

7/1/2018

Sermon Title: **“Healing Hands: BRING LIFE”**

Scripture: Mark 5:21-43

Series: HEALING HANDS

Theme: The hands and power of Jesus bring life to those in need of healing and wholeness.

As you may have already read in our July Newsletter, over the next five weeks during the month of July, we will be considering the healing power of Jesus through some of the stories in the gospels. The name of our series will be Healing Hands.

Today, we take a look at two stories, one nested in the other, from Mark’s account.

Mark 5:21-43 (NIV)

²¹ When Jesus had again crossed over by boat to the other side of the lake, a large crowd gathered around him while he was by the lake. ²² Then one of the synagogue leaders, named Jairus, came, and when he saw Jesus, he fell at his feet. ²³ He pleaded earnestly with him, “My little daughter is dying. Please come and put your hands on her so that she will be healed and live.” ²⁴ So Jesus went with him.

A large crowd followed and pressed around him. ²⁵ And a woman was there who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years. ²⁶ She had suffered a great deal under the care of many doctors and had spent all she had, yet instead of getting better she grew worse. ²⁷ When she heard about Jesus, she came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak, ²⁸ because she thought, “If I just touch his clothes, I will be healed.” ²⁹ Immediately her bleeding stopped and she felt in her body that she was freed from her suffering.

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

³¹ “You see the people crowding against you,” his disciples answered, “and yet you can ask, ‘Who touched me?’ ”

³² But, Jesus kept looking around to see who had done it. ³³ Then the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came and fell at his feet and, trembling with fear, told him the whole truth. ³⁴ He said to her, “Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your suffering.”

³⁵ While Jesus was still speaking, some people came from the house of Jairus, the synagogue leader. “Your daughter is dead,” they said. “Why bother the teacher anymore?”

³⁶ Overhearing what they said, Jesus told him, “Don’t be afraid; just believe.”

³⁷ He did not let anyone follow him except Peter, James and John the brother of James. ³⁸ When they came to the home of the synagogue leader, Jesus saw a commotion, with people crying and wailing

loudly. ³⁹ He went in and said to them, “Why all this commotion and wailing? The child is not dead but asleep.” ⁴⁰ But they laughed at him.

After he put them all out, he took the child’s father and mother and the disciples who were with him, and went in where the child was. ⁴¹ He took her by the hand and said to her, “Talitha koum!” (which means “Little girl, I say to you, get up!”). ⁴² Immediately the girl stood up and began to walk around (she was twelve years old). At this they were completely astonished. ⁴³ He gave strict orders not to let anyone know about this, and told them to give her something to eat.

† **I believe that every human being has the need to be touched in loving, nurturing, caring, positive ways.**

Case studies have shown how very important these are, not just for human, but for other healthy animal development as well.

One of my favorite psychologists from years ago is Leo F. Buscaglia, perhaps, best known for his book “*Living, Loving and Learning*”. He said: “Too often we underestimate the power of a touch, a smile, a kind word, a listening ear, an honest compliment, or the smallest act of caring, all of which have the potential to turn a life around.”

As Shel Silverstein shared in simple poetry:

Said the little boy, “Sometimes I drop my spoon.”

Said the little old man, “I do that too.”

The little boy whispered, “I wet my pants.”

“I do that too,” laughed the old man.

Said the little boy, “I often cry.”

The old man nodded, “So do I.”

“But worst of all,” said the boy, “it seems grown-ups don’t pay attention to me.”

And he felt the warmth of a wrinkled old hand.

“I know what you mean,” said the old man.”

(Chicken Soup for The Soul #3; submitted by Ruth Wiele)

I’m glad to say that I believe things have changed considerably in the years since those words were written. Children and the aging or elderly are given considerable more attention and understanding.

Yet, too many in today’s world are still suffering from harmful, or lack of positive connections with other human beings. Many lack an awareness of God’s loving presence. And in some cases, those lives who suffer from inner pain, isolation and death express those feelings in actions of despair, anger, and violence.

Indeed, more and more, it seems our nation is being polarized by politics and propaganda from different sides and sources.

In the past year or so, many women came forward as victims of sexual assault or harassment in the workplace.

Everything from road rage to gun violence seems to be weekly occurrences.

† **So, how do we, as followers of Jesus, bring life to a world suffering with pain and even death?**

As I said, the gospels tell of stories of Jesus healing, even bringing life, to others. One element that appears in most of them is that he touched the sick, and they sought to touch him. He demonstrated that healing power is conveyed through touch.

We should note that healing power and the gift of the Holy Spirit often go together in the New Testament (eg. Acts 8:14-24). This is not surprising. The touch of someone we love makes us feel good, while the touch of someone we do not like or we do not know can make us feel uncomfortable.

We hold a child who is sick or frightened to help calm and assure them. The holding becomes a channel. Our love flows out; the child feels our love; and we may even feel the child's pain.

I certainly believe that God, our Heavenly Parent, feels our pain. He desires to hold us in the palm of his hands, giving us calm assurance; bring healing and life. And, he sent Jesus to show and manifest that love for us in this world.

Consider again the stories from today's good news. . .

The woman with the hemorrhage of blood would have been considered ritually "unclean" by the religious law. For Jesus to have physical contact with her would have made him to be "unclean" as well. That is, perhaps, why she doesn't even ask him to heal her. She had faith that if she simply touches his clothes she will be healed. And, so she was!

Notice that Jesus felt the power leave him! And, while his disciples thought he was being, perhaps, a bit crazy to ask who touched him amidst a crowd pressing upon them, Jesus still looked to identify the one who received it. When she realized she had been healed, and came again to him and confessed, he did not scold her. Rather, he acknowledged and comforted her.

And, with Jairus, the leader of a synagogue, who had sought Jesus to come and heal his dying daughter, Jesus gave words of hope, as well. Before they reached the town where Jairus' daughter was, some people came from the house of Jairus and said, "Your daughter is dead. Why bother the teacher anymore?" Overhearing what they said, Jesus told him, "*Don't be afraid; just believe.*" And, in going to the room where she lay, he took her hand and said in Hebrew, "*Little girl, get up.*"

† **We, too, have power of healing hands to BRING LIFE!**

We are given the power of the Holy Spirit to bring healing and life in various ways to others in need. Yet, it is often limited by the power of sin, such as using touch in harmful ways. Such harmful ways can cause even greater fear and apprehension in children and parents, as well as teachers and others. This is

why United Methodist Churches have adopted and have been using a Safe Sanctuaries Policy for over a decade now.

It is by faith that we are healed and giving new life in spirit. It is also by faith in God's saving grace that we can trust God to use us in positive ways for God's purpose of healing and life. By the indwelling Holy Spirit, we may be channels of God's healing and life-giving power.

Along with faith there is hope. Just as the woman with the issue of bleeding had hoped to be healed. Just as Jairus continued to hope for his daughter's healing, even after others had said she was dead.

And, again there is the gift of love. It is God's love which enables us to reach out with the power we have been given, for love is the power of God at work among us.

But, what happens if healing does not happen as we might hope for? We still have assurance in the promise that "My God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus." (Ph. 4:19) Perhaps, the healing and life which we bring is meant to be more spiritual, mental, or emotional, than physical. I have witnessed this especially in holding the hand of those near death or with those mourning the loss of a loved one.

I invite you to try a little "experiment" this morning (or this week):

1. Turn to the person next to you
2. Ask permission to hold their hand or place your hand on their shoulder
3. Take a deep breath: notice any energy, or feeling, you might have in our extended hand, or that you might receive from the other person.
4. Share with the other person your feelings and observations.

Remember that we can be instruments and channels of God's healing power of life and blessings to others!