiving, in my soul.

Lord, I want a joyous feeling,
in my soul, in my soul.
Lord, I want a joyous feeling, in my soul,
in my soul, in my soul.
Lord, I want a joyous feeling, in my soul.