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Rev. Kazuya Ishida

“All who touched it were healed”.

Mark 6:56

And wherever he went—into villages, towns or countryside—they placed the sick in the marketplaces. They begged him to let them touch even the edge of his cloak, and all who touched it were healed.

The sick were laid out in the square, and Jesus walked through the square, and people were healed just by touching the tassels on the edges of his robe. Jesus had the power to heal people just by touching them. The people knew this. In Mark 5, a woman who had been suffering from long-standing blood for 12 years secretly touched Jesus' robe from behind and was healed. Had people heard the rumors? In villages, towns, villages, or countryside, the sick were brought to Jesus. And they were all healed.

Are we asking Jesus to heal us? I am healthy, so I don't need it. I am fine for now. My life is going well, I am satisfied with my daily life. I can manage on my own. Is that how you feel?

When you think things are going well, you are not likely to ask for help from anyone. Instead, we are confident that we can move forward, and up.

But let us consider this. We all cannot live by our own strength alone, can we? There is a limit to my power. Even when I think I am strong, I am sometimes made aware of my weakness. Even when I think I am fine, I never know when my health will fail. I cannot always and forever think that I will be able to manage on my own.

For example, how are we spending our time in the heat this summer? Even just being outside for a little while during the day, we feel like we are going to faint. Therefore, we take various measures to prevent ourselves from collapsing. We try to avoid going outside as

much as possible, use air conditioner, put up a parasol when going outside, drink plenty of water, and rest, eat, and sleep well when we get back home.

We do our best to take measures to protect ourselves.

In this way we try to protect ourselves somehow, but even so, we can get sick, fall ill, or have an unexpected accident and get injured.

I myself fell a little sick about a week ago, probably due to the summer heat and fatigue. When this happens, I ask God for help. I would pray, “God, please heal me,” “Please restore me, give me strength,” “Please help me to get well so that I can live my life as usual.”

As we pray like that, we are reminded of our weakness, helplessness, and misery.

Today is the welfare service for the handicapped. Are we handicapped people? Are we able-bodied people?

None of us is perfect. We all have physical differences. We have differences in our abilities. We have weaknesses and strengths. For children, they have immaturity. As we age, we will have decline. No matter who we are, we will never not get sick, we will never not get injured, and most of us will experience physical disability during our lives.

In this light, I believe that we, all of us, are beings who are alive today because someone helped us, that we need help from the Lord God more than anyone else, that we are living our lives supported by the Lord right now, and that we, who are weak, need to ask Jesus for healing. If we ask, Jesus is the One who can give healing.

Let’s look at Jesus’ healing work. Mark 2.

In a place called Capernaum, a man with a gout was brought to Jesus, carried by four men. Then Jesus said to him;

Mark 2:5.

When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralyzed man, “Son, your sins are forgiven.”

And then he continued, **chapter 2, verses 11-12.**

“I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home.” He got up, took his mat and walked out in full view of them all. This amazed everyone and they praised God, saying, “We have never seen anything like this!”

A man with a crippling disease called gout was healed. He got up and started walking. The people were amazed and praised God, saying, “We have never seen anything like this before”.

Next comes the incident in Mark 5, where a woman had been suffering from long-standing blood for 12 years.

Mark 5:27-29.

When she heard about Jesus, she came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak, because she thought, “If I just touch his clothes, I will be healed.” Immediately her bleeding stopped and she felt in her body that she was freed from her suffering.

The healed woman immediately wanted to leave, but Jesus looked around and said, “Who touched me?” and the woman bowed down before Him in fear. Then Jesus said,

Chapter 5, verse 34.

He said to her, “Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your suffering.”

This time, a woman suffering from long-standing blood stopped bleeding and was healed when she touched Jesus. The healing of the man with the gout and the healing of the woman with the long-suffering blood, these two events show that Jesus is indeed the one who can bring healing. Another thing we know is that those who seek healing have faith.

In the case of the healing of the man with the gout, it was not the person himself, but his friends who sought healing and had faith to ask the Lord for help.

“When Jesus saw their faith, He said to the man with the gout, “Son, your sins are forgiven.”

And in the case of the woman with the long-standing blood, she had faith herself and asked Jesus for help. Jesus said to her, “Daughter, your faith has saved you. Go in peace. Do not suffer, but be in good health.”

The friends of the man with the gout and the woman with the long-standing blood did not seek Jesus’ help just to be cured of their illness.

In their illness, in the weakness as man, they were reminded of the essential weakness of man, and their previous high-mindedness was shattered. They came to the faith that man cannot live except by the power of God, and they gave up, of course, living by their own strength and stopped relying on others. They simply humbled themselves before Jesus, and with faith, they asked for His help, sought His power, and hung on to His love and mercy.

Jesus certainly healed the sick. But the essence of Jesus’ healing work was to see the person’s faith in the Lord and to offer forgiveness for the sin of having lived selfishly, relying on one’s own strength until then.

When people face their weaknesses, they are shown their previous sinfulness and have faith in Jesus. Trusting in their own strength and confident that they can do it on their own, a life without the need of Jesus is transformed into a life of faith.

If we are aware of our weaknesses and experience healing through Jesus, we will be surrounded by His warm love and be led into a wondrous peace. At the same time, we will be convinced of the peace that Jesus gives us, and entrust ourselves into the hands of His love. We will be reminded that from now on we will not live by our

own strength, but by the strength of Jesus. That is the true healing that is available to us.

It is through illness, through physical weakness and infirmity that we are taught to humble ourselves before the Lord. This is because we are forced to abandon the power, confidence, and self-centered lifestyle we previously possessed. We are asked what we had been relying on, what we had been trusting in, and what we had been valuing.

And once again, it makes us to think about what is really important to us and what we are living by.

We realize. We turn to the Lord God, we seek a right relationship with Him, and we ask Him for healing. And we are healed.

Mark 6:56

And wherever he went—into villages, towns or countryside—they placed the sick in the marketplaces. They begged him to let them touch even the edge of his cloak, and all who touched it were healed.

The healed sick people must have been filled with joy and gratitude for being kept alive by the Lord and touched by Jesus' mercy and great love. And they would have continued to live thereafter, filled with gratitude and joy.

If that is the case, then rather than those who live their lives thinking that they are healthy, free from any inconvenience, able to do as they please, and able to live comfortably on their own, living the life of so-called abled person, those who are so-called disabled, admit their weakness, ask the Lord for help, and are kept alive by the Lord, are the ones who are truly in the Lord, healthy, and know true freedom, and know the true meaning of life, and they are living a life filled with true joy.

To be healed by Jesus may mean to be surrounded by God's love. I thought of this as I read Tomihiro Hoshino's poem.

As many of you know, Tomihiro Hoshino was seriously injured during a physical education class he was teaching as a junior high school teacher, and his limbs were crippled. However, he left behind wonderful poems and paintings using a brush in his mouth.

I would like to introduce a poem by Tomihiro Hoshino titled “Beloved. “I am loved”

God loves me at all times, that’s what I think.

Where I can reach out my hand and reach you
Where I can hear you when I call you

When I cannot sleep, you are there in my pillow.

We have a fear that if we don’t immediately move our bodies and do this, that, or the other, we won’t be recognized for our worth or our existence, but Tomihiro Hoshino has no fear or anxiety.

He has the peace of knowing that God loves him.

“God loves me in every moment.”

Tomihiro Hoshino’s poetry teaches us the image of those who are healed by the Lord and kept alive by Him.

I believe that Jesus also continued his healing work so that people could live their lives thinking “God loves me”. The Lord God is the one who heals us and embraces us with His love.

Psalm 147:3.

**“He heals the brokenhearted
and binds up their wounds.”**

It is not just the people of Jesus’ time. People from Old Testament times and even today need the healing and love of the Lord God.

Despite their need for the Lord God’s healing and love, sinful mankind still tries to solve their problems by themselves, trying hard to strengthen their own strength or rely on something else, but they are unable to solve their problems and continue to suffer and struggle even more.

Jesus Christ is the One who came to this world as the Savior of mankind, who has missed the point.

Isaiah 53:4, first half.

**Surely he took up our pain
and bore our suffering,**

Jesus came to save us because of our sinfulness that the harder we try to do something about it, the more we are separated from God. Jesus came close to me, Jesus bore my sickness, Jesus bore my pain. To be saved by Jesus, to be healed by Jesus, all we need to do is to ask Jesus, who came to help us. To expose our weakness, to ask Jesus to bear my sickness, to bear my pain, and to ask for healing. And to ask for healing.

II Corinthians 12:9, second half.

Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me.

For us to be healed, we must put aside our pretended strength and boast in the weakness that is in us.

But it is not easy for us to put aside our strength and expose our weakness. So Jesus also teaches.

Mark 9:43-47.

"If your hand causes you to stumble, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life maimed than with two hands to go into hell, where the fire never goes out.

And if your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life crippled than to have two feet and be thrown into hell.

And if your eye causes you to stumble, pluck it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into hell,

Jesus said, “Do not rely on your own strength. Be aware of your own weakness. If you are not aware of your weakness, cut off your hands, cut off your feet, and gouge out your eyes. This is how important it is for us to know our weaknesses.

In our sinfulness, we always think about how strong or admirable we are. We think about who is the best compared to others. We are like Jesus’ disciples. But what about when we come into contact with those who are vulnerable in this world, such as young children, the elderly with physical disabilities, the handicapped, and children with disabilities? Don’t you feel as if you naturally recognize your weakness as well?

Henri Nauen, a Catholic priest, spent the last 10 years of his life at L’Arche Daybreak, an institution where people with intellectual disabilities live together. He wrote about his encounter with a young man named Adam.

The book is titled *Adam, God’s Beloved Child*.

Nauen says that Adam, a young man with a disability, looked like Jesus Christ. Through Adam, he came to know God, and though Jesus actually lived on earth long ago, he felt through Adam’s presence that Jesus was now with him, living in the same time period.

In the spirit of the L’Arche community, people with intellectual disabilities are also said to possess the qualities of hospitality, curiosity, spontaneity, and candor, and are living witnesses who remind those around them of the essential values of the heart.

Jesus Christ did not come wrapped in power and strength. He came clothed in weakness. And the young Adam, too, had no heroic qualities and was not associated with what the newspapers would write about as a superior person. Yet, Nauen is convinced that Adam was chosen to witness God’s love through his own brokenness.

Nauen says,

Like all of us, Adam was a human being with limitations. He carried even greater limitations than most people, and he could not express himself in words. But he was also a full human being and a blessed man.

Because of Adam, we have become aware of a part of God's unconditional love. Adam's presence and value illuminated us and helped us to understand that we are precious children of God, blessed and loved like him.

Adam was sent to bring the gospel to the world. He was to proclaim the mystery, "I am the precious, perfect, beloved one born of God." Adam bore silent witness to this mystery. Adam was simply there. Adam was a true teacher and a true healer. Most of his healing was internal healing, announcing peace, courage, joy, and freedom to those who had difficulty accepting their wounds.

And Nauen himself experiences healing. Nauen confesses.

I began my communal life at L'Arche thinking, at first, that it was extremely obvious who had disabilities and who did not. However, as I lived with them together day by day, the boundaries became less and less clear.

I also need help and in my life, and through my self-examination, I began to think about my emotional poverty, my inability to pray, my restlessness, my anxiety and fear, and that I, too, had a disability in a new way, though it was difficult to see.

In this loving and caring environment, where competition, the art of outsmarting others, and the pressure of fame did not exist, I experienced something I had not seen or experienced before.

I was able to face my weakness. I was experiencing a deep human struggle. It was a struggle to believe that I was loved, even when I had nothing to be proud of.

Through living with Adam, a young man with intellectual disabilities, Nauen became aware of his own weakness and invisible disability, experienced a deep human struggle, and then was healed and came to the love of God.

Perhaps we too need such an experience. But we do not need to go to L'Arche, Canada like Nauen did.

Tsuchiura Megumi Church has Karashidane (a mustard seed). Several children gather there every day. I think it is really a blessing that there is a place called "Karashidane" in the church and that there is a ministry there.

I hope you have read "Living Together" which was distributed last week and contains a picture of Director Kanao smiling. It contains a report on the work of Karashidane as well as his fantasy for the future.

Since we are here, we would like to share it with you.

Thank you for always remembering the steps of the "Karashidane" and for your prayers and support. Thank you for your support, we have successfully completed the first semester and are now ready for the summer vacation. From 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., we have been devising various programs (curry, dumplings, pizza, bread making, nostalgic "mustard second," visits to staffs' homes, etc., and of course, homework) and spending time together in a friendly atmosphere.

On August 13, we took a day off from the Karashidane program to have a staff training session. The theme was "Toward a New Karashidane as a work in Christ.

First, we shared testimonies of "forgiveness" and "forgiven" with each other, and tasted the grace of "forgiveness" and "forgiven. Next, each of us wrote on a post-it on the white board our fantasies of "I wish I had a Karashidane like this! (Some of the wishes were written by the children)" and classified them.

The major categories were: (1) I wish there would be a building or space like such in the near future. (2) I wish there would be such a thing or facility in the near future. (3) I wish there would be a program like this in the near future. (4) I wish there would be such a place in the future (5) I wish there would be such a person in the future (6) I hope I will be able to work like this in the future (7) Although not specific, I hope I can work like this in the future.

It was a fun time with a total of 70 fantasies (no money, free ideas, no responsibility). Please pray that their fantasies will not turn into a runaway and that they will come true.”

Please pray for the work of Karashidane so that our delusions will not turn into runaway delusions, but into reality. We also hope that we can be a part of the work of Karashidane.

Karashidane is a healing space. It is a place where we can be healed when we touch the children and staff, a place where we can see the children and staff loved by God, and a place where we can realize that we, too, are simply loved.

It is my fantasy that Karashidane will continue to be such a Karashidane. I hope that the healing power that Karashidane brings will continue to spread to the church and to the community.