

# Bible Portraits of Christ 04 His Touch

by James Booker

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*The sermon emphasizes the transformative power of Christ's touch in the lives of believers, highlighting the need for salvation, service, and strength through His hand.*

**Duration:** 45:19

**Scripture:** Matthew 8:3, Matthew 9:20-22, Matthew 14:36, Mark 7:32-35, Mark 10:13, Luke 7:14-15, Luke 8:43-48

**Topics:** "Divine Healing", "Salvation Experience"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher focuses on the theme of being touched by God. He uses the story of the leper who approached Jesus for healing as an example of the first touch, which is the touch of salvation. The preacher emphasizes the importance of responding to this touch in our hearts. He then outlines a similar pattern of condition, concern, and cure in four other stories of people being touched by God. The sermon concludes with the exhortation to be strong and to allow ourselves to be touched by God.

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## Transcript

God, in the New Testament particularly, noticing his blessed hands, his feet, his faith, and Lord willing, tomorrow evening we'd like to look at his eyes as they're revealed in the Scriptures. But tonight we'd like to consider the touch of our Savior, the touch of the Master's hand. It's a very solemn and searching subject, I find, in my own Christian life, and in meditating upon this today again, it's really been searching my heart.

Shall we turn, please, to Mark's Gospel, Chapter 8. Mark's Gospel, Chapter 8, verse 22. Mark's Gospel 8 and verse 22. And he cometh to Bethsaida, and they bring a blind man unto him, and besought him to touch him.

And chapter 10, please, and verse 13. Mark's Gospel, Chapter 10 and verse 13. And they brought young children to him, that he should touch them, and his disciples rebuked them that brought them.

Shall we just look to the Lord in prayer briefly? Our Father, we thank thee for the word of God. We praise thee for the challenge that we receive as we look into thy precious word, and we long this evening that thou would touch our hearts and our lives. We might know the Savior's touch in every department of these lives of ours, but we might bring fruits of the glory of God.

To this end, we pray for thy guidance and thy direction, thine unction and power, for we ask it in the Savior's worthy and precious name. Amen. As most of you are aware, the Greeks are well known for their

many legends.

I recall when we took a tour over in that area, and we went through part of Greece, that the guide was constantly bringing out certain legends relating to Greek mythology and so on. And one of the legends, of course, would have come down over the years, but known to all as that concerning King Midas. You remember this particular king had a tremendous craving for gold, and he cried to his gods that he might get the touch so that whatever he touched it might turn to gold.

And as the legend goes, he received that answer, and he was so delighted and thrilled as he began to touch different things, and whatever he touched turned to gold. And so he had all the silverware brought in, and all the other utensils in the palace, and one thing after another came before him, and he touched it, and it turned to gold. And he was delighted for some time until his daughter, whom he loved, apparently rushed in poor arms around him, and he touched her, and his daughter turned to gold.

Such is the touch that he had. But our Savior has a touch, and there is divine gold in that touch, and there's never a touch that he gives that we would wish that he had not done so. And there's so many ways in which he can touch our lives.

There's so many ways in which he desires to touch our lives, and as we consider some of these scriptures tonight, may we long for the Lord to touch our lives here this evening. The word touch is a word that is used frequently in the New Testament. It's used 36 times altogether, and Mr. W. E. Vine suggests that the word really means, that word touch, means to fasten on to, or to cling to.

It's not just brushing, it's not simply a light touch, it's sort of holding on to, clinging to. And this particular word is used concerning the Lord Jesus Christ 13 times in the four Gospels. In other words, on 14 occasions, sometimes there's a duplication in different Gospels, but on 14 occasions we find the Savior touching.

And whatever he touched, it was never the same after. Never. Now this touch is brought before us frequently in the Old Testament, as most of you are well aware.

You remember in the Psalms, on at least two occasions, it speaks about the Lord. He touches the mountain and it smokes. You recall back in the book of Genesis, concerning Jacob.

He was touched to the Lord, and he was never the same afterward. Back in Genesis chapter 32, you recall on that occasion, dear Jacob was so worried and so upset and so concerned about facing his brother Esau, and he was teaming and planning, as seemed to be his nature. That's a planner.

He was teaming and planning how he might gain the favor of his brother, and he was working out all sorts of little programs, and one program was sending messengers ahead of him with cattle and with sheep and so on, and he would offer this to Esau, and then a little later on another messenger would come with some more, and he had this all planned out so well, and it tells us that he just feared the idea. He never thought of turning to the Lord and asking the Lord for guidance in the matter. He was trying to plan the whole thing out himself, just like we do so often in our own experience.

We get into difficulty, and we try to figure out how we can get our way out of it, instead of bringing the matter to the Lord. And you remember that night the Lord dealt with him, the angel of the Lord wrestled with him, and there was a real wrestling match that went on. Jacob's will pitched against the Lord's will, it seemed, and Jacob would not let him go, and so the angel of the Lord, you remember, tells us he touched,

he touched the hollow of his thigh, and he lost his strength, and he just had to cling to the angel of the Lord, and he clung to him, and he found that his strength must be in the Lord and not in himself, the touch of the master's hand to realize that.

And I'm sure that whenever Jacob was seen following that, he had the mark in his walk of the touch of the master's hand. It was seen in his life, as it will be in ours when the Lord touches us. You remember over in 1 Samuel, chapter 10, they had just crowned Saul king, and at that particular time God had allowed Saul to be made king among the people, and it tells us that there were a group of people, and it says, whose heart the Lord touched, and they followed it in.

And I suggest to you that what we need as God's people, as believers in Christ, is our heart constantly touched with the Lord, that we might follow him faithfully day by day. You remember in connection with Elijah, and you recall he got the master's touch. There's so many of them in the Old Testament that got that touch from the master, and Elijah, you recall how he stands before that tremendous gathering on Mount Carmel, and makes such a tremendous stand for the Lord, as the Lord God liveth before whom I stand.

And without any fear of his life, he stands before the Baal priests, and the Baal worshipers, and king Ahab, and so on, he makes such a valiant stand for the Lord, and seems to be so triumphant in it. And then you recall that after that tremendous victory, he hears that Jezebel has decided to get rid of him. And what Ahab couldn't do, or the priests couldn't do, or the people of Israel couldn't do, one dear woman apparently had the power to do, and dear Elijah turned and he ran, and he ran, and he ran, and he ran.

And you'll find that no wonder he was exhausted, because he went over a hundred miles just to get away from her. And he was quite exhausted, and you recall he went off to sleep, and the Lord came, and he touched him, awakened him, had food provided for him, he ate some food, he went off to sleep again, and the Lord the second time had to touch him. And again he was awakened by the touch of the Lord, and he ate once more, and at that point we find on the strength of that, the journey that was before him, which was a tremendous journey, the Lord strengthened him as a result of the touch.

See, the Lord strengthens our hearts, we all follow our king, he strengthens us so we lean upon him, he touches us so that we can go forth in his strength, in his power, but we need the touch of the master's hand. You remember Jeremiah were told that the Lord touched him, and he went forth, and he spoke with power. Turn rather just just for a moment to the book of Daniel, please.

Daniel chapter 8. This beloved man of God who had that unique little title, A Man Greatly Beloved. What a delightful title God gave to him, All Thou Greatly Beloved. You know he was touched by the Lord five times in the story.

In this passage, in section in Daniel chapter 8, for example, where it goes verse 18, Now as he was speaking with me, I was in a deep sleep on my face toward the ground, but he touched me and set me upright. He touched me and set me upright. Did you notice when he was touched? It was while he was meditating upon the word of God, and the temptation in looking at these things is to go into more detail than the surrounding verses, but may I just say in passing, there he was meditating on the things of God, and while he was meditating, he was touched.

He was touched. Chapter 9, please, in verse 21. Yea, whilst I was speaking in prayer, even the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning being caused to fly swiftly, touched me about the

time of the evening oblation.

So he was touched while meditating upon the word. He was touched now as he was in the attitude of prayer. Do you ever sense the Lord's touch in the times of prayer? Ever sense his touch as you get into his word? That's the way he desires it to be.

Notice chapter 10, please, and verse 10. Verse 9, for connection says, Yet heard I the voice of his word, and when I heard the voice of his word, then was I in a deep sleep on my face, and my face toward the ground. And behold, a hand touched me, which set me upon my knees, and upon the palms of my hands.

You notice what happens here? He's listening to the word. He's thinking on the plan, the program of God, the vision that was brought before him, and what happens? A hand touches him, and he's sort of frustrated on his face. So we're told in the verse prior to that, but when he's touched, he gets on his hands and knees.

Sort of the attitude of prayer there. But then he goes on in this particular passage, and we're told in verse 16, And behold, white one, like unto the similitude of the sons of men, touched my lips. Then I opened my mouth and spake, and said unto him that stood before me, O my Lord, by the vision my sorrows have turned upon me, and I have retained no strength.

And then farther down in verse 18, then there came again and touched me one like the appearance of a man, and he strengthened me and said, O man greatly beloved, fear not. Peace be unto thee, be strong, yea, be strong. And I suggest to you, beloved, if you just look at those five touches, you'll find that it's a little different lesson in each of those touches.

And you find the dear man of God, each time he's touched, he receives a fresh strengthening from the Lord. He's touched to speak, he's touched in strength, he's touched to pray, but in each case there must be the touch. There must be the touch.

Now let's go over, shall we, to the New Testament and notice five rather important touches. Let's turn, please, to Matthew. Matthew's Gospel.

Chapter 8. Matthew's Gospel, Chapter 8. May I just reemphasize the fact, beloved, and this is the point that I want to stress tonight, that we might have received some touches from the Lord, but there are more touches he wants to make on our lives. But we must be desiring, we must long for it. We must long for the touch of the Master's hand.

He doesn't force this touch upon us, and on the various occasions when his touch is brought before us in the Gospel, there's a desire, or there are people involved in bringing the Lord into the situation. Remember how they, the blind men, they desired to bring the blind man to be touched. They desired to bring the children to be touched.

There was always some involved in bringing them to the Savior. He was willing to touch, but there must be some form of response, and there must be a response in our heart if we long to be touched. Now, the first touch I suggest to you in our lives is the touch of salvation, and that's what I see in this little story in Chapter 8. It says, When he was come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed him, and, behold, there came a leper and worshipped him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.

And Jesus put forth his hand and touched him, saying, I will, be thou clean. And immediately his leprosy was cleaned. Now, in these five little stories we're going to look at, just a little brief outline I want to use, the same outline for each one.

I want to notice the condition, I want to notice the concern, and I want to notice the cure. In each case, there was a different condition. There was a concern, and there was a cure.

Now, notice the condition here. The particular condition in this case was leprosy. In fact, if we were to turn to the story that is similar to this in the Gospel of Luke, there's one little statement added, and the statement is, he was full of leprosy.

He was full of leprosy. No doubt, from the sole to the feet to the top of his head, he was covered with leprosy. And we're all aware of the fact, I'm sure, that leprosy in the Scriptures is such a constant reminder to us of sin.

Do you recall that occasion in your life? Have you had an occasion in your life when you realized that your condition was spiritual leprosy? A sinner. You see, a leper in the days of our Lord was one who was an outcast. He was an untouchable.

He could not associate with those around you. He was outside you. And that's just exactly what sins us through us, is it not? Without God, without hope, without strength, without Christ, a far-off.

Sin does that to us, and here was this dear man, his condition. Helpless, because there was no known cure at that time, but there was one who had the touch. Only one, but he was available.

Now, notice the concern, will you? We're told, Behold, there came a leper. Do you notice he makes the desire, he expresses his desire, he comes to the Savior, and he says something like this, Lord, if thou wilt acknowledge this in the Lord, thou canst make me clean. He recognized that the Savior could do the work.

He comes in faith, he acknowledges them in the Lord, and the Lord forbids you. That is still working today. I am sure that one after another could stand up and give their testimony tonight and say, I remember, I remember the night, the day, the time when I came to Christ, confessed my faith, and he touched me, and he made me whole.

As we were listening in song, he made me whole. That's what the Savior did to this dear man. He put forth his hand and touched him.

Now, if anyone else had touched him, they would have been contaminated. This man had never been touched, perhaps for years. No one would dare touch him.

He had never experienced a touch, but there was one who could touch him, and instead of leprosy spreading, leprosy would be removed. The touch of a master's hand, and there's only one, but it's none other name under heaven given among heaven, whereby we must be saved. One alone able to forgive sins.

Who can forgive sins but God alone, they said. He who is God, manifest in the flesh, forgave sins. What a wonderful Savior.

What a delight for this dear man, because notice what happens. It says, And immediately his leprosy was cleansed, and Jesus said unto him, See thou tell no man, but go thy way, show thyself to the priest, offer

the gift that Moses demanded, put a testimony unto them. About a year ago now in Ottawa, a man in his late forties who's been under conviction for a good many years, and different ones have been praying for him.

I received a letter this day from his brother-in-law saying, please get in touch with my brother-in-law. He is, I believe the Lord's beginning to speak to him. He has been so indifferent for so many years.

He's been so careless about these things, and the Lord has brought problems into his life, but he just refuses to face the Savior. And so we got in touch with him, and true enough, the Lord had me meeting with him. And to make a long story short, he came out to the service, and within a week he came along to the meeting this night.

He'd spend an evening with him talking about salvation, left him to think about it, and the next meeting he came to, his face was just glowing, and one didn't have to ask, Do you know the Lord? It was written all over his face. And what a delight, and what a thrill! The Lord had reached out his hand and touched him, and he knew he was born again. And immediately his concern went out to others.

He got concerned about his wife, and oh, she was so opposed to things. She was just so bitter about the whole thing. She would not come here, and she had an operation just about four months, four weeks afterward.

She had a chance to go into the hospital and visit her, and witness to her, and the Lord began to soften her heart, and just a matter of about three months ago, she too opened her heart and received Christ as Savior. And again the Lord touched, and a transformation, and then witnessing to others in the hospital, and the joy to see them being baptized just a few weeks ago. But the thing is, beloved, the Lord is reaching out, and he is touching hearts here and there.

And if there's a soul here tonight, and you've never had the touch of salvation, that's the first touch you need from the Savior. That's touch number one. That's not the only touch you need, but that's touch number one.

Let's look at chapter eight again, and verse 14. Not only do we need the touch of salvation, we need the touch for service. Have you had that touch from the Savior? Has he touched you, and have you got busy for him? Has that touch motivated you? That's what happened to this dear woman, Peter's wife's mother.

Verse 14, And when Jesus was come into Peter's house, he saw his wife's mother lay and sick of fever. And he touched her hand, and the fever left her, and she arose and ministered on the earth. How delightful! Let's look at the condition again.

Let's look at the concern and the cure. What about the condition? She was sick of the fever. And what's a fever? High temperature, restless, going on saying things we don't know what we're saying.

You've seen a person in a high fever, have you not? How they roll and pop, perspire and go through it all. And when they come out of it, they don't know what they've said or what they've done. And they're just drained of strength.

And so we need to go help them. And I find there are so many dear Christians who seem to go through life just fretting, restless, worrying, upset about this little thing and that little thing. They have peace with God, but they haven't got the peace of God in their life.

They're constantly worried. They're constantly concerned about little things and big things. Everything becomes a mountain.

And they're so worried about things that they can't do anything for the Lord. And there are many Christians like that, I find. Beloved, if you are a chronic worrier, if you're so restless in your Christian life and you're not producing for the Lord and you're concerned about it, listen, you need the touch of the master's hand.

You need his touch. You need to bring that condition to him. You can't do anything about it.

You notice she couldn't do a thing about it. The fever had control of her, but the Savior is concerned. One of the interesting things in this story, you don't read necessarily about her being concerned.

I'm sure she was, but perhaps she was almost beyond showing her concern. I'm sure Peter was concerned. I'm sure the daughter was concerned, and certainly the Lord was concerned, because we're told here when he came into Peter's house, he saw his wife's mother lay sick of the fever, and he touched her head.

He immediately got concerned about it, and our Savior's concerned about our lives, beloved. He wants us serving him, glorifying him, and did you notice a connection with the leper? Well, it doesn't actually say where the Savior touched the Lord. It's conceivable that he touched his body, but in this case it says specifically he touched her hand, and as you know, the hand reminds us of work, of service.

Putting the hand on the plow, he touched her hand, and the fever left, and the moment the fever left her, she arose from her bed, from her restlessness, and she ministered unto them, and beloved, what a delight to minister to God's people. There's so much work to be done for the Lord, so much you can do for the Lord day after day, but you need to do it under the touch of a master's hand. Say, Lord, take these hands.

Lord, take this life, and just touch it. Make me a blessing to someone this day, but are we willing? You say, I'm so useless. I don't know what to do.

Bring it to the Lord. Let him touch your hand. He'll make you useful in his service, but we must hurry on.

Notice, please, in Matthew chapter 20. Matthew chapter 20, verse 29, Matthew 20, and as they departed from Jericho, a great multitude followed him. Behold, two blind men sitting by the wayside, when they heard that Jesus passed by, cried out, saying, Have mercy on us, O Lord, thou Son of David, and in verse 34, for time, so Jesus had compassion on them, and touched their eyes, and immediately their eyes received sight, and they followed him.

He touched the body, and the leprosy was gone. He touched the hand, and service began, and now he touches the eyes. He touched the body, salvation.

He touched the hand, service. He touched the eye, see. These two men were blind.

That was their condition. What would you say? I'm saved. I can see.

The Lord's opened my eyes. Would you see in the Scriptures we're told that it's possible to be blind as believers? The church at Laodicea, you remember, where rich increase with good? We have need of nothing. Oh, the Lord says, you're wretched, you're poor, you're blind.

They have lost their vision of Christ. Do you remember over in 2 Peter, chapter 1? I'm forbid looking at these verses, but in 2 Peter, chapter 1, he talks about add to your faith virtue to virtue knowledge, and he developed that wonderful sevenfold development of the Christian life. Brotherly kindness, love, and he says, he that lacketh these things is blind.

Follow that. If I'm not growing as a believer in Christ, if I'm not developing through the working of the Holy Spirit of God, I'm blind. You say, oh, I have so many things in my life.

I have a hatred in my heart towards someone, and I can't seem to get any victory over it. I have such a temper, and I can't seem to get that temper under control. Why not let the Lord touch you? If these things are not developing in your life, you're blind and can't see afar off.

In other words, you're short-sighted. You've got your eyes on things around you in the immediate vicinity. We need our eyes on Him.

And so we find that these men in their condition, you notice their concern, and oh how concerned they were. They said, have mercy on us, Lord, thou son of David. The mob said, enough of that.

You'll always find people interfering, but they were not going to be persuaded by the multitude. They had their thoughts on the Lord. They wanted to see.

And beloved, we need to get a vision for souls who were reminded a few moments ago concerning this man who was concerned about six men he was dealing with. The Lord has given open his eyes to see the need around. Are we blind to the fact that there are people going down to hell all around us? Lord, I might see.

Jesus stood still. Jesus stood still. Someone crying out to Him, He stands still.

He called them and said, what wilt ye that I should do unto you? What do you specifically want me to do? Oh, they were ready for that, that question. They said, Lord, that our eyes may be open. That our eyes may be open.

Jesus had compassion on them and touched their eyes. And immediately their eyes received sight. They went home and forgot all about it.

Oh no. And they followed Him. Their eyes opened, their eyes on Him.

They said, we're not going to have you out of our sight, Lord. We're going to follow you. We're going to follow you.

Oh, beloved, when you read the word of God, does Christ come before you in the scriptures? You say, no, that's one of the problems I have. I read the scriptures and it's so dry and it just doesn't seem to give me the answers I want. Others seem to see Christ in it, but I can't see it.

Why not let it come to the Lord and say, Lord, open my eyes. Touch these eyes, Lord, so I might see wonderful things out of my Lord. And then they follow Him.

But we must hurry on. Notice the, in Mark's gospel, chapter seven, verse 32, and they bring unto Him one that was deaf, had an impediment in his speech. This is verse 32, Mark chapter seven.

And they beseeched him to put his hand upon him, and he took him aside from the multitude, and put his fingers into his ears, and he spit and touched his tongue. And looking up to heaven, he sighed and said unto him, Eph Hatah, that is, be open. Straightway his ears were open, the string of his tongue was loose, and he spake plainly.

So, you see, we need the touch of a master's hand to salvation. We need the touch of a master's hand to serve. We need the touch of a master's hand to see.

And we need the touch of a master's hand to speak. Have you brought your ears to the favor of the Lord? I want to hear your voice. I want your word to speak to me, that as I meditate upon it, I want it to be as from myself.

Lord, just tuck these ears so that I can listen to you day by day. Lord, I have such difficulty speaking for you. I get opportunities, and I get tongue-tied, and I can't speak plainly.

Lord, I'm such a failure. Lord, touch my tongue, touch my tongue. There was the condition, there was the concern they brought him, and you know what the Lord did here in this story? You'll notice rather interestingly in verse 33, he took him aside from the multitude.

He said, I want to get him alone. I want to get him alone, and they are alone from the crowd. The Lord touched him.

You know the Lord can touch you alone in your room. There don't have to be, there doesn't have to be certain spectacular things going on. Alone with him of the desire, Lord touch me, touch me.

Oh, so much could be said about that. Because, beloved, it seems that we make so many excuses for ourselves that we can't say a word to Christ. I remember a dear man in Newfoundland who, one reason why he would not touch Christ as his Savior, the main reason was because he believed, like many of them there believe, that if you profess to be saved, you had to immediately stand up and give your testimony, and go around to the neighborhoods and tell people about the Lord.

That's what the people did when they professed to be saved at that time. One man, I recall, who professed salvation, when we were in the home, it was ten o'clock at night, and he insisted on going around, and we woke people up, and we went around the village, and he told them what Christ done for them. People waking up, and others just startled as he walked in and started to witness for the Lord. That was their feeding.

And this dear man said, I cannot speak, I can't talk normally to people without getting all confused. But God began to work and work, and he became more miserable and miserable, and one night in a meeting, God spoke to him in such a way that he just stumbled out of the vents that he was sitting in, and stumbled up to the front and fell on his face before we were speaking. We hadn't even finished speaking, and he just groaned, Lord, I need salvation.

And then the amazing thing was, he stood up, he said, I'm going to save them. This man who couldn't say a thing. And the Lord touched his thumb, and for 20 minutes he talked about the Lord.

Talked about the Lord. The Lord touched my hand. And finally, beloved, without turning to it, you remember the story in Matthew 17.

In Matthew 17, we have the story of the men on the mountain with our Savior, and Peter, he said, Lord, let's make three tabernacles. One for thee, one for Moses, one for Elijah. And while he had space, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and a voice out of the cloud that said, This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.

Hear ye him? You see what had happened? Dear Peter and his enthusiasm was putting Christ and Moses and Elijah all on the same plane. And the Father said, There's only one beloved Son here. This, not thee, is my beloved Son, not son.

Hear ye him? Not them. And then you remember what happened? The Savior came, and he touched them. He touched them, and after he touched them, they lifted their eyes, and they didn't see Moses, and they didn't see Elijah.

They saw Jesus only. In other words, Christ was preeminent to them after the touch. Is Christ preeminent to you? Do you put other things on the same level as the Savior? Your work? Your own personal interest? Or has Christ got the exalted place, the honored place? In order for him to have that place, he must touch you.

Oh beloved, we need the touch of the Master's hand, but we must long for it. Why not just bring those things in your life that you want him to touch by faith? Because he'll stand still. He'll take you aside, and he'll touch you.

So we pray. Gracious Father, we do confess to thee that our eyes are often blinded to the things of Christ. So often our father, our thoughts, and our vision is taken up with the things of the world, and we get distracted, and instead of pressing toward the mark, we get led astray.

We pray that thou would graciously, Lord, touch these eyes, and touch these ears, that we might hear thy voice day by day. Lord, touch these lips, that we might speak well of thee, and touch our father, that we might indeed see in our goal and object in life no one. Save Jesus, O Lord.

For this we pray in his all-availing name. Amen.

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