

Made Perfectly Whole - radio

The scripture for today's sermon is found in Matthew 14:34-36. *“And when they were gone over, they came into the land of Gennesaret. 35 And when the men of that place had knowledge of him, they sent out into all that country round about, and brought unto him all that were diseased; 36 And besought him that they might only touch the hem of his garment: and as many as touched were made perfectly whole”* (Matt. 14:34-36).

Introduction

I want to be made perfectly whole, don't you? I want to know that all my sins are taken away. I want Christ to touch me and I want to touch Him, as these did.

There is a close connection in scripture between sickness and sin. Sickness affects how we feel and our outlook similar to the way sin affects us. When we are sick, we feel weak. We feel anxiety and despair and even fear. Scripture uses physical sickness and healing from it to teach us about our sin condition and salvation from sin.

I've entitled this sermon: “Made perfectly whole.”

- Sickness is a **physical condition**. Sickness mirrors our **spiritual condition**. In scripture, every disease, every plague, every sickness that Jesus healed teaches salvation from sin. He opened blind eyes. He unstopped deaf ears. He made the mute speak. The crippled and lame walked. Lepers were cleansed. Those who were paralyzed carried their beds. A woman bent over, unable to stand up, was made straight. A mother-in-law's fever was cooled. The woman's unclean flow of blood was stopped. The withered hand was restored. Lunatics were put in their right mind. The demon possessed were delivered from satan. The hungry were fed. Infants were blessed. The dead were raised. Jesus Christ healed every physical malady, sickness, disease, and plague of body and mind. All of these ailments describe the condition of

our heart as sinners, a condition from which only Christ can save us! He is the great physician of men's souls. He alone can take away our sin. Jesus said, "The whole do not need a physician. But the sick do." *"I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."* **Listen to what Peter said about how Jesus Christ heals our souls:** *"Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed"* (1 Pet. 2:24). He bore our sins in His own body. By His stripes we were healed. Christ heals our souls from sin by bearing our sins in His own body under the curse of God's law (Gal. 3:13). The purpose for Christ's coming is clearly explained here: to heal us from the sickness of sin. How He does that is clearly explained by this one verse: He bore our sins in His own body, carrying them up to the cross, suffering the punishment of God against those sins in Himself. He took the beating my sins deserved!

- Jesus healed all who had need of healing (Luke 9:11). Christ saves all who have a need. Having a need to be healed from sin is a gift of God's saving grace. Jesus told the Pharisees, *"If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth"* (John 9:41). **Needing Christ is the gift of God and the sign of life!** He heals all who have a need.
- Christ healed all who came to Him for healing. None were turned away. Can you find one case in all of the NT where Jesus turned away a sick person or a needy sinner?! He said, *"Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out"* (John 6:37)! If you come needy in all of your sin, He will not cast you out!
- Jesus healed multitudes. **He saves untold millions from their sin** (Rev. 5:11)
- Christ healed all manner of sickness, He takes away and forgives every sort of sin and sin of every degree, whether small and great. *"For thy name's sake, O LORD, pardon mine iniquity; for it is **great**"* (Ps. 25:11).
- Some in Jesus's day had one kind of sickness and some another. Like sheep, every one of us have turned to our own way. **Each one of us have a special bent toward evil that is uniquely our own. But know this: Christ alone can make us whole.** He came to save sinners!

- In Jesus' day, each person usually was healed of only one illness. But each of us have the full combination of every sin in our heart. Every sickness described in the Gospels is in each one of us in totality. **We are spiritually blind**: our natural heart is unable to see and know God in Jesus Christ. **We are deaf**. We cannot hear the truth of the Gospel. We **cannot speak**. Because the truth of Christ is not in our heart, there is no abundance of Christ out of which we can speak the Gospel (Matt. 12:34). **We are plagued in heart** (1 Kings 8:38). **We are unclean before God** because of our sin (Isa. 1:18; 1 Jn. 1:7). We are **withered, lame, crippled and paralyzed**. We cannot do the will of God. We are bowed down by the weight of our guilt under God's law and cannot lift ourselves up. **We have a fever**. God's law condemns our guilty conscience with scorching heat. **We are in darkness, under the deception of satan**. We are deceived concerning God, concerning ourselves and concerning His salvation. And **we are dead in sins**. We are unable to perform any functions of spiritual life. Our disease is not limited to a single sickness. Sin has affected our entire body, nature and soul. Though most whom Christ healed had but one affliction, we are guilty of every sin, and have a nature full of sin!
- All those healed by Christ had a condition that only He could heal. **There is nothing a man can do to save himself. Christ alone can save me from my sin.**
- All whom Jesus healed were made perfectly whole. Naaman's skin was made fresh like a child's. The blind saw all things clearly. The lame man went walking and leaping and praising God. The high priest found no uncleanness on the leper that Jesus cleansed. The bowed together woman was made straight. The paralyzed man carried his bed. The deaf man with a speech impediment both heard and spoke clearly. The man's withered hand was restored as the other. **Christ cleanses us from all sin** (1 Jn. 1:7; Lev. 16:30). **He covers with His own righteousness** (Isa. 54:17; 61:10). God finds no sin in His people. He sees only the perfect righteousness of His own beloved Son, with whom He is well-pleased. "*Thou art all fair my love; I see no spot in thee*" (Song 4:7; Jer. 50:20; 1 John 1:7).

How the Lord Jesus healed sick people in the Gospels shows how He saves sinners from their sin.

- Jesus healed by His will. The leper said, “*If **thou wilt**, thou canst make me clean. Jesus said, ‘**I will**, be thou clean’*” (Matt. 8:2). Christ is the absolute sovereign. He must will my salvation. He said, “*I will.*” He **is** willing to save. He is able to save. He alone can save. I must come to Him as guilty, with no excuse, owning my sin as all my fault. I sin against clear revelation. Sin is **all** my fault and Christ is absolutely sovereign. Therefore, I have only one plea: have mercy on me, THE sinner (Luke 18:13)! **Find reason, O Lord, in yourself, to pardon and cleanse me by your sovereign grace!**
- Jesus healed by His word. All creation leaped out of nothing into perfect completion at His command. “*Where the word of the king is, there is power*” (Eccl. 8:4)! He upholds all things by the power of His word (Heb. 1:3). **The Gospel is the power of God unto salvation** (Rom. 1:16). He must speak His Gospel to our heart. He must command the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in Christ to shine in us (2 Cor. 4:6). Jesus is the Word of God. We are saved by Him only. **His word** alone is the power of God unto salvation.

He healed by His touch

- At Gennesaret, they went throughout the whole region and carried sick people to Jesus. They begged Him to touch the hem of His garment. All who touched were made perfectly whole.
- Question: How was Jesus able to heal sinful people? Could He have continued on earth, healing and raising the dead, without going to the cross? No. We have a sin problem. **God has been offended!** Our **sin is against God.** God must receive His due. “*He will by no means clear the guilty*” (Ex. 34:6-8). God’s law must also be honored. Full obedience must be rendered. His justice must be compensated. The guilty must be punished. Man failed to glorify God. “*All have sinned and come short of the glory of God*” (Rom. 3:23). Therefore, before any man can be healed or raised to life from the dead, God must be honored by perfect, continuous obedience in heart, mind,

soul and strength. And He must receive full satisfaction for sin (Heb. 10:5-ff). For God to be just and forgive a man's sin, Christ must take that man's sin and die under God's curse for it as that sinner's substitute.

Sin cannot be dealt with apart from the cross of Christ. **Grace in the heart without Christ on the cross cannot save.** It is not the work of grace in you that makes you righteous before God. It is only the work of Christ for you (Rom. 8:34). Christ could not heal men by coming to earth only, without dying. Only the death of a substitute could take away sin. If God could have made men righteous by infusing grace into them, then Christ died for nothing. God would never afflict His Son needlessly. God required His death. Therefore, God could not save one sinner unless Christ died for them! *"If righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain"* (Gal. 2:21). Our personal obedience to God's law cannot put away sin. It cannot clear the guilty. It cannot make us righteous. Christ **must** die!

This is the crux of the matter. There is only one way God's justice can be satisfied. There is only one way God can justify the ungodly. Christ must die as our Substitute. Christ had to take the place of those He saved. He must be holy in His person. He must be holy in His life. He must obey all that God's law required of man. And after yielding perfect obedience, He must bear the punishment for all of the sins of all those He came to save! God removed His people's sins from them. He laid them on Christ. Jesus Christ did no sin and was not guilty of any sin, yet He was *"made sin for us"* (2 Cor. 5:21). He is holy. He had no sin. He did no sin. Yet God made Him to be sin for us. Christ became guilty. He was not only guilty of our sins, but He was affected by our sins. He experienced the agony of our sin. He took our infirmities and therefore knew *"the feeling of our infirmity"* (Heb. 4:15). His soul was made an offering for sin (Isa. 53:10). He carried the sins of His people in His own body up to the tree. The flood of God's wrath came into His soul. He drank the cup of the indignation of the wrath of God. **He drank damnation dry.** All that God's law required to be poured out on sinners was poured upon Him in His body and soul. He was wounded for our

transgressions. He was bruised for our iniquities. The chastisement of our peace was upon Him (Isa. 53:5). With His stripes we were healed. He Himself bore our infirmities. He took our sorrows (pain), our griefs (our sin-diseases). He bore them in Himself. Thus, **Christ heals the sin of His people by His touch.** When scripture says Christ touched someone to heal them, it means that He took their sin to Himself. He owned it as His before God. And He answered God for it. “*Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses*” (Matt. 8:17).

What Jesus did to heal any, teaches us what He must do to save us from our sins. Jesus touched the blind man. He touched the leper. He put His finger into the ears of the deaf. He touched the tongue of the mute. He put His hands on the woman bowed together. He touched the coffin of the widow’s dead son. Why? Because His touch is His compassion towards sinners. There is no way to adequately describe the compassion of Christ towards sinners. A touch calms; it soothes and comforts. How many times did your mother, by her touch, comfort you as a child? Even grown men welcome their mother’s tender compassion. Babies are said to recover more quickly and more completely if they are held. Christ’s touch was a touch of compassion. Compassion means to be affected with the same feeling as another, to sympathize with them. Compassion is a tender concern of sympathetic sorrow for someone who is suffering, coupled with urgent aid given to relieve them. Compassion towards the guilty is mercy freely granted to forgive and spare them of the punishment they deserve. When you or I have compassion, there is little more that we can do than convey our deepest sympathy. But Christ’s compassion was vicarious. He not only felt the feeling of our infirmity, He took it from us so that it was no more ours but His. He was affected by it. He was plagued (stricken) by God (Isa. 53:4; Ps. 73:14). His touch was a touch of compassion, but it was a compassion with power to relieve. His power to relieve suffering came at a great cost. He bore the full cost to heal us from our sin in His own person. He suffered the stroke of God (smitten). He was afflicted. He felt anguish (sorrows) of soul. He suffered. He was forsaken. He died. He experienced the full payback for

sin that God required in His law against guilty sinners. He cried, “*My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken me!?*” In Gethsemane, before any man laid hands on Him, He “*began to be sore amazed, and to be very heavy; And saith unto them (disciples), My soul is exceeding sorrowful unto death*” (Mark. 14:33-34). In Luke 22 He prayed that if it were possible, the cup of suffering would be removed from Him. “*Being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground*” (Luke 22:44). Bloody sweat from the heat of the holy eye of God and His wrath against sin. He who is the beloved of the Father prayed: “If there is any other way, O my Father, take this cup from me!” He who is well-pleasing in His Father’s sight and who is always heard, prayed to Him with whom nothing is impossible. But it was not possible. He could only take away our sin by bearing it in Himself under God’s just wrath (Gal. 2:21)! He who had compassion on men’s bodies and souls, asked if there was any other way that this “cup” of God’s indignation against sin could be taken from Him. There was not. He therefore felt all of the consequences of sin and its punishment in His body and soul. He knew sin’s guilt. In Psalm 40:12 He says, “*Mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up; they are more than the hairs of mine head: therefore my heart faileth me*” (Psalm 40:12)! Do **I** see how Christ was affected by **my** sins?! Do you? He said, “*O God, thou knowest my foolishness; and my sins are not hid from thee*” (Psalm 69:5). He cries, “*My loins are filled with a loathsome disease: and there is no soundness in my flesh*” (Ps. 38:7). Christ healed by His touch. His compassion moved Him to stand in the place of those He healed. **To heal any, He must bear their sins.** Matthew 8:16-17 says, He “*...healed all that were sick: **17** That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, **Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses***” (Matt. 8:16-17). 1 Peter 2:24 says, “*Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed*” (1 Pet. 2:24).

He healed all who touched Him

Jesus not only touched sinners to heal them, but He healed all who touched Him. **When any touched Christ, it meant that that person came into contact with Him in a way that His virtue entered into them.** This is what happened to the woman who had an issue of blood twelve years (Matt. 9:20-22). She came behind Him in the crowd, in the press. She touched the hem of His garment. When she did, virtue left Christ and entered into her (Luke 6:19; 8:46). The issue of her blood stopped. She felt in herself that she had been made whole. Here, in Matt. 14:36, all those who were sick begged Jesus to touch only the hem of His garment. And all who touched were made perfectly whole. What does this teach? It teaches us that when we come to Christ, when by the Spirit of God we are enabled to believe Him, we behold and receive in ourselves the effects of His salvation.

Numbers 15:38-40 illustrates how touching Christ's garments heals. God commanded the men of Israel to make fringes in the borders of their garments. He said to Moses,

"38 Speak unto the children of Israel, and bid them that they make them fringes in the borders of their garments throughout their generations, and that they put upon the fringe of the borders a ribband of blue: 39 And it shall be unto you for a fringe, that ye may look upon it, and remember all the commandments of the LORD, and do them; and that ye seek not after your own heart and your own eyes, after which ye use to go a whoring: 40 That ye may remember, and do all my commandments, and be holy unto your God" (Numbers 15:38-40).

The blue band on the fringe of their garment reminded them of God's commandments that they were to keep to be holy before God. But since no man can be holy by his personal obedience to God's law (Rom. 3:20), this scripture is only fulfilled in Christ, and in all who believe Him (Jer. 23:6;

33:16; Rom. 8:3-4; 10:4). Christ honored God's law by keeping it. He honored God's law by enduring its punishment. By His union with His people, He stood in their place before God. All that God requires of believers has been met by Christ's obedience unto death. All that He did is theirs (1 Cor. 1:30). In Luke 24, Jesus came to two on the road to Emmaus. And "*beginning at Moses and all the prophets, expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself*" (Luke 24:25-27). **Therefore, all things in the OT ultimately point to Christ.** The blue ribbon on the fringe of their garments reminded Israel what God required them to do to be holy. In fulfillment of this law, Christ made Himself holy as our High Priest. He sanctified Himself and sanctified His people. In His high priestly prayer in John 17:19 He prayed to His Father on behalf of His people: "***for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth***" (John 17:19). How did He sanctify Himself? By doing the will of His Father. His Father's **will** was that He take the sins of His people and offer Himself in suffering and death under God's law with their sins made His very own (1 Pet. 2:24; Heb. 10:1-18; Ps. 40:6-12; Ps. 69:1-7). It was by His obedience to this will of God (as their covenant head and Testator) that Christ sanctified His people. "***By the which will we are sanctified by the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once -- in time, for all time and eternity***" (Heb. 10:10). This is the truth of the Gospel. This is the truth by which Christ's people are sanctified. Jesus Christ sanctified Himself to God for His people. And they are sanctified in Him. The truth by which believers are sanctified is the truth of the Gospel, because it declares how Christ sanctified His people by offering Himself to God. Believing this truth honors God's justice and truth. It sanctifies the believing heart (Acts 26:18).

As the hem on the garment reminded Israel what God required them to do to be holy, the hem of Christ's garment signifies what He must do by His obedience in life and death to make His people holy (Philippians 2:6-8). He did not live for Himself. He obeyed God to establish everlasting righteousness for His people. He did not die for Himself. He died with the sins of His people to satisfy God in justice and put away their sins (2 Cor.

5:21; Isa. 53:4-5; Ps. 40:12). He suffered and died with the guilt of those sins under the curse of God. He repaid their debt to God's justice in their place by substituting Himself as their Surety (Gen. 44:18-34; Heb. 7:22).

We thus see the significance of touching the hem of Christ's garment. **First**, He touches us. His compassion moves Him to heal sin-sick souls. He answered for them all. He finished the will of God. His obedience to God's will is our righteousness. And, by His touch, He gives us life and faith in Himself. In His touch we see that He bore our sins before God. **In the second place**, we touch Him by the faith that He gives. All who are made to know the sickness of their sin come and take of Christ by faith. They receive His virtue. They receive the knowledge of the forgiveness of their sins. The plague of their sin is taken away. When you or I are enabled to touch Christ by faith, we receive the virtue of His obedience unto death. We know the forgiveness of sins in our conscience, by faith in His blood. He has made us holy by offering Himself to God. We stand on this by faith. He perfected us forever. His word tells us and believe it in our hearts. We are comforted by His compassion. By touching Him, we have "*joy and peace in believing*" (Rom. 15:13).

All who touched the hem of Christ's garments were made perfectly whole. It is His righteousness that makes us perfectly whole before God. As Ruth asked Boaz to spread his skirt over her, faith comes to Christ to find Him to be our covering.

Isaiah 61:10 says it all: "*I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels*" (Isa. 61:10").