

## **Jesus' Hands**

**By Paul R. Blake**

"And behold, a leper came and worshiped Him, saying, 'Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean.' Then Jesus put out His hand and touched him, saying, 'I am willing; be cleansed.' Immediately his leprosy was cleansed" (Matt. 8:2-3).

Hands say a lot about a person. A man who farms or works in construction has rough hands worn from years of hard labor. Surgeons have strong delicate hands allowing them to perform intricate surgeries. Pianists amaze us with the dexterity of long slender fingers producing masterful pieces of music.

What did the hands of our Lord look like? He was raised a carpenter's son, so his hands would be strong and rough textured. He spent a great deal of time outdoors, so they would be dry and browned by the sun. He was not fastidious about his appearance, so his nails would not be manicured. Not what you expected?

Beauty is what beauty does, not what beauty looks like. Lepers were outcasts; non-lepers refused to come near them, let alone touch them, even though leprosy is not communicable in the typical sense. The worst part of the disease was the isolation and rejection by everyone including family. God created man to long for companionship with others. Touch is one of the first sensations we experience in life; it brings comfort and security. Leprosy takes all of that away, because no one will touch you. When Jesus reached out his hand and touched the leper, He gave that poor beggar more than a healing for his body; He showed him the true meaning of godly compassion. His hands touched lepers!

His hands touched 12 pair of dirty feet when He washed the disciples' feet at the Passover. His hands touched street urchin children when He blessed them; who knows where they had been playing! His hands reached out to save Peter in his weak, sinful doubt as he was sinking into the sea. Hands that were rough, strong, dry, sun baked, dirty from handling lepers, feet, and children playing in the street... it's not about what they look like in medieval paintings or our misguided imaginations; it's about what they did. The hands of Jesus preached compassion, humility, kindness, and forgiveness. "By the wood of the cross the work of the word of God was made manifest to all; His hands are stretched out to gather all men together" (Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, c. 175).

We are all of the above: leprous with sin, unclean as dirty feet, unkempt street children, doubting disciples; we all need the hands of Jesus to offer love and forgiveness to us. "Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth. To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood" (Rev. 1:5).

Should I be found faithful and enter heaven, I want to be able to be able to walk up to Jesus, reach out to clasp His hands, and feel His hands grip mine in return. I want to hold the hands that touched a leper, that washed Judas' feet, that tried to carry the rough wood of His cross, hands that left heaven and worked 33 years on earth to save me from the sins I committed with my own hands. I will know then that I am at home. It's not about what His hands will look like, but what His hands did that brought me there.

Look at your hands and consider, not what they look like, but rather: What have they done? What are they doing? What will you do with them in the name of the Lord?

### **The Smell of Heaven**

"Oh, how I love Your law! It is my meditation all the day." (Psalm 119:97) "Through Your precepts I get understanding; therefore I hate every false way. Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path" (Psalm 119:104-105). John Bunyan wrote his immortal allegory "Pilgrim's Progress" after mastering the Scriptures and sensing that God had spoken to him again and

again through its pages. He said, "Although you may have no commentaries at hand, continue to read the Word and pray; for a little from God is better than a great deal received from a man. Too many are content to listen to what comes from men's mouths, without searching and kneeling before God to know the real truth. That which we receive directly from the Lord through the study of His Word is from the 'minting house' itself. Even old truths are new if they come to us with the smell of heaven upon them." (From Bible Illustrator) Let us open our eyes and behold wondrous things from God's holy word.

### **A Moments Homespun Wisdom**

- A good neighbor doubles the worth of a house.
- If you really want to know about the troubles a church is having, ask someone who hasn't been to services in a couple of months.
- Before criticizing your wife's faults, remember it may have been those defects that prevented her from getting a better husband than the one she married.
- Gratitude unlocks the fullness of life. It can turn a meal into a feast, a house into a home, and a stranger into a friend.
- What makes resisting temptation difficult for many people is that they don't want to discourage it completely.
- Some people may still have the first dollar they ever made, but the man who is truly wealthy is the fellow who still has the first friend he ever made.
- A smile is a curve that sets many things straight.
- Losers quit when they are tired; winners quit when they have won.
- Don't use a gallon of words to express a teaspoon of thought.
- You can't expect people to see eye to eye with you if you look down on them.
- Good ideas are a dime a dozen; bad ideas are free.
- It's the little things that annoy us; we can sit on a mountain, but not a thumbtack.
- Never fear criticism when you are right; never ignore criticism when you are wrong.
- What a father says to his children is not heard by the world, but it will be heard by posterity.
- The easiest way to make ends meet is to begin by getting off your own.
- Go to your Bible regularly, open it prayerfully, read it expectantly, and live it joyfully.
- Only the mediocre are always at their best.
- Criticizing another's garden doesn't keep the weeds out of your own.
- When the majority of people agree on an idiotic idea, it is still an idiotic idea.
- Science is not a sacred cow; it is a work horse; feed it and use it.
- Laughter is jam on the toast of life. It adds flavor, keeps it from being too dry, and makes it easier to swallow.
- A little common sense would prevent most divorces, and some marriages, too.
- It doesn't take brains to criticize; any old vulture can find a carcass.
- A form of wastefulness is the expenditure of words beyond the income of ideas.
- When you don't know what you are talking about, it is hard to know when you are finished.
- Men do not reject the Bible because it contradicts itself, but because it contradicts them.
- He is a self-made man who adores his maker.
- You have the capacity to choose what you think about. If you choose to think about past hurts, you will continue to feel bad. While it is true that you cannot change the effect past experiences had on you once, you can change the effect they have on you now.
- We underestimate ourselves. If we did all of the things of which we are truly capable, we would completely astound ourselves.
- Don't ask God to guide your footsteps if you are unwilling to move your feet.