**The Power of Touch**

Mark 5:21-43

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Ed Stetzer recently tweeted: *“In 5 days: 700 refugees drowned off Greece, 9000 babies were aborted in the U.S., 68 were shot in Chicago…and a gorilla dominated the news.”*

Last Saturday a young boy climbed a railing, squeezed through a fence and fell into the mote within the gorilla enclosure at the Cincinnati Zoo. A 450-pound gorilla named Harambe dragged the toddler through the water twice and so zoo officials killed the animal. Zoo director Thane Maynard said, *“We are heartbroken about losing Harambe, but a child’s life was in danger and a quick decision had to be made.”*

This event has set off a heated and even hateful cultural conversation.

Here are some actual headlines…

* *Parents Get Death Threats*
* *Shooting an Endangered Animal is Worse than Murder*
* *Probe into Possible Criminal Charges*

And social media was anything but social…

* *How many people supporting the shooting of a gorilla? Shoot the parents.*
* *SAVE A GORILLA, SHOOT A BAD MOTHER.*
* *Murdering an endangered gorilla? We are already overpopulated with kids! Where are the stupid parents?*
* *We have a dead person on our hands.*

Let me just say that while it is sad that a beautiful and endangered animal was killed, this animal was not a person. People must always take precedence over animals because we are made in the image of God and thus have great worth and value. Albert Mohler is right when he says that human dignity is at stake in our culture.

So much of our cultural confusion is corrected in the very first book of the Bible. Genesis 1:26-27: ***“Then God said, ‘Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.’*** [Human beings have been given dominion over animals] ***So God created man in his own image,*** [that’s why abortion, racism and suicide are wrong] ***in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them*** [it’s clear that God created our gender].***”***

And Genesis 2:24 declares that the divine design for marriage is one man and one woman in a covenant relationship for life: ***“Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.”***

As we’ve been walking through the Gospel of Mark we’ve been learning that Jesus is both servant and Savior. We’ve seen that Jesus cares for crowds and He cares for individuals. I’m reminded of what He declared in Matthew 12:12: ***“Of how much more value is a man than a sheep!”***

We have established that Jesus is Lord over the deep and the demons and today we’ll discover that He is Lord over disease and death.

Last week we saw that Jesus delivered a man who lived among the dead. He was self-destructing and Satan was also destroying him. After Jesus delivered him, he was deployed to live on mission to his friends and family as he was unleashed to minister to his neighbors and to the nation made up of ten key cities.

Speaking of deployment, I’m thrilled that Kyle and Liesl Parks are in the process of being deployed to serve the youth and young adults of the QCA. They accepted an offer on their home in South Carolina and have also made an offer on a house in Rock Island. We’re still working out the details related to their arrival but Kyle will be going on the Ignite Camping Trip July 8-9 and will also be joining the high schoolers in Colorado July 10-15 for their camp.

**A Man in Need**

Grab your Bibles and turn to Mark 5:21-43. As I percolated on this passage, I wrote down this summary statement: *Jesus came for those who have fame and for those who live in shame.* Jesus will receive you whether you are respected or rejected, or somewhere in between. We will see how much Jesus values a man, a woman and a young child.

Verse 21 gives us the setting: ***“And when Jesus had crossed again in the boat to the other side, a great crowd gathered about him, and he was beside the sea.”*** This crowd was no doubt waiting for his return from the other side of the lake. In the midst of all these fans, some sincere followers break through and express their belief. We’ve asked this before but it bears repeating: *Are you a fickle fan or a faithful follower?*

With crowds of people pressing in on Jesus, verse 22 says: ***“Then came one of the rulers of the synagogue, Jairus by name, and seeing him, he fell at his feet.”*** We’re given the name of this man of distinction. Jairus comes from “Jair,” taken from one of Israel’s judges and means, *“Jehovah Enlightens.”* This man who had some fame, fell in humility at the feet of Jesus. He’s in crisis and needs the help that only Christ can provide.His *“child’s life was in danger and a quick decision had to be made.”*

Hear the agony and urgency in verse 23: ***“And implored Him earnestly, saying, ‘My little daughter is at the point of death. Come and lay your hands on her, so that she may be made well and live.’”***  It’s obvious that position, power and privilege do not exempt one from problems. This dad calls his girl ***“my little daughter.”***  I understand that as a dad of four endearing daughters. I don’t know much Spanish but I used to love hearing a young daughter referred to as *“mi hijita”* when we lived in Mexico. We know from Luke’s account that she is an only child and is dying. Jairus has heard of Jesus performing miracles and maybe even witnessed some and so he’s confident that if Jesus just came and touched her she would be healed.

I love Jesus’ response in verse 24: ***“And He went with him. And a great crowd followed him and thronged about him.”*** The word ***“thronged”*** means to *“press closely on all sides.”*

**A Woman With No Name**

Almost as soon as we’re introduced to Jairus, a nameless woman appears out of nowhere. We know some sad things about her condition.

* **She was suffering.** Check out verse 25: ***“And there was a woman who had had a discharge of blood for twelve years.”*** The word for discharge is ***“flowing”*** which shows that she was hemorrhaging and no doubt suffering from anemia. Verse 26 says that she had ***“suffered much under many physicians.”*** I find it funny that Dr. Luke leaves this part out and instead gives his summary of her situation in Luke 8:43: ***“She could not be healed by anyone.”*** By the way, doctors and nurses often get dissed today but I’m thankful for each of you who serve in the medical profession.

A doctor back then trusted sorcery more than the sciences, as he would experiment with curious concoctions like mixing together owl brains and frog livers. Some believed that colds could be cured by kissing the nose of a mule.

* **She was spiritually unclean.** Leviticus 15:25 tells us that a discharge of blood would have made her unclean and unable to gather for corporate worship. In addition, anyone who touched her would be unclean as well. As a result she was shunned and relegated to a lonely and empty life. Her life verse might have been Jeremiah 8:22: ***“Is there no balm in Gilead?”***
* **She had spent all her money.** Verse 26 says that was broke and she was ***“no better but rather grew worse.”*** Her disease had left her destitute. She had tried everything and spent all she had. Can any of you relate to her?
* **She was seeking help.** Look at verse 27: ***“She had heard reports about Jesus and came up behind Him in the crowd and touched his garment.”*** The word for ***“heard”*** means, *“to hear with attention.”* The healing power of Jesus gave her hope but there was no way she was going to approach him face-to-face. This woman with no name had too much shame to do that. The best she could hope for was a secret healing. Verse 28 reveals her thinking as she said these words to herself over and over: ***“If I touch even his garments, I will be made well.”*** Luke tells us that she grabbed onto the fringe of his cloak.

Before we go further let me just say that her faith had some superstition in it. Her theology was not well developed but to her credit she brought as much of herself as she could to as much of Jesus as she understood. Imperfect faith in a perfect Savior will always accomplish much. I’m reminded of what Jesus said in Matthew 18:3: ***“Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.”***

As soon as she touched his garments, verse 29 tells us what happened: ***“And immediately the flow of blood dried up, and she felt in her body that she was healed of her disease.”*** I love that this happened immediately and she could tell that she was better. I wonder if she tried to shrink back into the crowd.

Verse 30 tells us what happened next: ***“And Jesus, perceiving in Himself that power had gone out from Him, immediately turned about in the crowd and said, ‘Who touched my garments?’”***  The reminds me of the title of a book I saw recently: *“Questions from the God who needs no Answers.”* Jesus knew exactly who touched Him but He asked the question for the woman’s benefit. I can think of three reasons why he may have done so.

* To enable her to give testimony of what Jesus had done. Belief is personal but must also go public. That’s one of the purposes behind baptism – it gives us the opportunity to publically identify with Jesus Christ. Luke 12:8: ***“And I tell you, everyone who acknowledges me before men, the Son of Man also will acknowledge before the angels of God.”***
* To build her belief and fortify her faith.
* To show the crowd that she is now clean and is to be accepted back into society. Her shame is now gone. Romans 10:11: ***“For the Scripture says, ‘Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame.’”***

The disciples get a bit sassy with the Savior in verse 31: ***“You see the crowd pressing around you, and yet you say, ‘Who touched me?’”*** This shows once again that they just don’t get it. They are impatient and don’t understand what just happened. I’m often the same way.

Verse 32 describes Jesus searching for the woman: ***“And He looked around to see who had done it.”*** The tense is that *“he kept looking.”* In verse 33 we see that she ***“came in fear and trembling and fell down before Him and told Him the whole truth.”*** She is terrified because she knows that she should not have been in the crowd because of her impurity, much less touching the garments of Jesus. She fears rejection…again.

Don’t miss what happens next. The man with some fame fell down before Jesus and now this woman with shame falls down as well. Listen. It doesn’t matter who you are or what position you hold, your posture before Christ must be one of broken humility and deep reverence. *Jesus came for those who have fame and for those who live in shame.*

Verse 34 tells us that she wasn’t just healed but was also saved: ***“And He said to her, ‘Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace, and be healed of your disease.’”*** I love that He calls her, ***“daughter.”*** He does so because she has just entered the family of God through faith. She goes from living with shame to having a name as a daughter of the King! For twelve terrible years she had been a nobody and now she is a somebody!

It was her ***“faith”*** that made her well, not something inherent in his clothing. The word ***“well”*** is translated as *“saved”*in other passages and means, *“to be kept safe and sound.”* She’s told to go in shalom, and to be healed of her disease. She was delivered from her sickness and her sin.

**A Dead Daughter**

After calling this nameless woman ***“daughter,”*** we see in verse 35 that some messengers come from Jairus’ house and report to the man with fame: ***“Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the teacher any further?”***

I can’t imagine what Jairus must have been thinking. If it weren’t for the interruption from the woman, Jesus could have already healed his little girl. This delay caused the death of his daughter. Why couldn’t Jesus have come back later and healed the woman? After all, she had been sick for 12 years. What would another 30 minutes matter?

Perhaps you’ve heard this saying: “*God is never late; He’s seldom early; He’s always on time.”* To which I add: *And He can be trusted.* So, here’s a question. Are you OK with a divine delay? When God delays it doesn’t mean He doesn’t care; rather, He is weaving His ways and His will in such a way that this delay will result in greater glory for Himself and greater faith for us. Romans 8:28: ***“And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.”***

Delays are really part of God’s divine design and interruptions are part of God’s appointments for us. It was kind of comical when I was working on this message at McDonald’s and was interrupted by a customer who wanted to have a conversation. When I realized that this was God’s appointment for me I was able to share the gospel with her and invite her to Edgewood. I might have missed this if I would have just gotten irritated.

I love the tenderness in verse 36 because Jesus knows this ruler would start falling apart at this news: ***“Do not fear, only believe.”*** Literally, He’s saying, *“Keep on believing, keep trusting. Stop fearing, only be believing.”* Jesus was calling him to have fervent faith in the face of what seemed impossible. Jesus then thins out the crowd in verse 37: ***“And He allowed no one to follow Him except Peter and James and John the brother of James.”***

There were three key elements in Middle Eastern funerals from the first century – the tearing of clothes, hired professional mourners and at least two flutes playing dirges. Funerals were filled with frantic weeping and wailing and loud handclapping. With that as background, let’s imagine the scene laid out in verse 38: ***“They came to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, and Jesus saw a commotion, people weeping and wailing loudly.”***

Don’t miss the theological depth of what Jesus says next as He redefines death as a temporary condition for the believer: ***“And when he had entered, he said to them, ‘Why are you making a commotion and weeping? The child is not dead but sleeping.’”***  For the believer, death is only sleep. 1 Corinthians 15:51-52: ***“Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet.”***

When Jesus said she was sleeping everyone started jeering at Him. Luke tells us that they all knew she was dead. Look at verse 40: ***“And they laughed at Him.”*** This word means, *“to ridicule, scorn and deride; the laughter of one who feels superior.”* It’s in the imperfect tense, meaning they kept on jeering Him. Psalm 22:7 is a messianic psalm, meaning it’s about Jesus: ***“All who see me mock me.”*** This same idea is behind Nehemiah 2:19: ***“Sanballat and Tobiah and Geshem jeered at us and despised us…”***

We shouldn’t be surprised when people laugh at us or make fun of our faith. If they jeered at Jesus, they’ll do it to you. While people are laughing, Jesus clears them out in verse 40: ***“But He put them all outside and took the child’s father and mother and those who were with him and went in where the child was.”*** Putting them ***“outside”*** is the same word used of Jesus clearing the temple of the moneychangers. The word ***“took”*** indicates that Jesus may have tenderly put his arms around the parents as he led them into the house.

We see again the tender spirit of the Savior in verse 41: ***“Taking her by the hand, he said to her, ‘Talitha cumi,’ which means, ‘Little girl, I say to you, arise.’”*** I love how Jesus gently takes hold of her hand. He did the same thing for Peter’s mother-in-law in Mark 1:21. Mark records the Aramaic phrase, which literally means, *“Little lamb, arise!”* That is so beautiful!

Verse 42: ***“And immediately the girl got up and began walking (for she was twelve years of age), and they were immediately overcome with amazement.”*** Notice that she didn’t need any physical therapy and walked around like any normal 12-year-old would. Those who witnessed this miracle were literally *“astonished with great astonishment.”*

Jesus then makes sure to give the family some privacy and doesn’t want any selfies taken. Verse 43: ***“And He strictly charged them that no one should know about this, and told them to give her something to eat.”*** Don’t miss this tender touch. A miracle brought her to life and a meal would keep her alive. This shows He cares about all our needs, including a missed meal.

**Implications and Applications**

Let’s pull out a few implications and applications from this passage.

**1. Start seeing your interruptions as God’s appointments.** When things don’t go as planned, say a quick prayer that goes something like this: *“God, help me not be irritated so I can see the appointment you have for me in this situation.”*

**2. Refuse to attach labels to people according to their relative importance.** *Jesus came for those who have fame and for those who live in shame.*

**3. Identify a situation in which you need to stop fearing and start having faith.** See your extremity as God’s opportunity to go to work. I like this quote from A.W. Tozer: *“As God is exalted to the right place in our lives a thousand problems are solved all at once.”*

**4. Go public with your faith.** If you’re saved, your next step is baptism. And then go public in your family, in your neighborhood, among your friends, at your workplace and on your campus. It’s time to stop being an undercover Christian.

**5. Don’t wait for a crisis before you commit yourself to Christ.** Reach out to Jesus in faith and ask Him to deliver you. The named man and the unnamed woman had some things in common – they both were hopeless and humble and they knew where to go for help as they fell down at the feet of Jesus.

When Jesus came in contact with the diseased and the dead, technically He should have been declared unclean. But just the opposite happened. Jesus transferred His purity to their impurity. The discharge of Jesus’ blood on the cross cleanses those who have been converted. His righteousness is exchanged for our wretchedness. 2 Corinthians 5:21: ***“For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.”***

It wasn’t until late this week that the name of the toddler who fell into the moat was revealed. His name is Isaiah and he’s named after the prophet from the Old Testament. I found it fascinating that the vitriolic verbiage seemed to lessen once his name was known. He’s no longer nameless…and neither are you.

Jesus wants to give you a new nature through the new birth. And He’ll give you a new name to blot out your shame. Are you ready to become His daughter or His son? John 1:12 says, ***“But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.”*** Once you receive Him, He will turn to you and say, *“I delight in you, my daughter. I celebrate you, my son.”*

As a way to remember what Jesus has done for us, He invites us to have a family meal together. We call it communion and it’s for His sons and daughters.

We’re given some cautions before we participate in 1 Corinthians 11:27-28: ***“27Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty concerning the body and blood of the Lord. 28Let a person examine himself, then, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup.”***

After examining ourselves, we’re called to remember what Christ has done for us in verses 23-26: ***“23For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, 24and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, “This is my body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” 25In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.” 26For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.***

Let’s stand and sing the chorus, *“Thank You Jesus for the Cross.”*

Membership (10:45)

* **Joanie Deaton**
* **Steve and Joy Verstraete**