

REACHING OUT TO CHRIST (MK 5:21-43)

Sermon by the Rev. Corinne Hodges, Sun., June 28, 2009, SJOC

- I. Returned home Thurs. to news about Michael Jackson—grew up with, known by all generations, so great was his impact, so wide was his reputation, all over the world
 - A. Watched images all people pressing in around him, even at death; every country crowds
 - B. People wanting to get close, catch a glance, maybe even shake a hand or brush up against this pop icon
 - C. Sadness of his life—even with all those people, lonely; no real childhood; never seemed comfortable in his own skin

- II. Jesus—so popular in his day; swarmed him
 - A. Those who wanted to get close, see if he was real, this miracle man who could heal the sick, cast out demons, preach with such power
 - B. Many wanted to see him due to his fame and reputation, tell others they had. Squeezing closer, pushing their way through, brush with fame
 - C. Hemorrhaging woman touched Jesus in completely different way
 1. Not to be in the know or brag to her friends
 2. Sincere desire, even a need to touch him.
 - a. 12 yrs. Of hemorrhaging: frustrated, weak, tired, desperate
 - b. Poor. Spent all her money and poor treatment with no results
 - c. Worse rather than better
 - d. Last chance—Jesus is coming!

- III. Love this story. Makes it through crowd
 - A. Picture her stretching out her arm, “If I can just get a little further. If I but touch his clothes, I will be made well.”
 - B. Risk: crowd could punish her for not obeying law. Unclean, impure, untouchable according to Lev. Cast out. Anyone who comes in contact with her was considered to be contaminated. Yet woman persists.
 - C. Admire this woman who has such courage, faith and hope—so opposite of the disciples in the rocky boat last week. Her faith is stronger than her fear
 - D. Tries again, lunging and does it. The joy, relief, wants to disappear quickly
 - E. Through her own initiation of touching Christ, she is restored to whole health. Now she would be brought back into society, back

into relationship with other people, also has a new, closer relationship to Jesus, as he calls her daughter

- F. Diff. from healing of Jairus' daughter when Jesus is the one who initiates touch. Not really a healing, but a greater act: raising the girl from the dead. He brings the girl to new life=resurrection.
- G. Both of these stories show how restoration, regardless of what type, require physical contact and faith in Jesus

IV. Touch is crucial

- A. One thing that seems to have been missing from the hemorrhaging woman's life, something she so desperately wanted and needed. Longed for.
- B. Something I thought about as watched newsclips of Jackson. He had achieved a lot in his life (talent, fame, success, money), yet it always seemed that he was limited in his relationships. Lived an isolated life and longed for human contact
- C. Touch has become a taboo subject these days, but the fact is:
 - 1. Touch can take shape in many different ways, not just the tactile, physical acts when we touch with our hands, but in the things we say or do not say, do or do not do for others, the ways we are there or not for people. Little gestures we make.
 - 2. We all need it. Some more than others, but we all need to know that we are loved by someone else and we need to show our own affection towards others as well

V. Whether we realize it or not, we touch other people's lives each and every day. The Gospel reading today asks us to take an honest look in the mirror and ask:

- A. What can we do to touch another person's life in a positive way?
- B. Who is untouchable in our world?
- C. Who do we know that desperately needs to be healed and restored to wholeness? How can we help?
- D. Paul urges Corinthians to "excel in the generous undertaking" of not just desiring to do something, but completing the task in actually doing something for others, touching another's life
- E. As Christians, this is part of our call, to seek a "fair balance between our present abundance and others need."
- F. When Christ touches us, it should have a reciprocal affect—we want to have a healthy, healing impact on other's lives
- G. Let us pray that one day all people who are isolated and lonely will feel God's loving embrace. And may we reach out to others, esp. those in need, really stretching ourselves, in the name of Christ