

Tusculum Hills Baptist Church  
Paul Gunn, Pastor

Sermon Title: The Touch of Jesus, Matthew 8-9

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**INTRODUCTION:** The title of my message today is, “The Touch of Jesus.” There were times in the Bible when Jesus healed directly by physical touch, and I want to share those experiences with you today. Here is an overview of my message.

1. In some cases, people asked Jesus for healing.
2. In some cases, people requested healing on behalf of others.
3. And then in some other cases, people were healed and there was no record they or anyone else asked for the healing.

I’m going to start in the book of Matthew, and all of the scriptures will follow in sequence to the other Gospels—Mark, Luke, John. I’ll read selected passages from them about the direct **physical touch** of Jesus.

**SCRIPTURE:** Matthew 8:2-3 <sup>2</sup> *A man with leprosy came and knelt before him and said, “Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean.”* <sup>3</sup> *Jesus reached out his hand and **touched** the man. “I am willing,” he said. “Be clean!” Immediately he was cleansed of his leprosy.*

The man challenged Jesus in a sense, by saying, “If you are willing.”

Now look in the same chapter of Matthew at this passage about Peter’s mother-in-law.

**SCRIPTURE:** Matthew 8:14-15 <sup>14</sup> *When Jesus came into Peter’s house, he saw Peter’s mother-in-law lying in bed with a fever. <sup>15</sup> He **touched** her hand and the fever left her, and she got up and began to wait on him.*

In this case, we don’t know if the woman asked for healing or if someone else asked for healing on her behalf.

Matthew 9 deals with a healing inside of a healing. So, let's look at the first story first. Jesus was talking about the parable of the wine skins or the illustrations of the wine skins, and I'll let you read this for yourselves. But, in verse 18, it says;

**SCRIPTURE:** Matthew 9:18-26 <sup>18</sup> *While he was saying this, a synagogue leader came and knelt before him and said, "My daughter has just died. But come and **put your hand on her**, and she will live."* <sup>19</sup> *Jesus got up and went with him, and so did his disciples.*

Then let's skip to verse twenty-three.

<sup>23</sup> *When Jesus entered the synagogue leader's house and saw the noisy crowd and people playing pipes,* <sup>24</sup> *he said, "Go away. The girl is not dead but asleep."* *But they laughed at him.* <sup>25</sup> *After the crowd had been put outside, he went in and **took the girl by the hand**, and she got up.* <sup>26</sup> *News of this spread through all that region.*

**EXPLANATION:** Here **Jesus put his hand on** her. It also says that **he took her by the hand**, and she got up. We believe the girl's father was a synagogue leader. Not all of the synagogue leaders trusted Jesus. Most of the leaders scoffed at Jesus and thought he was a phony. But, this leader knew better. And besides, if she was dead it sure didn't hurt to get Jesus involved. There was no demand on his part; there was just a statement to Jesus: "Put your hand on her, and she will be healed."

While Jesus was on his way to heal this girl, resurrect her, and bring her back from the dead, Matthew 9:20-22 tells us about a woman with a discharge of blood. Here we have an example of a person who reached out to touch Jesus. In previous examples, Jesus reached out to touch people, but in this example, we see the woman reached out to touch him.

**SCRIPTURE:** Matthew 9:20-22 <sup>20</sup> *Just then a woman who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years came up behind him and **touched** the edge of his cloak.* <sup>21</sup> *She said to herself, "If I only touch his cloak, I will be healed."* <sup>22</sup> *Jesus turned and saw her. "Take heart, daughter," he said, "your faith has healed you." And the woman was healed at that moment.*

It's interesting that in this passage the woman reached out and touched the edge of his cloak. The writer tells us of the woman's thoughts even before she touched Jesus.

Now go down to Matthew 27-31 where these two men pleaded for mercy. I want you to be aware of the pleading for healing.

**SCRIPTURE:** Matthew 9:27-31 <sup>27</sup> *As Jesus went on from there, two blind men followed him, calling out, "Have mercy on us, Son of David "* <sup>28</sup> *When he had gone indoors, the blind men came to him, and he asked them, "Do you believe that I am able to do this?" "Yes, Lord," they replied.* <sup>29</sup> *Then he **touched** their eyes and said, "According to your faith let it be done to you";* <sup>30</sup> *and their sight was restored. Jesus warned them sternly, "See that no one knows about this."* <sup>31</sup> *But they went out and spread the news about him all over that region.*

Here are two men with a matter-of-fact request—pleading for mercy.

Now let's go to the next book of Mark Chapter Six.

**SCRIPTURE:** Mark 6:1-3 <sup>1</sup> *Jesus left there and went to his hometown, accompanied by his disciples.* <sup>2</sup> *When the Sabbath came, he began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard him were amazed. "Where did this man get these things?" they asked. "What's this wisdom that has been given him? What are these remarkable miracles he is performing?"* <sup>3</sup> *Isn't this the carpenter? Isn't this Mary's son and the brother of James, Joseph, Judas and Simon? Aren't his sisters here with us?" And they took offense at him.*

**APPLICATION:** In other words, they didn't believe a local guy could do these things. Isn't it interesting when churches look for staff; sometimes they do a nationwide search for a person? I don't know how many times I've seen on a church website or heard of a church that is looking for a staff member or pastor and they have conducted a "nationwide" search. This might be good if there is nobody else who could do the job, but there might be a local person who could do it. So many times we think that something that is far away is more legitimate, and that is exactly what happened in Jesus's time. Now look at verse four.

**SCRIPTURE:** Mark 6: 4-6 <sup>4</sup>Jesus said to them, “A prophet is not without honor except in his own town, among his relatives and in his own home.” <sup>5</sup>He could not do any miracles there, except **lay his hands** on a few sick people and heal them. <sup>6</sup>He was amazed at their lack of faith.

I want you to note, Jesus healed people in spite of the circumstances. There is no record of requests for healing here – instead – we just have criticism and sarcasm.

**SCRIPTURE:** Mark 7:31-35 <sup>31</sup>Then Jesus left the vicinity of Tyre and went through Sidon, down to the Sea of Galilee and into the region of the Decapolis. <sup>32</sup>There some people brought to him a man who was deaf and could hardly talk, and they begged Jesus to **place his hand on him**. <sup>33</sup>After he took him aside, away from the crowd, Jesus **put his fingers** into the man’s ears. Then he spit and **touched** the man’s tongue. <sup>34</sup>He looked up to heaven and with a deep sigh said to him, “Ephphatha!” (which means “Be opened!”). <sup>35</sup>At this, the man’s ears were opened, his tongue was loosened and he began to speak plainly.

**EXPLANATION:** Now this is a sermon within itself. Jesus was dealing here with some local, cultural things, but that’s not my point. It says Jesus **put his fingers into the man’s ears**, and he **touched** the man’s tongue. He **touched** him. Also notice the way that his friends brought the man to him—they were begging. So up to now we’ve had different ways people were bringing people to Jesus to be healed, and here we’ve had people again begging to be healed.

**SCRIPTURE:** Mark 8:22-25 <sup>22</sup>They came to Bethsaida, and some people brought a blind man and begged Jesus to touch him. <sup>23</sup>He took the blind man by the hand and led him outside the village. When he had spit on the man’s eyes and **put his hands on him**, Jesus asked, “Do you see anything?” <sup>24</sup>He looked up and said, “I see people; they look like trees walking around.” <sup>25</sup>Once more Jesus **put his hands** on the man’s eyes. Then his eyes were opened, his sight was restored, and he saw everything clearly.

**EXPLANATION:** Here again, there were a lot of cultural things Jesus was addressing, and we will have to look at these another time. But, what I want you to see here is: people begging for healing, and Jesus again, **put his hands on the man** and healed him.

Now let's look where a man brought his little boy to Jesus and said he was possessed by a spirit. Jesus' disciples were not able to cast out the evil spirit.

**SCRIPTURE:** Mark 9:21-27 <sup>21</sup> *Jesus asked the boy's father, "How long has he been like this?" "From childhood," he answered.* <sup>22</sup> *"It has often thrown him into fire or water to kill him. But if you can do anything, take pity on us and help us."* <sup>23</sup> *"If you can?"* said Jesus. *"Everything is possible for one who believes."* <sup>24</sup> *Immediately the boy's father exclaimed, "I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!"* <sup>25</sup> *When Jesus saw that a crowd was running to the scene, he rebuked the impure spirit. "You deaf and mute spirit," he said, "I command you, come out of him and never enter him again."* <sup>26</sup> *The spirit shrieked, convulsed him violently and came out. The boy looked so much like a corpse that many said, "He's dead."* <sup>27</sup> *But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him to his feet, and he stood up.*

**EXPLANATION:** Here we have a father with no real emotion, no challenge to Jesus, no plea for mercy, no begging, just a matter-of-fact explanation of his son's behavior when he was possessed by this spirit. No emotion – just fact. He had a firm confidence Jesus could do something about it. And then the emotion came from the father. "Help me with my unbelief. I do believe." This sounds like a contradiction, but I think the man did believe, and he wanted Jesus to strengthen his belief. I believe he was trying to say, "I do believe with all that I am and all I can be, but with your help, I can believe even more."

Next let's go to Luke Chapter Six. You may think I refer to too many scriptures in my sermons. One man told me I had too many scriptures, and you may think I have too many. 😊

Jesus prayed all night on a mountainside with his disciples. In the following scripture, here is another example of people touching Jesus. Whether or not this is the same story as I told you about a few minutes ago, we don't know for sure. We do know that the gospels recorded many stories, but there were so many stories about Jesus they could not all be recorded.

**SCRIPTURE:** Luke 6:17-19 <sup>17</sup> *He went down with them and stood on a level place. A large crowd of his disciples was there and a great number of people from all over Judea, from Jerusalem, and from the coastal region around Tyre and Sidon,* <sup>18</sup> *who had come to hear him and to be healed of their diseases. Those troubled by impure*

spirits were cured,<sup>19</sup> and the people all **tried to touch him**, because power was coming from him and healing them all.

**EXPLANATION:** I guess in the crowd there there was so much emotion and a little bit of everything— begging, pleas for mercy, and everything else, including those with no emotion. And of course, those who simply had faith that Jesus could heal. We don't know for sure, but what we do know is the crowd was trying to get to Jesus, just to **touch him** for healing.

Then in Luke Chapter Seven, we have the story of the young son of a widow, who Jesus healed just of his own compassion.

**SCRIPTURE:** Luke 7:11-15 <sup>11</sup> *Soon afterward, Jesus went to a town called Nain, and his disciples and a large crowd went along with him.* <sup>12</sup> *As he approached the town gate, a dead person was being carried out—the only son of his mother, and she was a widow. And a large crowd from the town was with her.* <sup>13</sup> *When the Lord saw her, his heart went out to her and he said, “Don't cry.”* <sup>14</sup> *Then he went up and **touched** the bier they were carrying him on, and the bearers stood still. He said, “Young man, I say to you, get up!”* <sup>15</sup> *The dead man sat up and began to talk, and Jesus gave him back to his mother.*

**EXPLANATION:** Wow! What a story! Jesus didn't even touch the son, only the coffin. No one asked him to resurrect this person. Jesus did it without any request from anyone. He just wanted to do it out of the compassion of his own heart.

**SCRIPTURE:** Luke 13:11-13 <sup>11</sup> *and a woman was there who had been crippled by a spirit for eighteen years. She was bent over and could not straighten up at all.* <sup>12</sup> *When Jesus saw her, he called her forward and said to her, “Woman, you are set free from your infirmity.”* <sup>13</sup> *Then he **put his hands on her**, and immediately she straightened up and praised God.*

This is another example of Jesus healing without any request.

**SCRIPTURE:** Luke 22:47-51 <sup>47</sup> *While he was still speaking a crowd came up, and the man who was called Judas, one of the Twelve, was leading them. He approached Jesus to kiss him,* <sup>48</sup> *but Jesus asked him, “Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?”* <sup>49</sup> *When Jesus' followers saw what was going to happen,*

they said, “Lord, should we strike with our swords?”<sup>50</sup> And one of them struck the servant of the high priest, cutting off his right ear.<sup>51</sup> But Jesus answered, “No more of this!” And he **touched** the man’s ear and healed him.

**EXPLANATION:** While he was being betrayed by Judas, and when he was about to be handed over to these officials to go to the crucifixion, Jesus healed. This is another example of Jesus’ choice to heal without anyone’s request.

Now let’s look at John Chapter Nine. And when we look at this story in John, we will have looked at Jesus’ healing throughout all four gospels.

**SCRIPTURE:** John 9:1-7 <sup>1</sup>As he went along, he saw a man blind from birth. <sup>2</sup>His disciples asked him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” <sup>3</sup>“Neither this man nor his parents sinned,” said Jesus, “but this happened so that the works of God might be displayed in him. <sup>4</sup>As long as it is day, we must do the works of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work. <sup>5</sup>While I am in the world, I am the light of the world.” <sup>6</sup>After saying this, he spit on the ground, made some mud with the saliva, and **put it on the man’s eyes**. <sup>7</sup>“Go,” he told him, “wash in the Pool of Siloam” (this word means “Sent”). So the man went and washed, and came home seeing.

Once again, Jesus chose to heal without request.

**SUMMARY:** There are other Scriptures where Jesus healed with only words, and other times he healed by proxy, meaning he wasn’t physically present. A person made a request for healing of a relative, and Jesus healed without even seeing the person. Today’s message reflected on those he healed by his touch. Now let me point out to you the several insights which I told you earlier in my message.

1. In some cases, people asked to be healed.
2. In some cases, people requested healing for others.
3. In some cases, people were healed without asking.

Now I want you to pay attention. No two healings where “**touch**” actually happened were alike. There was no exact method, formula or plan of healing. Think

about it— Jesus could have had an office in Galilee, and if anyone wanted to be healed, he or she could have gotten an appointment and requested a five-minute appointment in Jesus’ office. Can you imagine an office with the name Jesus written over the top of the door? “I’ve got an appointment with Jesus next Tuesday at 10:00 AM.” Jesus could have had a receptionist with a scroll signing in people’s name and appointment time. But, Jesus did not heal that way.

## **CONCLUSION AND CALL TO ACTION:**

Here’s my conclusion: **Jesus met people where they were.** No one had to become a better person before Jesus paid attention to them. No one had to become a better person before Jesus healed them. Jesus met them where they were— if they were traveling, if they were at home, wherever they were.

And it’s the same today— I want you to look at this from a spiritual perspective: Jesus will meet you where you are. Jesus will meet you in the big, messy, middle of your sins, and he will heal you. Jesus wants to meet you where you are, because if you try to elevate yourself to him, he won’t be able to meet you. We must come to him as we are—filthy, rotten, sinners with greasy, oily, dirty rags of sin. Jesus meets us where we are. Isn’t it wonderful that we have a Savior who meets us where we are, just as he met these people in his travels?

Today, there are some of you who need to bring your friends to Christ, the same way people long ago brought their friends to Christ.

Just as people came to Christ for healing, people come to him the same ways for salvation:

- Some plea for mercy— I’ve been with people as they came pleading for mercy in a prayer of repentance.
- Some utter that rather benign challenge— “Jesus, if you can save me”
- Some bring their friend
- Some beg for forgiveness.

- Some know the truth of the Gospel and receive Jesus without any real emotion. They just believe by faith that it's true.
- And, then there are some who are healed without request. Some people are just living their own lives, minding their own business, when **BAM!**, the spirit of God hits them in a way they did not expect.

So I want to ask you today, who needs a touch from Jesus? Come to him as you are! Let him take you as you are. There are people who say Jesus reaches out to you and people who say you must reach out to Jesus, but it is simultaneous. We have examples in the Scriptures stating that it goes both ways—it is simultaneous. Jesus doesn't force himself on anybody who doesn't want him.

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Tusculum Hills Baptist Church  
Nashville, Tennessee  
USA