

Intentional Contact

Mark 6:53-56

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53 When they had crossed over, they came to land at Gennesaret and beached the boat. 54 As they got out of the boat, people immediately recognized Him. 55 They hurried throughout that vicinity and began to carry the sick on mats to wherever they heard He was. 56 Wherever He would go, into villages, towns, or the country, they laid the sick in the marketplaces and begged Him that they might touch just the tassel of His robe. And everyone who touched it was made well.

Introduction

“Is there a doctor in the house?” – Recognizing the Need and Calling for Help

How do we help those in need in our world?

Exposition

I. We must believe in Jesus’ Power. (Vss. 53-54)

As soon as Jesus and the disciples had landed and secured their boat, the people in the region “immediately” recognized Jesus. Obviously, this is due to the fact that Jesus’ fame was spreading throughout the regions as He preached, healed, and cast out demons. The people of Gennesaret had heard about the power of Jesus and longed to experience it. In many ways, these people demonstrated faith in Jesus, for prior to this arrival in Gennesaret, we have no record of Jesus visiting this region.

As we read this account, it might be hard for us to understand its significance since our present-day situation is so different from that of the people in this passage. Jesus is no longer physically present on earth in His incarnate state. Jesus made it exceedingly clear that his physical departure was for our good, because once He had ascended, He would send the Comforter, the Holy Spirit. This reality may tempt us to downplay the significance of the demonstration of Jesus’ power that we read about in the Gospel of Mark, but it shouldn’t! Jesus’ demonstration of power (particularly in healing and casting out demons) was always pointing to His authority and power in the spiritual realm of life! No clearer example of this can be found than in **Mark 2:10**, when Jesus says, “But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins” – He said to the paralytic – “I say to you, get up, pick your pallet and go home.”

When Jesus physically healed people during his earthly ministry (and even **now** when He chooses to heal according to the prayer of faith and anointing with oil as seen in **James 5:13-20**), we must realize that the purpose is ultimate to affirm his authority and power to deal with our sin sickness. It is to point us to the greatest expression of his power in the forgiveness of our sins!

Restatement – Just as the people in Gennesaret recognized Jesus’ power, we, too, must believe that Jesus is willing and able to save those in desperate need of him.

T.S. – And the need is truly desperate, which brings us to the second point we have to see in this text...

II. We must be urgent in Jesus’ Purpose. (Vss. 55)

As the people recognized Jesus, they appear to know immediately what needed to be done. They saw that the restorer of life and health had come into their region, so they hurried (ran) to gather all the sick in need of healing. There was urgency about their response to Jesus. They didn’t wait. Something about their response makes me think that they heard what Jesus said in **Mark 2:17**: When Jesus heard this, He told them, “Those who are well don’t need a doctor, but the sick do need one. I didn’t come to call the righteous, but sinners.” (Gospel Summary Here – God, Man, Christ, Response)

The people of Gennesaret understood Jesus’ purpose (at least partly). They comprehended that Jesus was a savior for the sick, the poor, and the powerless. They did not question what he had said, but instead, set out with urgency to bring the sick to the Savior. They sought out those who were regarded as lost causes in their society.

Illustration – Lost Causes (Someone Seemingly Beyond Hope or Help)

I don’t believe that Jesus bought into the idea of that people were beyond His help. In fact, it was just such people that He came to redeem and restore! Jesus came for the sick, and He viewed them this way, which is the way that we must view all who have not yet been spiritually healed by Christ. In **2 Corinthians 5:16a**, Paul writes, “From now on, therefore, we regard no one according to the flesh.” We are prone to think about people in the categories of this world -- to think of them as being of a particular race (or generation), or a particular class, or a particular education or economic level. But as Christians, we are called to view people “through the eyes of Christ,” as opposed to the “eyes of the world.” When we do this, we will be urgent in Jesus’ purpose, because we will see people as He sees them, as people in need of Him!

T.S. – So once we have believed in Jesus’ power and embraced Jesus’ purpose with urgency, what are we to do next?

III. We must bring people into Jesus’ Presence. (Vs. 56)

As the crowds recognized Jesus, they rushed to find those who needed Him, but instead of simply reporting the news of Jesus’ arrival in the region, they went to great pains and effort to bring people into contact with Jesus. They did what was necessary for people to have a chance at encountering Jesus. They took risks. They made sacrifices. They were intentional and strategic. And according to the end of verse 56, they were successful. As a needy people encountered a willing and able Savior, everyone who touched him was made well.

At this point, we encounter a tension between our experience and the experience of the disciples among the people of Gennesaret. For them, Jesus was physically present, traveling about the region, and coming into direct, physical contact with those that needed him. Yet, this is not the case for us today. So how are we to bring people into contact with Jesus' presence?

While Jesus is no longer physically present in His incarnate state, we must realize that people still desperately need to be brought into contact with Jesus' presence. Providentially, though, Jesus' presence is now mediated through the Holy Spirit in the life of believers. Malcolm Yarnell, a theology professor at SWBTS, states, "It is the Spirit who now makes the Son present to and within the church." And what did Christ promise the church would do once the Spirit was sent (**Acts 1:8**)? He promised them that they would "receive power when the Holy Spirit" came upon them in order for them to be "His witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

How then must we bring people into Jesus' presence? Through the declaration of Jesus' gospel in the power of the Holy Spirit, who, according to **John 16:8**, "will convict the world about sin, righteousness, and judgment." In other words, the spiritually sick of the world will continue to be brought into the saving presence of Jesus through the Spirit-empowered ministry of the church! As the church is gifted by the Holy Spirit for the work of ministry, the body of Christ, wherein the Spirit of Christ dwells, proclaims and displays the "gospel of the glory of God," and as people encounter Jesus in this proclamation and display, their lives are forever changed!

Conclusion

Big Idea – As we encounter the power of Jesus and the needs of the lost, we must work with urgency and intentionality to bring them together.

Fellow followers of Jesus, as those who believe in His power and behold the needs of the world around us, it is our divine duty to work with an intentional urgency to bring people into a saving encounter with Jesus Christ. We not assume that the spiritually sick are strong enough to bring themselves to the Great Physician. Rather, we, like a search & rescue team, must go find them.

So now, as we close, I have a very practical, easy-to-follow application for this sermon.

- 1) As you exist the sanctuary today, pick up at least one gospel tract before heading to your car. They have been strategically placed throughout the building. Please pick up at least one of these tracts today.
- 2) Take it with you whenever you go somewhere that you will encounter a stranger, whether that is a doctor's office, a restaurant, or shop of some sort. When you speak to that stranger, I want you to ask them how you can pray for them. This works particularly well at a restaurant with your waiter or waitress.

- 3) Be sure to remember their name (write it down if you have to) and pray for them on the spot. If you do this at a restaurant, you can do it as you bless your food.
- 4) As you are getting ready to leave, be sure that you leave the tract for them. Again, following the examples of the restaurant, you can leave the tract with your ticket and a generous tip. A generous tip reflects the generosity of God's grace in the gospel (sacrifice).
- 5) Now, as you leave and you have remembered their name, I want you to share that name with a fellow Christian that can join you in praying for that person. In the next two weeks, make plans on going back to that same place and follow up with the person you gave the tract to, and ask them how the situation that they asked you to pray about is going.

By doing this, or something similar to this, you are intentionally bringing people into contact with the presence of Jesus through the message of His gospel and the deeds of His church.

As we do this, let us trust that God is going to move and spiritually heal all with whom He comes in contact as we believe in Jesus' power and urgently labor to bring the people into His presence!