

MESSAGE – Being Taken by the Hand

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It's been a long time since I shook someone's hand...nearly 10 months?!?! We've been so acclimated to our current safety precautions, that when I see people shaking hands on a TV show I experience an emotional response:

Hey – what are you doing?!

To

Man...I can't wait til things are back to normal so we can do that.

I had the same reaction with this week's lesson:

Mark 1:29-34

²⁹ As soon as they left the synagogue, they went with James and John to the home of Simon and Andrew. ³⁰ Simon's mother-in-law was in bed with a fever, and they immediately told Jesus about her. ³¹ So he went to her, took her hand and helped her up. The fever left her and she began to wait on them.

³² That evening after sunset the people brought to Jesus all the sick and demon-possessed. ³³ The whole town gathered at the door, ³⁴ and Jesus healed many who had various diseases. He also drove out many demons, but he would not let the demons speak because they knew who he was.

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Did you hear it?

*So he went to her, took her hand and helped her up.*

They had just gotten back to Simon Peter's house from synagogue service. And Jesus was told about Peter's mother-in-law who had a fever. And what happens next is one of those "God is here and very present" moments: Jesus took her hand.

It seems that something happens when Jesus takes the hand....this is a little different understanding that having hands laid upon you.

Which is a wonderful thing: a sign of blessing, or ordination, or healing.

This isn't that.

This is taking her by the hand and lifting her up.

Lifting her from something that had her bogged down: in this instance, a fever which left her unable to participate.

But this isn't the only time this happens:

Mark 5:41 – the synagogue leader's daughter who had died...Jesus said she was only sleeping and went into to her, spoke to her and took her by the hand....

Mark 9:27 – there had been a boy with convulsions....disciples couldn't heal him and Jesus took him by the hand and helped him up

Now from my understanding, and certainly with the situations of germ avoidance we are in now, it was understood that you did not touch someone who was ill.

Not touch lepers – they were to remain separated

Not touch ill

Not touch a dead person – unclean for 7 days

Because that left you unclean

Their brokenness defiled your own wholeness.

But with Jesus that is reversed:

Instead of their brokenness being imparted to him

His wholeness is imparted to them.

His wholeness is imparted to our brokenness

His power is imparted to our weakness

And yes, His life is imparted to our death

It's not just with the ill....

Matthew 14:31 – and then there's Peter....walking on water.....he started to sink – Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him from drowning.

But it's not just Jesus in the flesh who does this, but Jesus does this through others:

Acts 3:7 – Peter says to a lame beggar, I do not have gold nor silver, but what I do have I give you:...and he took him by the hand and lifted him up

Acts 9:41 – Peter prays over Dorcas and says the same thing ...and takes her by the hand and lifts her up.

Now I'm not talking about throwing health safety precautions to the wind, ok?

What I mean that Jesus reaches out through his people to lift people up:

I've seen this through people reaching out to one another...

Listening, praying, being with, sitting with,

As a matter of fact, this is the whole premise of Stephen Ministry.....

The fact of the matter is:

Some of us are facing sorrows and worries

Some of us are dealing with broken dreams

Some of us are wrestling with problems in relationships

Some of us are literally down with illness.

Some of us are sinking in problems

This story – all these stories remind us – that one way or another, Jesus is there.

Reaching out to each one of us.

Offering healing

Bringing hope and wholeness into all of our situations.

I pray you reach out to the hand that it reaching out to you!