

Receiving The Touch of Jesus

Opening Text: Mark 8:22-26

22 Then He came to Bethsaida; and they brought a blind man to Him and begged Him to touch him.

These were men who knew that they could bring the impossible to Jesus. *They begged Him to touch him* - these were people who knew the power, the authority, and the weight of the touch of Jesus.

They *begged* – they asked with great intensity because they knew that one touch from Jesus, one moment, one word, one gesture from Jesus is all it takes to overturn the impossible.

Seeking the touch of Jesus

With all that we do in life we should **prioritise the touch of Jesus** in our lives – to live with the weight of His glory and the power of His hand firm upon our lives.

In all our striving to deal with the impossibilities we face in life, we should seek to be of those who come to Him, who stay within the proximity of His touch, and who intensely seek the touch of Jesus.

Mark 6:56 - *Wherever He entered, into villages, cities, or the country, they laid the sick in the marketplaces, and begged Him that they might **just touch** the hem of His garment. And as many as **touched** Him were made well.*

Matthew 9:21 - *For she said to herself, “**If only I may touch** His garment, I shall be made well.”*

Receiving more than they had asked for

They begged that Jesus would touch the blind man. He did. In fact, Jesus touched him and not only once, but 3 times:

- First, Jesus touched his hands V.23 ... “*He took the blind man by the hand*”.
- And two other times He touched the man’s eyes.

Jesus wants to touch our lives in many ways: our hands that we may be led, our eyes that we may see - and still touch us again that we may have not just sight but clarity of vision for our lives.

Hellen Keller said, “*the only thing worse than being blind is having sight but no vision*”

Being touched by Jesus

1. The first touch was to lead him

a) ² Then He came to Bethsaida; and they brought a blind man to Him and begged Him to touch him. ²³ So He took the blind man by the hand and led him out of the town.

People with visual impairment often rely on someone else's hand to guide them. The hand of Jesus became that hand. He took over. The man had to trust the hand of Jesus.

His hand always guides us, His hand is always reassuring. We can trust the hand of Jesus to take over! He leads us beside still waters.

b) *So He took the blind man by the hand and led him out of the town*

Why did Jesus lead the man out of the town? – he didn't belong there anymore. You see, Bethsaida was a cursed city:

Matthew 11:21 - *"Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes.*

Bethsaida was an unrepentant city – in spite of all the good God had done, in spite of all the miracles He did to them. The goodness of God should have been enough to lead them to repentance, but they didn't repent. They despised the grace of God. Therefore, it became a cursed city. It was abandoned in 65AD and became a place of ruins.

God wants to lead us out of cursed places and places filled with darkness. His hand wants to lead us out! We don't belong there. Ruins is not where he wants us to live. That is why after Jesus healed the man, He also told him not to go back into the town:

26b *Then He sent him away to his house, saying, "neither go into the town, nor tell anyone in the town."*

Once Jesus leads you out of something, don't go back in – don't return to cursed places and places of ruin. You don't belong there anymore. Don't travel that way again. That is not your environment anymore.

2. The second touch was the healing touch

23b - And when He had spit on his eyes and put His hands on him, He asked him if he saw anything. ²⁴ And he looked up and said, "I see men like trees, walking"

The second touch was the healing touch. However, healing did not come like they expected. Jesus laid His hands on him and spit on him. They had asked for a touch, not for a spit.

Of the 8 people who were specifically healed of blindness in the New Testament, this is the most unusual account. In fact, only Mark mentions it. This was as unusual as it gets.

The worst fear of a visually impaired person is probably the unusual, the unfamiliar and the unpredictable. People with blindness normally move within areas familiar to them and if they must venture somewhere new, they do so assisted by a trusted friend.

The blind man was out of the city familiar to him, in the hands of a new person he had only heard about, and now to top the list of unusual things, instead of receiving a nice prayer for his healing, Jesus spits on him. I think that this required more faith from the blind man than we give him credit for.

The point is: the healing touch of Jesus has to be received with faith, even if it seems strange and unusual to the mind.

Isaiah 28:21b - ... *“That He may do His work, His awesome work, And bring to pass His act, His **unusual** act.*

Jesus is unusual. He does unusual miracles.

Acts 19:11-12 – *“Now God worked unusual miracles by the hands of Paul, ¹² so that even handkerchiefs or aprons were brought from his body to the sick, and the diseases left them and the evil spirits went out of them.*

3. The third touch was for restoration

*²⁵ Then He put His hands on his eyes again and made him look up. And **he was restored** and saw everyone clearly.*

He was restored: this is probably an indication that he was not born blind. He may have lost his sight at some stage. However, whatever he lost, was restored. Whatever was stolen from him was restored! – that is what the touch of Jesus does.

The third touch was for restoration and also for completion: Jesus didn't want the man half-healed. Jesus doesn't want you and I to also be half-healed, of half-delivered, or have half revelation. No. He wants to complete the work He started in us. That work is not always instantaneous, it is often gradual and that is why we need to keep going!

He doesn't want to leave you seeing '*men like trees, walking*'. No. He wants to give you 20/20 focus, accurate revelation, total healing, complete change, full restoration.

The key to wholeness, to the completeness Jesus offers is to keep coming back to Him for another touch, and another and another touch – until we become totally free and totally healed.

Conclusion

As I said at the start, let us **prioritise the touch of Jesus** in our lives – to live with the weight of His glory and the power of His hand firm upon our lives.

In all our striving to deal with the impossibilities we face in life, we should seek to be of those who come to Him, who stay within the proximity of His touch, and who trust the guidance of His hand.