

Everyone Who Comes Gets Healed

Mark 6:53-56

Halifax: 27 October 2019

Introduction

Today we will continue our sermon series in Mark's Gospel

- In this part of Mark (from chapter 6, verse 30), we have been looking at how Christ is showing His apostles that He Himself is their provision.
 - We started off with our theme song, Psalm 24—our song of focus for this part of Mark—and we saw how the whole church was unfit to come before God until Jesus, the King of glory came—then the gates are lifted up to let Him in and He comes in to be our righteousness forever.
 - In the next sermon, we looked at the feeding of the five thousand, in Mark 6:30-44, and we saw how Jesus showed His disciples that though they had no bread to give to the people, that He is the LORD of glory who is eager to provide bread for the flock of God.
 - And in the next sermon, Mark 6:45-52, we saw that He is the one who walks on water. We saw how the apostles were overly amazed by this. Of course He could walk on water; He is the Son of God. They showed, as Mark tells us, that they still did not understand who He really was.
 - But have no fear, He will continue to teach them until they finally understand who He is; and as we learn of His teaching of His apostles in these pages, He will graciously teach us to understand who He is too.

Listen as I read today's text to you: Mark 6:53-56.

- This is the Word of God.

Mark 6:53-56: When they had crossed over, wherever they heard He was. ⁵⁶ Wherever they came to the land of Gennesaret and He entered into villages, cities, or in the anchored there. ⁵⁴ And when they came out of the boat, immediately the people recognized Him, ⁵⁵ ran through that whole surrounding region, and began to carry about on beds those who were sick to market-places, and begged Him that they might just touch the hem of His garment. And as many as touched Him were made well.

May the LORD add His blessing to the reading of His holy word.

In this account you see how Jesus was quickly recognised in this region.

- As soon as He and His disciples anchor their boat and come on shore at Gennesaret, a region just to the south of Capernaum, the people there recognise Him and begin to swarm Him, looking for healing.
- No one in the region could deny that people were being healed—there were many many such healings of people they knew.
 - This passage and those like it in the other gospels show us that Jesus did a lot more healings than those we have detailed accounts about in the New Testament.
 - Today, I want to show you some things that we can learn from this general report of the many healings that Jesus did.

I. First, when we see these many healings, it reminds us of how needy we all are in this fallen world.

A. So many sick people—

1. Mark gives us the graphic picture of people carrying their loved ones about on beds to bring them for healing.
 - These had such infirmities that they were not even able to walk.
 - There would have been those with permanent paralysis and those who were so weakened by illness that they were bedridden.
 - Likely, there were even some that were unconscious or nearly so, or those who were gasping for their last breath.
2. And if these bedridden folks were coming, surely there were many more that came on their own two feet.
 - Some hobbling along, some blind folks being led by those who could see.
 - Some with conditions that were just starting and some with conditions that they had borne for many years.
 - There were those with very visible infirmities and those with afflictions that were not visible to others at all.
3. There is no end to all the infirmities that are borne by the human race since the fall.
 - Job said it well, “Man is born to trouble, as the sparks fly upward.”

B. And it is no different today.

1. Despite all the advances we have made in medicine, our hospitals are overflowing with patients.
 - There are long wait times in our emergency rooms, and specialists are overwhelmed with requests,
 - and even when we gain access, there is only so much they can do.
 - In our own church we know of many with chronic conditions that they live with from day to day; and the doctors are often unable to help much.
 - It seems as if medicine is not able to keep up with all the new diseases and defects that continue to spring up.
2. You can only imagine the mayhem among us if someone came along who was able to heal with a mere act of his will and command from his lips.
 - As soon as it was discovered that this was for real, he would be swarmed.
 - The highways and the airways would quickly be overwhelmed with desperate people trying to gain access so they could be relieved of their afflictions.

C. We are all, naturally, quite eager for such help. Mark does a good job capturing the eagerness of the people to get to Jesus.

1. Look at all the things that demonstrate that in the text.
 - a. First, in verse 55, Mark tells us that as soon as the people saw that Jesus was in their area, they **ran through that whole surrounding region**.
 - The picture is of folks rushing off to find their sick friends and relations and then rushing back to Him before He moved on.

- b. And then Mark includes the detail, already mentioned, of how some even **began to carry about on beds those who were sick.**
 - How zealous they were.
 - c. In verse 56, Mark shows what happened as soon Jesus entered into every a new place.
 - It says: **Wherever He entered into villages, cities, or in the country, they laid the sick in the marketplaces...**
 - Villages, cities, and the country—that covered it all. Where ever He went there were people in need of healing waiting to see Him.
 - d. And to complete the picture, Mark captures their eagerness by telling us how they **begged Him that they might just touch the hem of His garment.**
 - They didn't just ask, they begged.
 - That is what you do when you are earnest about receiving mercy from Jesus.
2. Such zeal is not surprising.
- Think of all the efforts we expend to get well.
 - We spend lots of money and time on health care, even when it is often not effective.
 - We will endure harsh medications and treatments in the hope of getting better.
 - If we hear of something new that seems to work, we are eager to give it a try.
 - But what if there was someone who could cure anything and everything and did not even charge fees?
 - We are told that **as many as touched Him were made well.**
 - Would you not spread the news far and wide and make every effort to get those you love to the one who could cure them?
3. How wonderful it would have been...how wonderful it would be...
- to see a child with severe birth defects, fully cured,
 - to see a dear relative who had been bent with pain for years completely set free.
 - to have a spouse who was dying of cancer or on the brink of death with heart failure immediately and fully cured.
 - to see the blind have their eyes opened and the deaf their ears unstopped.

II. But there is a notable omission in all of this coming to Jesus.

- That is the next thing I want you to notice in our text.
- A. We are told of no one who comes to Him for deliverance from sin.
1. The crowds in every place sought Him out for healing, but where are those looking for forgiveness and eternal life?
 - They are not mentioned here.
 - They are scarcely mentioned in the gospels at all... other than the rich young ruler who comes more to posture, it would seem, than to seek eternal life...
 - When he says, “Good teacher, what shall I do that I might inherit eternal life?” he presumes that he is nearly there and that he is quite able to do something to get there—perhaps he even hoped that Jesus would tell him that that he was already fine as he was.
 - But where are the masses coming to Jesus for their spiritual needs?

2. You might be able to excuse them somewhat because Jesus had not yet been delivered to the cross and been raised again.
 - When He did that, He showed them all that He Himself was the offering for the forgiveness of sin.
 3. But is that really an excuse? Is that really the reason they had so little interest in Jesus as a Saviour from sin? I think not!
 - a. We have already seen how Jesus had revealed (when He healed the paralytic) that He had the authority to forgive sins.
 - Do you remember that? Instead of saying, **“Rise up and walk,”** He said, **“Your sins are forgiven you,”** as He Himself said (Mark 2:10), **“that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins.”**
 - b. Moreover, He went around preaching “the gospel of the kingdom,”
 - the good news that with Him there was acceptance with God for everyone who believes.
 - John the Baptist had taught this, introducing the sign of baptism that testifies to the washing away of sin by the One that John called “the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.”
 - c. Can we not say that anyone who had been truly burdened with their sins would have taken these revelations to heart as soon as they were given?
 - So where were those hordes of persons who hearing of forgiveness and the promise of eternal life came rushing to Him?
 - Truly their lack of interest in spiritual healing testifies to the hardness of the human heart and the truth that none seek after God... no not one...
 - That no one, on their own, will come unless God draws them.
- B. And look at us! Are we any better? We have even less excuse.
1. He has now been fully revealed as the one who came to procure the remission of sin for His people... complete forgiveness and eternal life.
 - He is revealed to be the true Son of God in human flesh.
 - He has been crucified and raised again for the justification of His people—to make them right with God through faith.
 - He has ratified the New Covenant, promising forgiveness and the renewing of our sinful hearts by the Holy Spirit.
 - He has promised forgiveness and eternal life to all who believe.
 2. But where are the multitudes, rushing to Him?
 - Where are those burdened by their sin, thrilled to hear the good news of forgiveness in Christ when it is preached to them?
 - Where are those running about to round up their loved ones and bring them to Jesus?
 - There should be a much greater zeal to get to Christ deliverance from sin than there ever was to get to Christ deliverance from illness...
 - People are no different today.
 - If Jesus was accessible for healing from every physical infirmity today, there would be a mad rush; but He is accessible to deliver all who come to Him from sin, but there is little interest in that.

- No one comes to Him unless God draws him.
 - The Holy Spirit has to use force to persuade us of our sin and misery, to enlighten our minds in the knowledge of Christ, and to renew our wills.
 - If He does not do that, we have no interest.
- 3. And even after He has graciously drawn us to repentance and faith, and given us new life,
 - where is our zeal for sanctification? for growth in holiness? for knowing the Lord better and for understanding His will and His gospel better?
 - We have Christ accessible to us, we have His word, sacraments and prayer, but how little zeal have we for these?
 - We are more zealous for physical health than spiritual health.
 - It is a mercy that He is not available to us for our physical infirmities now (not to say that He never answers prayer for healing—but that He is not here for immediate healing in every case as He was when He walked on earth).
 - If He were still here in that way, there would be even less interest in seeking Him for forgiveness and eternal life.
 - It would be just like it was when He was here.
 - In His wisdom and in His mercy, He has made the focus of this present age (since His resurrection) to be on our spiritual deliverance from sin.
 - The symbols of the New Covenant are baptism and feeding upon Him as the Lamb who was slain rather than medicine applied for healing.

TRANS> So we are confronted with something not so flattering about ourselves in this passage—we have far too little concern about our sin!

- But there is also much that we can learn here about Jesus!
- Let's turn to look at that now...

III. We are shown that He is ready and able to save all who come to Him.

- The simple fact is that every single person who came to Him was healed.
 - There it is in our text, at the end of verse 56: **And as many as touched Him were made well.**

A. Not one person was rejected.

1. If they came to Him for healing, He healed them.
 - a. There is not one case in scripture of someone coming to Jesus for healing and being refused.
 - Sometimes, Jesus healed people who did not ask for it—certainly when He raised the dead, the dead did not ask...
 - but usually no one else did either because they did not suppose it would be possible.
 - b. We are told that when He went to Nazareth He only healed a few because of the unbelief He found there,
 - The problem with their unbelief was not that it prevented Jesus from being able to heal them when they came to Him for healing.
 - The problem with their unbelief was that it kept them from coming to Him to ask for healing.

- c. Ordinarily, He did not heal people unless they asked.
 - But whenever they did, it was enough.
 - He did not require super faith—the faith that led them to ask was enough.
- This is meant to inform us about our Saviour as the one who saves us from our sins in this present time.
 - As I already mentioned, He does not ordinarily save all who come to Him with physical infirmities today—in fact, usually He does not immediately do so.
 - But His doing this when He was here among us is meant to teach us a wonderful fact about our Saviour.
- 2. Our Saviour Jesus Christ saves all who look to Him for salvation.
 - a. It doesn't matter who you are or what you may have done. His promise is that whoever comes to Him will not be cast out.
 - **Joh 6:37: All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out.**
 - The words of John 3:16 are likewise very clear: **For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.**
 - You can be the chief of sinners, but if you turn from your sin and come to Him to be pardoned and cleansed, you will be pardoned and cleansed.
 - b. The only thing that keeps Him from saving you is your own refusal to come to Him in faith for cleansing.
 - Mark 16:15-16 says: **And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. ¹⁶ He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned."**
 - John 3:36 also points to unbelief as the problem: **"He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him."**
 - c. The Bible ends with this gracious invitation to eternal life issued by the Holy Spirit and the church (here called the bride):
 - Rev 22:17: **And the Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let him who hears say, "Come!" And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely.**
- So when we read in our text that not one person was rejected, it is meant to illustrate for us this fact that none who come to Christ for salvation will be rejected.
 - But notice as well... not only were none rejected who came to Jesus for healing...
- B. We also find that there was no malady that He could not cure.
 - As many as touched Him were made well.
- 1. Never did anyone come to Him and have Jesus tell them that their case was too much for Him.
 - He raised the dead, He cleansed lepers, He gave sight to those who were born blind, He raised the dead, He enabled the lame to walk instantaneously (without having to learn how and to rehabilitate their atrophied muscles.)
 - No case was too hard for Him.
 - Never did He try to heal someone and find He could not.

2. This is meant to be instructive to us in several other ways.
 - a. First, it illustrates the wonderful promise that we will be raised with incorruptible bodies...
 - bodies that will be completely whole.
 - 1 Cor 15:51-53: **Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed—⁵² in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.⁵³ For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.**
 - There is no defect, no injury, no deformity, no physical malady of any kind that He will not completely cure when we are raised at the last day.
 - He will not have such deformities in His redeemed people when they stand before Him in glory.
 - All our physical maladies are an aberration because of the sin of the whole human race... it is because of sin that we all die and return to dust... but these will all end for those who belong to Christ.
 - But complete healing is not the only thing that is illustrated to us by Jesus' cure of every physical malady.
 - b. By healing every defect that was brought to Him when He was here, He also testifies to us that He will deliver us from all our sin.
 - 1) First of all, even in this life He will deliver all who come to Him from the dominion of sin.
 - What I mean is, He will grant repentance to all who come to Him so that they will not have sin that prevents them from serving God.
 - He will give them new life in the gospel.
 - For example, in 1 Corinthians 6:9-11, Paul says: **Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites,¹⁰ nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God.¹¹ And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.**
 - It is not that we will never struggle with these sins and perhaps even fall into them for a time—but it is that we will not live in them without true repentance so that we return to Him.
 - There is no sin that is too hard for Him to deliver us from.
 - As it says in Romans 6, sin no longer has dominion over us because we are not under law, but under grace—that is, the grace of God is at work in our lives.
 - But what about Paul who cried out concerning his own sin in the next chapter, saying, “Who shall deliver me from this body of death?”
 - Paul is not here talking about the dominion of sin... he was a servant of God... but he was talking about the presence of sin... the corruption that remains in us after we have come to Christ.

- 2) The promise of Christ is that there will be no more sin at all in our lives when we get to glory.
- Those who die in Christ are immediately perfected so that the scripture refers to their spirits as **the spirits of just men made perfect.** (Heb 12:23)
 - And when our bodies are raised incorruptible, we will then live in a new heaven and new earth of perfect righteousness with Jesus as our King (2 Pet 3:13).
 - All of our selfishness and pride and sinful desires will be fully eradicated, and we will be full of all the fruit of life—
 - Love and joy will dominate... Love for God and joy in Him, and love for each other and joy in each other—with never a sinful thought, word or deed.
 - Just as Jesus healed every disease that was brought to Him, so He will fully deliver us from every sin.
 - But even now, as we struggle with sin, we should look to Him for deliverance...
 - Though we will not be perfected in this life, we should certainly be growing and overcoming until the end.
 - The same power that raised Him from the dead is at work in us, and if we bring our sin to Him, He will help us even now.

TRANS> So you see how Jesus' healing of all who came to Him of whatever physical maladies they brought to Him is an important reminder to us...

- that as many as touch Him are made well...
 - that no one who comes to Him is rejected...
 - that no malady is too hard for Him to cure.
- There is one more lesson that we need to look at from our text.

IV. There is in this text an excellent testimony to us of *how* Jesus delivers us.

A. It is by touching the tassel on His garment.

1. This may seem like a strange thing to focus on, but it stands out in the text.
 - The people who come to Jesus here, **begged Him that they might just touch the hem of His garment. And as many as touched Him were made well.**
 - There are a couple of important grammatical details here.
 - a. First of all, it is probably actually better to translate this “as many as touched *it* were made well...” that is, as many as touched the hem of His garment.
 - It is translated that way in the English Standard Version and the New American Standard version, and the context seems to require that—for it was not Jesus, but the hem of His garment that they asked to touch... so when they touched *it* they were made well.
 - b. Also, the Greek word translated *hem* needs to be considered.
 - This word refers to the outer edge of anything, but when used of clothing in the Greek translation of the Old Testament and in the New Testament which was written in Greek originally,
 - this word is used of the tassels that the Jews were to wear on their garments...

- We read of this in Numbers 15.
 - In Numbers 15:38, the Lord commands His people (and this command would have applied to Jesus, who submitted to the law of Moses) to wear tassels on the four corners of their garments:
 - Num 15:38: **Speak to the children of Israel: Tell them to make tassels on the corners of their garments throughout their generations, and to put a blue thread in the tassels of the corners.**
 - Jesus would certainly have done this, so it was one of these tassels that the people were touching.
2. The purpose of these tassels is expressed in Numbers 15.
- It is to remind them that they were to be those people who kept the commandments of God.
 - Numbers 15:39 explains this: **And you shall have the tassel, that you may look upon it and remember all the commandments of the LORD and do them, and that you may not follow the harlotry to which your own heart and your own eyes are inclined, ⁴⁰ and that you may remember and do all My commandments, and be holy for your God.**
 - So the people of Israel were reminded that they were righteous by keeping God's commandments.
 - Not only the moral commandments (of which all come short), but also the ceremonial commandments by which God testified to His people that they were made acceptable by the death of a substitute.
3. So the tassel was not magic, but symbolic of righteousness by faith.
- a. These Galileans who were touching the tassel on Jesus' garment were quite aware of what these tassels represented.
 - It was part of their everyday life.
 - They also knew that God would not hear a person who tried to heal people unless that person was righteous.
 - The man who was born blind that Jesus healed shows this was the common understanding of the people.
 - In John 9:30-33 he faced an inquisition from the Jews who were angered about Jesus and as the conversation went on: **The man answered and said to them, "Why, this is a marvelous thing, that you do not know where He is from; yet He has opened my eyes! ³¹ Now we know that God does not hear sinners; but if anyone is a worshiper of God and does His will, He hears him. ³² Since the world began it has been unheard of that anyone opened the eyes of one who was born blind. ³³ If this Man were not from God, He could do nothing."**
 - No doubt, these Galileans who were touching Jesus had a similar understanding.
 - b. When they touched Jesus and were all healed, they knew that He was a righteous man.
 - Touching the tassel was a constant reminder and testimony of that.

B. But of course this has a deeper significance to us now than what the Galileans understood as they touched Jesus.

1. It has now been revealed to us that Jesus fulfills the purification of the whole church to which the ceremonial ordinances of Moses testified.
 - They called for the sacrifice of animals on the altar at Jerusalem, but now Jesus Christ the Son of God Himself has been offered for our sins.
 - By coming to Him in faith now that He has been crucified and raised again, we can be certain that we will be forgiven and accepted through His righteousness.
 - Not only did He perfectly keep the moral law, but He also perfectly fulfilled the law of Moses in offering to God what was required to atone for our sins.
2. The basis of our acceptance with God is represented by the tassel on Jesus' garment.
 - Because He has done all that God commanded for sinners to be accepted through Him, we can be sure that when we come to Him as our righteous Lord and Saviour, we will be fully accepted.
 - By His righteousness, we who have come to Him have all the benefits I have outlined already:
 - By His righteousness, we have full forgiveness and justification by Him as soon as we believe—a perfect and righteous standing before God.
 - He has done the will of God.
 - Therefore, the promise of the New Covenant is of full forgiveness.
 - By His righteousness, we have immediate deliverance from bondage to sin so that it no longer has dominion over us.
 - We are now able to serve God by His grace and power... we are no longer slaves to sin, but slaves to God.
 - Therefore, another promise of the New Covenant is that His law is written on our hearts.
 - By His righteousness, we are also assured of the future eradication of all the sin that remains in us.
 - Once we see Him in glory, we will never sin again, even in the smallest way.
 - By His righteousness, we are assured that our bodies will be raised up incorruptible—completely free of all physical maladies—at the last day.
 - There is no physical malady that He will not cure.

C. When it is all boiled down, there is only one reason not to come to Christ and touch the tassel of His garment...

- It is that you have no interest in becoming righteous.
- You would prefer to die in hell, as far as you can see it now, than to be restored to the living God as your God.
- Spiritual healing bringing forgiveness and eternal life is accessible...
 - Christ has brought it into the world.
 - As many as touch His tassel are made well.
 - And just to be certain that you understand, you touch His tassel simply by trusting in Him to make you righteous—by coming to Him for cleansing from your sin.
 - As many as touch Him are made well.