

Sermon Notes: Mark 5:21-43

Two Entwined Touchy Tales

Touch Is Vital For Life

Why is it impossible to keep kids' fingers off the windows? Why does a baby play with food?
Why do museums always have "Do Not Touch" signs?

The largest organ of the human body is... We have about two square metres of....

In one study researchers found that after patients in medical units were simply touched by health care staff they experienced improvement in the oxygenation of their blood. Another study found that when a nurse held a patient's hand there were improvements in blood pressure, heart rate and breathing. - From "The Importance of Safe Touch In the Healing Process" © Pamela Perez

Why Touch Is (And Should Be) Such A Touchy Topic

Human beings are great at taking good things and abusing them. This is why touch is not an easy topic for us. We do need to be 'touchy' (careful) about touch. We need to have strong and good boundaries about touch. Don't be ashamed of being careful about this area!

The most desired and abused form of touch is...

Around 14,000 children are physically or sexually abused in Australia each year.
- CFCA Child Family Community Australia Resource Sheet— June 2017

I used to run courses with a domestic violence resource service. About half of participants had experienced sexual or physical abuse. Touch can harm or help more than almost anything else.

Bad Touch: - *When feel uncomfortable unsafe or unsure*
- *When I don't consent.*
- *When my space is invaded.*
- *When I have no control or can't withdraw.*

Good Touch: - *When I said "yes" in some way.*
- *When I feel safe and trust them.*
- *When the other person respects me and it's clear what it means.*
- *When I can withdraw and have control over what happens to me.*

Mark 5:21-43 Two Entwined Touchy Tales

This Bible reading is two stories with one in the middle of the other. Can you find the similarities?

| Story 1 (vs 21-24 & 35-43) | → | Story 2 (verses 25-34) |
|----------------------------|---|------------------------|
| Sick Girl | → | |
| Unclean | → | |
| 12 Yrs Old | → | |
| Daughter | → | |
| Come & Lay Hands | → | |
| Don't Fear | → | |
| Have Faith | → | |
| Lays Hands | → | |
| Raised/Healed | → | |

The word "touch" occurs in the middle story how many times? (hint: it's lots!)
The word "pressing in" (collide/bump into) describing the crowd touching Jesus occurs 2 times.
The words "lay hands" and "took her by the hand" at the start and end add another 2 touches.
This is a total of 8 specific mentions of touch!

This happened in an ancient traditional society where touch was very touchy. In that world many people were labelled "untouchable", touching the wrong person made you an outcast. But Jesus touched! His whole life on earth is characterized by (safe healthy) touch.

Circle The Word "Touch"

Mark 3:10. Those with diseases were pushing forward to touch him.

Mark 10:13-14. People were bringing little children to Jesus to have him touch them...

Mark 8:22. People brought a blind man and begged Jesus to touch him.

Luke 7:38-39 ... She wiped Jesus' feet with her hair, kissed them and poured perfume on them. The Pharisee saw and said to himself, "If he were a prophet, he would know who is touching him...."

Matt 20:34. Jesus had compassion on them and touched their eyes.

Luke 22:49-51. Jesus touched the man's ear and healed him.

Luke 24:37-39. Jesus said, "... Look at my hands and my feet. It's me! Touch me and see..."

1 John 1:1. We proclaim to you the one who existed from the beginning, whom we have heard and seen. We saw him with our own eyes and touched him with our own hands...

God came as a human - to physically touch us - because love required it!

Grace Involves Touch?

Grace is God's free healing, saving, life-giving, transforming work. Grace is what makes us whole. Grace makes us confident for the future. In this story both the girl's father and that sick woman understood that God's grace involves touch. God doesn't just sit up there far away and send messages. God's love is tangible. It's touchable.

Christians call our most special things from God "SACRAMENTS". A sacrament is something where God's love is given in a way you can touch! Can you name some sacramental things?

Grace Filled Touch!

As we seek to bring the love of Jesus to the world we need to be fully aware of bad and good touch – wise, careful, caring, with good boundaries. We need to learn the difference so that we can bring healthy, appropriate touch, that respects and honours. But we need to begin being a little less afraid and a little more willing to bring the grace of a hug or a reassuring pat on the back.

A world starved for touch is a world starved for grace!

There are people around you who need touch, who crave the grace of someone simply showing them love, who need to know they matter, who will be healed by appropriate grace-driven touch.

For info about safe touch see the "Safe Place" brochure in the Immanuel foyer.