

Sometimes it takes A Second Touch

Jeremiah 1:4-10 Mark 8:22-25

Jeremiah 1:4-10

⁴ Then the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

⁵ Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations.

⁶ Then said I, Ah, Lord GOD! behold, I cannot speak: for I am a child.

⁷ But the LORD said unto me, Say not, I am a child: for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee, and whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak.

⁸ Be not afraid of their faces: for I am with thee to deliver thee, saith the LORD.

⁹ Then the LORD put forth his hand, and touched my mouth. And the LORD said unto me, Behold, I have put my words in thy mouth.

¹⁰ See, I have this day set thee over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down, to build, and to plant.

Mark 8:22-25 And he cometh to Bethsaida; and they bring a blind man unto him, and besought him to touch him.

23 And he took the blind man by the hand, and led him out of the town; and when he had spit on his eyes, and put his hands upon him, he asked him if he saw ought.

24 And he looked up, and said, I see men as trees, walking.

25 After that he put his hands again upon his eyes, and made him look up: and he was restored, and saw every man clearly.

If you ask someone who has experienced the touch of God's hand, to describe that experience, they will use words like; wonder and wonderful, amazing, supernatural, awesome, miraculous, unbelievable, and life changing.

Touch is something every human being longs for... was designed for...and desperately needs.

That's evidenced in the fact that one of the top 5 advertisements for effectiveness and popularity of all time is the old AT&T commercial—you remember what it was?

—Reach out and TOUCH someone.

Today's scripture and today's message is about people who God touched and people who longed to be touched by God again.

In our gospel text, Mark records for us a rather strange event—of a blind man who, with a little help from his friends, comes to Jesus to be healed.

Now, this man was in a bad way.

Sometimes we forget, when we read scripture, to consider the context. This guy was blind, and that was just about as bad off as anyone could be in Jesus' time.

Today, we can prevent and treat so many eye problems---how many folks in here wear glasses, or contacts, or have had laser surgery or cataract surgery?

How would life be for you if you did not have glasses or contacts or surgery?

Bad vision is bad enough, but to be blind was to be helpless and without hope in Jesus's day.

There was no help for bad vision, and no cure for blindness.

And as far as we know, this blind man did not know Jesus---his friends or family, or neighbors take him by the hand and lead him in desperation to a meeting with Jesus.

The man himself, had very little faith and even less hope...but then, what did he have to lose—he was a beggar with no sight, no future, no hope, and no chance for recovery.

As far as he knew, alive but blind was about as good as it was going to get for him.

And then, Jesus touched him.

(Not only did He touch the man, He took him by hand---
He touched eyes.)

The man could see light, and people, and movement, but his eyesight wasn't perfect, things were not clear...sorta like you or me without our glasses—but that was still a whole lot better than the darkness---the blindness.

Now, in that touch, Jesus gave the man a glimpse of possibility—a glimpse of hope, a glimpse of how much better life could be...and the man wanted more.

He wanted to be touched again!

He wanted a second touch.

God's not done with you yet, Second chances require a second touch

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He wanted more. And Jesus touched him again, and in that second touch, the man who had been broken by blindness was healed, and whole and complete. His future and his life were given back to him...with that second touch. I love this story---I never get tired of hearing about people whose lives are transformed by Jesus.

Jeremiah is another person who was touched by God---and then touched again. Now, unlike the blind man who had just a little faith, Jeremiah was a man of great faith. He loved God and he knew that God had already touched him.

In fact, God reminds Jeremiah, by saying,

“before I formed you in the womb, I knew you...”

You see, God had been personally, and intimately involved in creating Jeremiah, and Jeremiah was a follower of God—He was God's man, eager and ready to live for God and serve God.

But there was one problem—Jeremiah couldn't do it---not every day---not 24/7.

He just didn't feel he could live for God and accomplish what God was calling him to do---

He just wasn't that good; he had weaknesses, he had faults; it was not humanly possible.

He needed something more than he had in himself---he needed another touch of God's hand.

And so, God touches Jeremiah again...touches his mouth and Jeremiah goes on to become one of the heroes of faith.

Don't you love how God can take, and transform a timid but willing, self-conscious follower into a confident and capable leader with just the touch of His hand!?!

The touch of God---it really is amazing and wonderful and awesome!

But, you know, this is not just about the blind man and Jeremiah. It's about you too...and me.

The Word of God ALWAYS encounters us and challenges us, and asks us, "What about you?"

What's your story? How do you fit in to God's story?"

Your story may not be written in ink, but you have a story and you are living your story right now.

Your story may well have some parallels to Jeremiah's story--- you have a sense that God is calling you to do something or calling you to be something more than you believe you can be.

And the blind man's story; it may not be so different from your own.

In some ways, you may be like the blind man---

Oh, you can see, all right, but you know, if no one else knows, that your life is just as broken as this man's---your situation seems just as impossible---your hope of things ever being better--of YOU being a better person is all but gone....and you feel helpless to do anything about it.

Perhaps, like the blind man, you never really met Jesus either, not face to face---and, like the blind man, you want to have faith, but you don't have a whole lot of faith. You know that story sounds awfully familiar to a lot of folks.

But Jesus touched this man, and that touch totally transformed this man's life---gave him a future and a reason to believe, and a reason to rejoice---a reason to get up in the morning and to get dressed and to get going!

Talk about awesome, and amazing and wonderful!

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And if Jesus can do that for this blind guy, He can touch you, too, and give you a reason to live and a reason to hope, and a reason to rejoice.

You do not have to have a whole lot of faith...just a little.

Wouldn't it be great to experience a touch like that from Jesus today? To have your whole world open for you one more time.

Your story may be more like Jeremiah's story.

You may be a person of faith. You may know that God Himself had a hand in your creation.

Psalm 139 says that God personally and intimately knit you together in your mother's womb.

You may already know the experience of being touched by God, but it was so long ago, and like Jeremiah, you've discovered that you can't follow God and you can't live for God 24/7 without some help.

You have tried your best to be a Christian on your own strength...and discovered it's impossible for you at this moment in time. Sooner or later, you run out of steam—your wear out—you hit a dead end.

I am not much of a gardener, particularly when it comes to flowers. I do not know a lot about growing flowers.

But I do know about Impatiens plants—they are beautiful flowers and come in an assortment of colors...but they are awfully sensitive.

Impatiens flowers are bright and cheerful annuals that can light up any dark and shady part of your yard.

They must be watered every day...just a little...but every day. Not like a cactus.

A cactus you can water once and leave it go for weeks, maybe months.

But Impatiens plants have to be watered every day.

If you miss a day, they wither and wilt. They just kind of sag and droop...almost like they'll die at any moment. But just add a little water, and within a matter of minutes, they come alive again, and beam.

I've discovered that the Christian life is a lot like that.

If you try to live it on your own, you begin to wilt and fade quickly.

You droop. And you drag. If your spiritual life was a bouquet of Impatience...what would it look like right about now?

Does it need tending? Does it need a touch of Living Water?

Now, woven into the fabric of these two stories; of Jeremiah and the Blind Man, is a Divine Truth that is echoed throughout Scripture, and it is really good news for us today if you will hear it.

The Divine Truth underlying these two stories is this: God is not done with you!

Did you hear that? God is not done with you.

You are a work in progress.

God has far better plans in store for you than you can imagine. That's what the Bible says!

So, if you aren't the man or woman you want to be...hang in there; God's not done with you yet.

If you're not the person your heart wants to be and God's Word is calling you to be; hang in there! God's not done with you yet.

If you remember being touched by God...maybe years ago, but you feel as if you've let God down, or failed as being a faithful Christian....God's not done with you yet!

So long as you are willing, you are a work of God in progress.

Jeremiah and the blind man, they lived hundreds of years apart, but God is the same yesterday, today and forever. They both longed to be touched by God—to be healed and refreshed by God's touch and God was faithful then and God is faithful today.

You know Jeremiah's story, and you know the Blind man's story...so what's your story?

We looked at the story of two men in Scripture this morning, but the Bible is filled with stories of people whose lives were touched by God.

Jesus touched blind man & gave sight and hope—gave him his life back.

He touched lepers and gave them dignity and families & future back.

He touched woman who was sick and bleeding—gave her back her health.

He touched people who were paralyzed and set them free to walk and run and live.

He touched a soldier's wound and healed him.

He touched children and gave them a blessing.

He touched a little dead girl and gave her new life.

What about you? What do you want God to do for you today?

Wouldn't it be great to be touched by God this morning in a way that turns your life right side up?

You may remember what happened to Peter the night Jesus and the Disciples shared the Last Supper together.

Jesus went around and washed the feet of each of His disciples.

When He got to Peter, Peter was too prideful to let Jesus wash his feet, until Jesus told him that if He did not allow Jesus to wash his feet, then Peter could not be a part of the Kingdom.

And you remember Peter's response; he said, "then not just my feet, but wash me all over!" Jesus told Peter, that is not necessary; your feet will be enough.

Today---open your hearts altar and we invite you to come and to ask God to touch you.

We're not going to wash your feet, but as you come to these altars, you are invited to allow one of our stewards to rinse and dry your hands, as a symbol of your desire for God to touch you for the first time or to touch you again.

The water represents the Living Water of Jesus...washing away any sin, any mistake, any regret, any poor choice. You are a work in progress. Come and receive the gift God has for you.

1 John 1:9 Authorized (King James) Version (AKJV)

⁹ If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

1 John 5:13 Authorized (King James) Version (AKJV)

¹³ These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.

2 Cor 2:6 (For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now *is* the accepted time; behold, now *is* the day of salvation.)

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