

Scripture References: Matt. 8:14-15 / Mk 10:13-16 / Lk 5:12-13

Date: December 9, 2012

Title: "A Touch"

Focus: Why the incarnation matters.

Intro:

1. The significance of a touch. Aside from the act of marriage, touch is the most intimate way two people can connect and identify. The human hand has a particularly refined sense of touch. According to Smithsonian magazine, researchers found that our hand can detect roughness just 75 nanometers high—a nanometer being one thousandth of a micron! (A human hair has a diameter of 50 to 100 microns.) The hand has about 2,000 touch receptors in each fingertip. The hand can detect temperature changes of 5/100ths of a degree!

2. Touch is powerful. Much is communicated through it, compassion, support, and presence. The incarnation makes possible a touch between God and man.

Body:

Touch Can Be Healing. - Matt. 8:14-15

- Jesus touched Peter's mother-in-law to heal her. He didn't need to. He could have done this from a distance as He did with the centurion's daughter (Matt. 8:5-13).

- However, He chose to get close, so close He could touch her, in order to bring healing.

- The fact He chose to touch her is worthy of note.

- We generally avoid those who are sick. Why? Because we're afraid of catching something.

- Yet, it is the sick of humanity that Jesus touched. These people were sick in body, mind, and spirit. Still, He touched them and brought them healing.

- There is a risk of getting close to those who are infirmed. But the healing brought by touching a life outweighs the risk.

Touch Provides a Blessing. - Mark 10:13-16

- Throughout history the adage, "children should be seen, not heard," has prevailed.

- Children, though valued, are not always respected. That is the case demonstrated here. For Jesus's disciples, there was important work to be done. Children should not detract from it.

- After all, what do children have to offer? Can they pay bills, offer service, or make a contribution? No, children are takers, not givers.

- But not in the eyes of Jesus. To Him, they are precious. They have something to teach.

- They were so valuable He took the time to touch them.

- There are many people that are just overlooked. They are discounted, ignored, and minimized by society at large, and by the Body of Christ in particular.

- When a person takes time for another, for no reason of return, it is a blessing. That action tells them they are valued.

- It is when people know they are cared about, they open up.

Touch can Bring Someone Back into Community. - Luke 5:12-13

- Few words elicit the emotional response Leprosy does. Maybe the closest we have to it is "AIDS."
- In the time of Jesus, and still in parts of the world today, lepers are isolated from others, including their families. They are left to themselves and cut off from community.
- According to Levitical law, lepers could not come to temple and therefore were unable to offer sacrifice. In affect, they were also cut off from YHWH.
- People who came into contact with them were likewise unclean and had to be purified before they could go to temple.
- So it is that Jesus touched this man - giving him something he had been denied since being labeled a leper, human contact. His touch brought him back into community with God and man.
- For reasons God has determined, human interaction is the conduit He chooses to use to bring people back into relationship with one another as well as with Him.
- There are people who have been ostracized by their family because of disagreements or wrong choice. These are not the minimized, they are the outright rejected.
- Some have been cut off from God by religion. Others have no awareness of Him.
- All these individuals need someone willing to touch them, to serve as the bridge by which God brings them into community with Him and those they have been estranged from.

Closing:

1. The importance of the incarnation is seen in the ability to touch lives. Where there no incarnation, Jesus could not have touched them.
2. It continues to be through the incarnation of Jesus, in the lives of His disciples, that He touches lives. - Matt. 25:34-40.