



# TOUCHING JESUS

Fairview Memorial Missionary Baptist Church  
Winter Bible Study  
February 3, 2020  
Elder Jeff Moran

**Reading Lesson:** *"For we have not a high priest which cannot be touched with the feelings of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."*  
~ Hebrews 4:15-16

### **Introduction**

When it comes to the human family, our God is a hands-on God. He is not in some remote place, cordoned off with red velvet ropes, with signs that say "Do not touch!" No, from the very beginning we know that God spoke things into existence things ("And God said...") - until it came to the creation of man. Then, the Bible says in Gen. 2:7 that "the Lord formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." The word "formed" in that verse was translated from the Hebrew word *yatsar*, which means God formed him by the touch of His hands, just as a potter would squeeze and mold a lump of clay. In so doing, God demonstrated the loving care of a living God - not some idol made of wood or stone, incapable of feelings or actions. In this lesson, entitled "Touching Jesus," we want to look at the "touchability" of God's dear Son, first from a physical aspect and then from a spiritual standpoint.

### **Touching Jesus Physically**

Jn. 1:14 tells us that "...the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us..." This incarnation is what made it possible for Jesus to be touched physically. Let's take a walk through the life of Jesus and look at some of the physical contacts that occurred. Of necessity, we understand that Mary was the first person to touch Him, for she carried Him until He was born. Afterwards, Joseph was likely the next one to touch and handle the Son of God. Perhaps it was the shepherds who touched him next, since they were "in the same country" [general area] (Lu. 2:8), and were told of it the same day it occurred (v.11).

In eight days, we know the child was circumcised, and in 40 days He was brought to Jerusalem. There, in the temple, we know that the aged Simeon took Jesus up in his arms and gave thanks to God that he had been allowed to see the Lord's salvation in the person of Jesus. Perhaps the elderly widow, Anna, was next to touch him, as she too praised God.

As Jesus grew up in Nazareth, He probably came in contact with other adults, and played with other children. By age 12 though, He had matured enough to have His Father's business on His mind, as He engaged the teachers in the temple (Lu. 2:41-52). Then came the 18 years or so of silence, during which it is impossible for us to know exactly who may have had physical contact with him. However, we know that before He started His ministry, He made His way to John the Baptist to be baptized. There, John laid Him down in the watery grave, and lifted Him back up, to fulfill all righteousness. (Mt. 3:13-17)

Surely, after He chose the twelve, and they began to travel, eat and sleep together, they must have had occasion to touch Jesus from time to time. In fact, throughout His ministry, Jesus came in contact with thousands who were interested in getting close to this man who could do such miraculous things. Over and over, the scriptures speak of the masses that followed Him, such as Mk. 3:7 & 10, 5:24; Lu. 6:17, and 8:42.

Along His way, Jesus often stopped to tend to the needs of those He was passing, putting His healing hands on them. And in one of the most endearing scenes described in the Bible, Jesus showed love and affection to the little children: "And they brought young children to him, that he should touch them... and he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them." (Mk 10:13-16)

Of the many who trailed Jesus, some no doubt followed Him out of curiosity, some in hopes of being fed, and some with a desire to be healed; but motives of others were more sinister - to spy and find fault with Him. At the appointed time, the night came when the temple guards and Roman soldiers laid their hands on him, but theirs was not a touch of benevolence. Roughing him up, brutalizing him and eventually nailing Him to the cross, they showed no regard for His personage or His precious body. But after He had given up the ghost, Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus received permission to take His body, and prepare it for burial. Surely, as they cleaned, anointed and wrapped His mutilated body, they handled it tenderly and with the utmost care.

After His resurrection, apparently Mary Magdalene was wanting to cling to Jesus, for He told her "Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father... (Jn. 20:17). Yet when He appeared to His disciples that evening, He encouraged them to look at His hands and feet, and to "handle" Him (Lu. 24: 39). Eight days later, when faced by the unbelieving Thomas, Jesus told him "Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing." (Jn. 20:27)

Two verses later, Jesus said, "Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou has believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed." Those in the Old Testament, as well as you and I, fit into that category of those who "have not seen, yet believed." Not long after uttering those words, Jesus ascended back to the Father, where He now makes intercession for us. Because of His departure, we no longer have the ability to touch the physical body of Jesus. Now, we must touch Jesus spiritually.

### **Touching Jesus Spiritually**

Although we now know there are more, Aristotle wrote of five senses: seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting and touching. Praise be to God though, there is another way of sensing/knowing, and that involves the spirit realm. One of the iconic events involving a physical touch of Jesus is found in Mt. 9, Mk. 5 and Lu. 8, but it also involved a spiritual touch.

Mk. 5:29 says when the woman touched the border (hem) of His garment, she was immediately healed and felt it in her body. She sensed that her condition had been cured. And although Jesus was in the midst of a great multitude, being touched on every side, He immediately knew that healing power had gone out of His body. In speaking to the woman, Jesus said, "...thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace." (Lu. 8:48) It was not the physical contact (for many others around him were also touching him), but rather the firm belief in her heart that she would be healed by touching Jesus.

Now let's notice our lesson verses. The first clause occurs as a double-negative, so putting it in an affirmative equivalent, it would read: "We have a high priest who can be touched (moved) by the feeling of our infirmities (weaknesses/needs)." Delving into this more deeply, let's look at what we find when we touch Jesus spiritually:

1. **Access** - Whether we are a lost person seeking salvation, or a saved person needing help, we can get to Jesus. He is not surrounded by body guards who hold us at arm's length, or require that we show them special qualifying credentials. We are not limited by the length of our reach, the size of our bank account, or the recognition of our name. No, because just as the veil in the temple was torn from top to bottom, Jesus has opened up the way. He says "Come unto me," "Come and dine," "Come boldly," "You can reach me because I am not far away from you!"
2. **Compassion** - Does Jesus care? YES! He has lived in a robe of flesh himself, so He has the capacity to sympathize with us. Mt. 9:36 and 14:14 both speak of how He saw the multitudes and was moved with compassion to help them. When friends get tired of hearing about it, and others turn their backs, you can be sure Jesus is still listening and His arm is still outstretched. He is a very present help in time of trouble. Ps. 46:1
3. **Mercy & Forgiveness** - Verse 15 of our lesson says that Jesus was tempted in all points like we are, and 1 Jn. 1:9 tells us, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Verse 16 of the lesson says we can obtain mercy from this high priest!
4. **Grace** - Verse 16 goes on to say that we should come confidently to the throne of grace, that we may find help in time of need. Rom. 5:2 also refers to the fact that it is through Jesus that we have access by faith into "...this grace wherein we stand..." It is at the throne of Jesus that we can find grace that is sufficient (enough) - all that we need.

### Conclusion

As we draw this study to a close, let us remember that Jesus is abundantly approachable. No matter how great our need, how hopeless our situation, or how humiliating our failure, He will never turn us away. When we reach out in prayer to touch Him, and we come

- humbly, abandoning our pride (Ja. 4:10);
- believing, doubting nothing (Mt. 21:22); and
- diligently, pressing through the obstacles in our way (Heb. 11:6);

we will connect with the Lord. And in that moment of contact, we will know that we have found all that we need: peace for today, hope for tomorrow, and the glorious joy of Touching Jesus!