



Mothering Sunday Sermon - 22nd March 2020 Transcript

Hello everyone.

We may not be able to do Mothering Sunday in the way we had hoped and planned, but here are a few thoughts. First a reading from Luke's Gospel, chapter 8.

A man named Jairus, a leader of the local synagogue, came and fell at Jesus' feet, pleading with him to come home with him. His only daughter, who was about twelve years old, was dying. As Jesus went with him, he was surrounded by the crowds. A woman in the crowd had suffered for twelve years with constant bleeding, and she could find no cure. Coming up behind Jesus, she touched the fringe of his robe. Immediately, the bleeding stopped. "Who touched me?" Jesus asked. Everyone denied it, and Peter said, "Master, this whole crowd is pressing up against you." But Jesus said, "Someone deliberately touched me, for I felt healing power go out from me." When the woman realised that she could not stay hidden, she began to tremble and fell to her knees in front of him. The whole crowd heard her explain why she had touched him and that she had been immediately healed. "Daughter," he said to her, "your faith has made you well. Go in peace." While he was still speaking to her, a messenger arrived from the home of Jairus, the leader of the synagogue. He told him, "Your daughter is dead. There's no use troubling the Teacher now." But when Jesus heard what had happened, he said to Jairus, "Don't be afraid. Just have faith, and she will be healed." When they arrived at the house, Jesus wouldn't let anyone go in with him except Peter, John, James, and the little girl's father and mother. The house was filled with people weeping and wailing, but he said, "Stop the weeping! She isn't dead; she's only asleep." But the crowd laughed at him because they all knew she had died. Then Jesus took her by the hand and said in a loud voice, "My child, get up!" And at that moment her life returned, and she immediately stood up! Then Jesus told them to give her something to eat. Her parents were overwhelmed, but Jesus insisted that they not tell anyone what had happened.



Thinking about Mothering Sunday, I thought back to my own experience of being mothered, and it seemed that everything I thought of that my mum did for me as a baby and a small child involved touch. Hers were the first hands to hold me, and feed me, and bath me and cuddle me, and wipe away my tears. I expect my Dad played his part too. Her touch was vital to me in my early days of life.

As I grew, I learned to walk and she held my hand. She used her hands to prepare food for us all, and to keep our home a good place to be. She used hands as she helped me to learn to read, and write. Hers were the first hands that guided my hands on the piano. She helped me to clean out my first rabbit. She held my hand through music exams, and interviews. She even had the courage to sit beside me in my first driving lessons, grabbing the wheel occasionally! My mum helped me to move into my first house. She used her hands to do my washing and ironing in the early days before I had a washing machine. I am grateful in so many ways, too many to mention for the way my mum was involved in my life from its start until the day she died. And I realise that so much of it was about using her hands.

Right now our hands have become a bit of an obsession for us. We are washing them frequently, and avoiding unnecessary touch with each other. Sharing the peace, shaking hands, holding hands has been a no no for a while as we have begun to grasp a bit about this encroaching virus. But now, we find ourselves not only unable to touch, but unable to meet. Hand hygiene remains critical, but touch has become one commodity that is largely out of bounds for us just now.

In the reading from Luke, we heard about how touch was vitally important in two healings of Jesus. In the first, the woman, ill with a bleeding condition was too afraid to speak to Jesus, but she reached out her hand and touched his robe, and was instantly healed of her affliction. And Jesus knew, immediately. He sensed her touch, and her need, and responded to both with the healing she craved. Maybe we can't currently reach out and touch another person in our need, but if we are feeling lost, alone, afraid, or if we have a particularly need, perhaps we need to have the confidence to reach out in other ways to someone within our church family - to ask for their help - whether it be a friend, a pastoral visitor, a neighbour, a minister - whoever feels right. It took that woman courage



to ask for help, and I know it may take you courage to ask for help too. But when we have take a small step in this way, we give others the opportunity to put their faith into action, and help in whatever way they can.

In the second episode, Jairus's young daughter was seemingly beyond help. She no longer had the capacity to reach out to the One who could make a difference for her. In her situation it was Jesus who did the reaching, the touching, the lifting and the healing. That may well be where we find ourselves in the coming weeks: unable to ask for help, alone and isolated, even sick. Know that Jesus is with you in whatever situation you find yourself in these weeks ahead, and that he is there constantly with his touch. As you invite him to participate in your situation, or in the situation of your loved ones as Jairus did, his touch can bring help and healing, hope and peace. We have One who want to reach into the situation each one of us finds ourselves. His hands are there for us when others are no longer. And we can trust in him, no matter how long it takes, until normality resumes, and always.

Let us pray

Lord Jesus, who used your hands every single day for the good of others. Show us how to use our hands as you would like us to. And when hands can not be used help us to be creative in the ways we can touch each other with the love that comes from you. Help us see what you see, and be ready to help.

Work through us, through our actions and through our prayers, to help make this world the place you want it to be, right now in these current unprecedented uncertain days, even though we are separated from our church families

Lord, through our prayers and actions, and through your touch reaching out to each one of us, may your love be experienced, and may your peace fill our lives and days.

And though we are apart, may all that we are and do and think and pray help to bring your kingdom on earth a little nearer. Amen