



Mark 6:53-56

After making the crossing, they came to land at Gennesaret and tied up there. As they were leaving the boat, people immediately recognized him. They scurried about the surrounding country and began to bring in the sick on mats to wherever they heard he was. Whatever villages or towns or countryside he entered, they laid the sick in the marketplaces and begged him that they might touch only the tassel on his cloak; and as many as touched it were healed.

Introductory Prayer: I believe in your power of healing grace, in your capacity to heal both physically and spiritually. I come to you in spiritual illness and weakness, confident in your desire to heal and strengthen me. I humbly offer you my soul, wounded and aching from the spiritual cancer of self-love, pride and self-sufficiency. I abandon myself to your loving mercy. Thank you, Lord, for watching over me and loving me unconditionally.

Petition: Lord, heal my heart and soul, and help me to do what I must do to maintain my spiritual health.

1. “People recognized him, and started hurrying all through the countryside.” For the most part, the people in this Gospel were not “hurrying throughout the countryside” to invite others to come and seek forgiveness and spiritual healing from Jesus. They were in haste, yes, but in haste to bring the sick so that the Lord would heal them from their physical infirmities. How blind is the human heart that often fears physical illness more than spiritual infirmities and falling out of God’s grace! The gravest ills we can suffer are those that come from within us: “For from the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, unchastity, theft, false witness, blasphemy. These are what defile a person” (Matthew 15:19-20).

2. “They laid down the sick in the open spaces, begging him to let them touch even the fringe of his cloak.” Holy men and women throughout the centuries have firmly believed that “touching” Christ through receiving the sacraments brings about spiritual healing and redemption. “My heart has been

wounded by many sins," St. Ambrose used to pray before he celebrated Mass, "my mind and tongue carelessly left unguarded. Lord of kindness and power, in my lowliness and need I am turning to you, the fountain of mercy; I am hurrying to you to be healed; I am taking refuge under your protection. I am longing to meet you, not as my Judge but as my Savior. Lord, I am not ashamed to show you my wounds. Only you know how many and how serious my sins are, and though they could make me fear for my salvation, I am putting my hope in your mercies, which are beyond count. Look on me with mercy, then, Lord Jesus Christ, eternal King, God and man, crucified for our sake. I am putting my trust in you, the fountain that will never stop flowing with merciful love: hear me and forgive my sins and weaknesses."

3. "All those who touched him were cured." All those who touched Jesus Christ with the touch of faith were cured: the Canaanite woman, the blind man, the ten lepers, the man with a withered hand, the paralytic, Jairus' daughter, the woman with the hemorrhage, the boy with a demon, the Gerasene demoniac, the deaf man. All these people in the Gospel had something in common: it was their faith that allowed the Lord to heal them. The phrase used in the case of the woman with the hemorrhage is telling: "power had gone out from him" (Mark 5:30). Faith is one of the most powerful acts of the human person, since God himself chooses to be moved by it. How strong is my faith in the power of our Lord Jesus Christ? Do I reach out and touch him in faith every day? Do I allow him to act in my life through faith? What am I waiting for?

Conversation with Christ: Lord, you are all powerful and the source of my salvation and spiritual healing. In this prayer I am reaching out to touch you in faith, even though I am unworthy and my faith is weak. Heal me, Lord. Give me the strength to resist the power of evil in my life and to adhere to your grace and goodness. Lord, I believe; increase my faith.

Resolution: I will offer up short acts of faith in the Lord throughout the day.