

DAILY DEVOTION – Tuesday, March 24, 2020

Pastor Kischnick, Grace Lutheran Church, New Albany, IN

HE TOUCHED THE MAN

READING: [Matthew 8:1-4] – “When he came down from the mountainside, large crowds followed him. A man with leprosy came and knelt before him and said, ‘Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean.’ Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. ‘I am willing,’ he said. ‘Be clean!’ Immediately he was cured of his leprosy. Then Jesus said to him, ‘See that you don’t tell anyone. But go, show yourself to the priest and offer the gift Moses commanded, as a testimony to them.’”

It’s obvious that Jesus had failed to get the memo about “social distancing!” He’s a lot closer than six feet. In fact he touches this man who no one was to touch for fear of being not only ritually unclean, but quite possibly infected with a terrible and ultimately fatal disease. Why does he do such a thing?

That poor man hadn’t been touched in a long time: no handshake, no hug, no kiss of affection, no comforting pat on the shoulder, no human interaction in, oh so long! Jesus knowing how important such human contact is to the inner person, he touches this man as a sign of acceptance and love. He does this even before healing the man of his affliction. Humans are made to be *sociable*. We’re made to be *together*.

Isn’t that something we’re missing about now? Keeping even our relatives, friends, and neighbors at a six foot radius is weird and disconcerting. When this virus outbreak has passed us by (and it will!), won’t it be wonderful to shake each other’s hand, give one another a friendly hug, or even touch our own faces! We were made to be *sociable*! We were made to be *together*! We were made for one another.

Did you notice what Jesus tells the leper after healing him? “Tell no one.” Really? Tell no one? After such a life changing and life saving gift he’s to tell no one? Well, Jesus has good reason: this man is under the commands of the law until he is given certification by a priest. He hasn’t been allowed to approach anyone within a stone’s throw for many, many months. His first duty is to go straightaway to the priest and then, having been found whole, he must make the ritual sacrifice of thanksgiving. Only then will he be totally and completely “clean” in the eyes of the community again. Jesus is giving him the entire package, nothing left undone. It’s another sign of Jesus’ love for the man.

What a marvelous Savior we have! He came to make all of us “clean.” The leprosy of sin infects and threatens us all. But, he WAS willing! Willing to take our sin upon himself, to carry our burdens to the cross, and to suffer our punishments that we might be clean in the sight of God, our Heavenly Father. But, to have the whole package, he also poured out his Holy Spirit upon us that we might be brought to faith in Christ Jesus, and so receive fellowship with him and with one another in the Church on earth.

Someone once famously said, "No man is an island." Boy, he had that right. I miss you folks. Texts are good. Emails keep us posted. Telephone calls bring your voice to my ear. But seeing you in person, worshiping our Lord together, laughing and teasing one another – I miss that! So, we'll keep in virtual touch with digital data and plentiful pixels, but we'll pray together that God would soon put this pestilence far from us. We'll thank him for deliverance. And, we'll look forward to once again filling his pews, singing his praises in a divine service, and kneeling at his altar together to receive his Son's body and blood.

Until then, keep us in your prayers as we do you. Keep us abreast of things going on in your lives. And, God be with you until we meet (in person) again!

In His Service,
Pastor Kischnick