

Coming to Our Senses: Week Two

The Sense of Touch

Exploring various textures – smooth, silky, rough, coarse – heightens our awareness of the richness in God’s created order. We experience both pleasure and pain through the sense of touch. And sometimes, we experience numbness. How might pleasure, pain, and numbness inform our spiritual journey? How does our sense of touch protect us from harm, or make us vulnerable to it?



The Psalm

Read Isaiah 61:1-6 aloud:

The spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me;
 he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted,
 to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners;
 to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor, and the day of vengeance of our God;
 to comfort all who mourn;
 to provide for those who mourn in Zion— to give them a garland instead of ashes,
 the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit.
 They will be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, to display his glory.
 They shall build up the ancient ruins, they shall raise up the former devastations;
 they shall repair the ruined cities, the devastations of many generations.
 Strangers shall stand and feed your flocks,
 foreigners shall till your land and dress your vines;
 but you shall be called priests of the Lord, you shall be named ministers of our God;
 you shall enjoy the wealth of the nations, and in their riches you shall glory.

The Miracle: Mark 5:21-43 – A Healing Touch

When Jesus had crossed again in the boat to the other side, a great crowd gathered around him; and he was by the sea. Then one of the leaders of the synagogue named Jairus came and, when he saw him, fell at his feet and begged him repeatedly, “My little daughter is at the point of death. Come and lay your hands on her, so that she may be made well, and live.”

So he went with him. And a large crowd followed him and pressed in on him. Now there was a woman who had been suffering from hemorrhages for twelve years. She had endured much under many physicians, and had spent all that she had; and she was no better, but rather grew worse. She had heard about Jesus, and came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak, for she said, “If I but touch his clothes, I will be made well.” Immediately her hemorrhage stopped; and she felt in her body that she was healed of her

disease. Immediately aware that power had gone forth from him, Jesus turned about in the crowd and said, "Who touched my clothes?" And his disciples said to him, "You see the crowd pressing in on you; how can you say, 'Who touched me?'" He looked all around to see who had done it. But the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came in fear and trembling, fell down before him, and told him the whole truth. He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace, and be healed of your disease."

While he was still speaking, some people came from the leader's house to say, "Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the teacher any further?" But overhearing what they said, Jesus said to the leader of the synagogue, "Do not fear, only believe." He allowed no one to follow him except Peter, James, and John, the brother of James. When they came to the house of the leader of the synagogue, he saw a commotion, people weeping and wailing loudly. When he had entered, he said to them, "Why do you make a commotion and weep? The child is not dead but sleeping." And they laughed at him. Then he put them all outside, and took the child's father and mother and those who were with him, and went in where the child was. He took her by the hand and said to her, "Talitha cum," which means, "Little girl, get up!" And immediately the girl got up and began to walk about (she was twelve years of age). At this they were overcome with amazement. He strictly ordered them that no one should know this, and told them to give her something to eat.

Questions for Reflection

1. Compare the way Jairus approached Jesus with the way the hemorrhaging woman approached him. How are they similar, and how are their approaches different?
2. The crowd was pressing in on every side, yet Jesus could tell that someone's touch had drawn power from him. What are some ways we draw power from Jesus today?
3. Jesus took his three closest disciples to Jairus' house. Who are the three people you would trust to go with you in ministry?
4. Have you, or someone you know, ever experienced dramatic healing? What was that like?

The Spiritual Practice of Service

In Matthew 20:25-28, Jesus tells his disciples, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them. *Not so with you.*" ... Instead, Jesus tells us, "Whoever would be great among you must be your servant, ... even as the Son of Man came not to be served, but to serve."

Service is closely connected to the virtue of humility. "Nothing *disciplines* the inordinate desires of the flesh like service, and nothing *transforms* the desires of the flesh like serving in hidden-ness," writes Richard Foster.

This week, as you look for opportunities to serve others, notice how you are changed when you make a point of serving in humility. Find someone to touch with kindness, someone to serve without expectation of gratitude or recognition. Ask God to open your heart to the needs around you, and show you how you might be of service to someone else.