

Your Secret Healing Power

On Sunday, we continued our new sermon series called “The Beauty Of Christ – Living In Me” by looking at one of Jesus’ miracles of healing.

1. Warm-up Question: We’re in the midst of the cultural equivalent of a season of “high holy days” – the Super Bowl (sports), the Grammys (music), the Oscars (movies), and the State of the Union Address (politics). Which of those events is of most interest to you – and why?
2. In our Gospel passage, Jesus encounters a man struggling with leprosy, a deadly bacterial disease that attacks the skin and nerves and ultimately eats away and distorts the body. Leprosy is thought to be spread through contact with nasal mucus or droplets. In the ancient world, it was thought to be so contagious, lepers were required to leave their homes and families to live alone outside the city or village. If anyone approached, they were required to call out, “Unclean! Unclean!” In our Gospel passage, we’re told the sick man was “covered” with leprosy, meaning his disease was far advanced.
 - a. What’s the greatest health scare you’ve ever had? How did you feel while you were in the midst of that struggle?
 - b. To help us experience the full force of our Gospel passage, Jeff showed us a photo of a modern-day man with advanced leprosy. If you can bring yourself to do it, take a look at that photo on page 3. What kinds of feelings and emotions do you suppose the man in our Gospel story (and the man in the photo) experienced?
3. Read Luke 5:12-16.
 - a. Instead of avoiding the leper, Jesus welcomed his presence. Apparently the leper had heard about Jesus and his power. When the leper realized Jesus wasn’t going to run from him, how do you think he felt?
 - b. Verse 13 says, “Jesus stretched out his hand.” The phrase, of course, is a literal description of a physical gesture Jesus made. But the phrase also has an inspired deeper meaning. To offer this man a healing touch, Jesus had to “stretch” himself. When in your life have you encountered someone who needed you – maybe because they were sick or needy or disabled or emotionally messed up – that you were tempted to avoid?
 - c. In your life right now, who stretches you?
 - d. Hebrews 4:15 says Jesus was “tempted in every way we are, yet without sin.” That means there were certain people and situations Jesus was tempted to run from. As Jesus encountered this man with a highly contagious, grotesque disease, what kind of temptations do you think he experienced?

- e. Despite the temptations he faced, Jesus “stretched out his hand [and] touched [the man].” In that moment, how do you suppose Jesus’ disciples reacted? What do you suppose the leper felt? What do you suppose Jesus felt?
4. Today’s Gospel story captures the essence of what we find so beautiful about Jesus. What is it about what Jesus does, and who Jesus is, in this story that’s so compelling?
 5. Stories like this make it easy for us to sing about Jesus and worship him. But we mustn’t stop there. The highest form of worship is for us to “become like the Teacher.” Luke 6:40. We are called to “be imitators of God, as dear children.” Ephesians 5:1. So let’s take some time to think about what it might look like for us to imitate what we see Jesus doing in this story.
 - a. Jesus physically touched the leper, but his example is not limited to situations of physical touch. When someone says something kind to us, we say, “Your words touched me.” When someone does something moving for us, we say, “You touched my heart.” Touching a person’s heart can be just as healing as touching them physically. Both are powerful. What’s the most healing physical touch you’ve ever experienced?
 - b. What are the most healing words ever spoken to you?
 - c. Tell us about a time someone did something for you that was incredibly healing.
 6. In John 4:12, Jesus says, “Very truly I tell you, the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do and, in fact, will do greater works than these.” What does that mean? Can we really do greater things than Jesus did? How?
 7. In Sunday’s sermon, Jeff challenged us to consider what it would look like for us to offer the miracle of healing touch (i.e., acts of great kindness) to three categories of people in our lives: (a) strangers; (b) coworkers; and (c) loved ones.
 - a. When did you last encounter a stranger in need? How did you respond? Do you feel you represented Jesus well in that situation?
 - b. In your work environment, who is someone who might need a healing touch from you? What form might your “healing touch” take?
 - c. Among your loved ones, who most needs a healing touch right now? What form might your “healing touch” take?
 - d. Sometimes it’s hardest to be kind to those closest to us. Why is that? What kinds of things can help us be more like Jesus when we’re with those closest to us?

Remember, you have been entrusted with the power of healing touch.

Let’s get out there and work some miracles!

Let the beauty of Christ shine through you.



A man suffering from advanced leprosy.
This is what the man Jesus encountered in Luke 5:12-16 might have looked like.