

## When Your Life Is Touched By God

*Matthew 8:1-3*

If you were ever to visit Vatican City, most likely your trip would include a tour of the Sistine Chapel, which has the same measurements as Solomon's Temple in the Old Testament: 134 feet long and 44 feet wide. You would walk in and immediately be awed by the masterpieces of art that were painted directly on the walls about five hundred years ago. You would walk out into the very center of the room, and when you looked up, you would be stunned by Michelangelo's masterpieces painted on the ceiling, 68 feet above the floor. You would see nine different scenes from the Book of Genesis—and right in the middle of the ceiling, you would see what has been called “The Creation of Adam.” It is one of the most widely recognized scenes in the history of art.

You've seen that painting, even if you haven't been to the Sistine Chapel. It's the one where God is reaching out His hand to Adam, their fingers nearly touching. The Bible tells us that God breathed into Adam, and he became a living being. But that is just the way that Michelangelo depicted God creating life into the body of Adam. Imagine what that must have been like! To be touched by the finger of God!

The Farmville United Methodist Church in Farmville, North Carolina, has as its slogan: “Where YOU can be touched by God.”

Film director Woody Allen once said of actress Scarlett Johansson: “Scarlett is just a naturally great actress. She can do no wrong and is incapable of a bad moment. She's very pretty. She was just touched by God.” But I want to tell you today that our being touched by God has nothing to do with our talent, our brains or our beauty. Everyone of us can be touched by the Almighty Hand of God—and it can happen today.

In Matthew 8:1-3 we have read about a man whom Jesus touched, and healed of his leprosy. But that is only one place we can read about the touch of God upon our lives. We see touching throughout the Scriptures. It conveys love, understanding, healing, life. It speaks when words cannot. But what happens when our lives are touched by God?

# **1 When we are touched by God, we are declared “Not Guilty!”**

In the sixth chapter of Isaiah, Isaiah tells about a vision he had one day, in which he saw the Lord God sitting on His throne. When he recognized the holiness of God, Isaiah saw how unclean he himself was.

One of the attendants around the throne came to Isaiah with a burning coal, touched his lips, and said, “Now you are pronounced ‘Not guilty.’ Your sins are all forgiven.”

You and I can experience the same sort of cleansing in our lives today. When God touches our lips, or our minds, or our hearts, with the burning coal and convicting power of His Holy Spirit, we are declared, “Not guilty.”

We realize now that Jesus loves us and takes our shattered lives into His tender, understanding hands. He forgives us and forgets the past with all of its failures, and the sins that have kept us from walking each day with Him. Psalm 103:12 becomes a living reality for us:

*As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us.*

In March of 1595, Sir Walter Raleigh, explorer and soldier of Queen Elizabeth I, landed on the island of Trinidad, in the West Indies. There he found a crater in an extinct volcano which was completely filled with pitch. More than twelve million tons of asphalt have been removed over the last hundred years and used to pave roads in thirty different countries all over the world.

It is said that no matter how large a hole of asphalt is dug out, it fills back up within 72 hours. They have gone down as 280 feet and still found this black, gum-like substance bubbling up—and experts say it will for at least another five hundred years. Someone once thought about that asphalt lake in Trinidad, and wrote, “The same is true of God's grace and forgiveness. It never runs out and never diminishes. No matter how terrible the sin, there is grace and forgiveness sufficient.”

But get this: in 1928 a huge tree, estimated to be four thousand years old suddenly rose to a height of about ten feet—right in the middle of the asphalt lake. They were able to cut a cross-section of the tree before it slowly sank again, and it hasn't been seen since. Our own minds and hearts might continue to dredge things up to the surface, things that have been buried a long, long time. Now this is important: just because we can remember them and feel badly about them doesn't mean that God hasn't forgiven us! When our lives are really, really touched by God, we are declared "Not guilty" and all those things in our past are gone forever. Jesus has paid the penalty for our sins once for all.

## **2 When we are touched by God, we are given new life.**

Once a rabbi of the local Jewish synagogue came and worshipped Jesus. Then the rabbi said, "My little daughter has just died, but you can bring her back to life again if you will only come and touch her."

So Jesus went back to the home of the rabbi, where the noisy mourning crowds were, and He heard the loud funeral music. He said, "Get them out, for the little girl isn't dead; she's only sleeping." The Bible says that everyone there scoffed and sneered at Him. But when everyone was finally outside, Jesus went in where the body of the little girl was lying, and He took her by the hand. She jumped right up and was alive again! She was touched by God, and she was given new life!

Sometimes we think that a person is so low in sin, that he's beyond hope. Sometimes we might even think that about ourselves. But that's not what the Bible says. The Bible says that we who were once dead in sin, have been given new life in Christ! Listen to this:

*Anyone who has died has been freed from sin. Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him. The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God. In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus.*  
(Romans 6:7-11)

A teakettle singing on the stove was the beginning of the steam engine. A spider web strung across a garden path inspired the invention of the suspension bridge. In

1945, Raytheon engineer and inventor Percy Spencer stood in front of a magnetron—a radar component—and noticed a chocolate bar start to melt in his pocket. That was the beginning of the microwave oven.

In 1953, three rocket scientists at San Diego’s Rocket Chemical Company tried to develop a substance that would prevent corrosion in rockets by displacing water. They finally succeeded on their 40th try, naming the substance “Water Displacer—40th Attempt.” That was the beginning of WD40.

And when your life is touched by God, that is the beginning of a new, abundant life!

**3** **When we are touched by God, we are given new sight.**  
Right after Jesus raised the little daughter of the Rabbi, two blind men followed along behind Jesus. They began shouting, “O Son of David, have mercy on us.” When they followed Jesus into the house where He was staying, Jesus asked them, “Do you believe I can make you see?” They told Him, “Yes, Lord.” The Bible reads that then Jesus touched their eyes, and told them, “Because of your faith, it will happen.” And suddenly they could see!

After we are given new life in Christ, our spiritual eyes are able to see, to understand, to discern the things of the Spirit of God. Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 1:18, *“I know very well how foolish it sounds to those who are lost, when they hear that Jesus died to save them. But we who are saved recognize this message as the very power of God.”*

And in the second chapter: *But the man who isn’t a Christian can’t understand and can’t accept these thoughts from God, which the Holy Spirit teaches us. They sound foolish to him, because only those who have the Holy Spirit within them can understand what the Holy Spirit means. Others just can’t take it in.*

Those of us who are Christians here today can understand what Paul was talking about. You can understand the things of the Spirit of God. You can understand what Jesus did to save us from our sins, to give us new life. You can understand how the Holy Spirit works in our lives to reprove, to convict, to consecrate, to call,

to sanctify. You understand those things that used to be meaningless to you. You once were blind, but now you see!

## **4 When we are touched by God, God speaks through us.**

In the first chapter of Jeremiah, we see that the Lord said to Jeremiah, “Before you were born I sanctified you and appointed you as My spokesman to the world.” Jeremiah’s answer sounds like a lot of people I’ve known when they have been asked to do something. He said, “O Lord God, I can’t do that!” But listen to the rest of his answer: “I’m far too young! I’m only a youth!”

God replied, “Don’t say that, for you will go wherever I send you and speak whatever I tell you. And don’t be afraid of the people, for I, the Lord, will be with you and see you through.”

Then God touched Jeremiah’s mouth and said, “See, I have put My words in your mouth!” When we are touched by God, and when we have fully dedicated ourselves to Christ, and when we have been truly born again, then God is going to put His words into our mouths, so that we may speak for Him. I’m not saying that every Christian should preach, or teach or sing, but every Christian does have opportunities every day when we can speak on behalf of our King Jesus.

When God touches your life, He frees you from all your hang-ups and fears that have kept your voice silent. When God touches our lives, God speaks through us.

You cannot know the forgiveness of Christ until you have been declared not guilty. You cannot be set free from the deadness of sin until you accept the new life Christ offers to you. You cannot receive and understand the voice of the Spirit speaking to you until God touches your life. And when God touches your life, He will begin to speak through you, and He will really be saying something.

A mother called out the back door at suppertime, “Sammy, Sammy, Sammy!” There was no answer. Again she called, “Sammy, Sammy, Sammy!” Finally, still receiving no answer, she called once more, this time with firmness in her voice: “SAMMY!”

From around the corner of the house came a voice: “Do you want me, Mom, or are you only jest hollerin’?”

Over and over and over God calls for you to come to Him, to allow Him to touch your life, to forgive you of your sins, to cleanse your life, to give you new life and new sight, to give you the privilege of sharing Him with others. Do you dare to say to Him, “Do you want me, God, or are you only jest hollerin’?”

Yes, He wants you. Even now, and every second of your life, He reaches out to touch you—like Michelangelo’s painting of God reaching toward Adam. Will you reach out to Him?

*If by faith you reach out to Him, He will meet your every need.*

*He will respond to the cry of your heart. He will touch you and set you free.*

*Rise and be healed in the name of Jesus. Let faith arise in your soul.*

*Rise and be healed in the name of Jesus. He will cleanse you and make you whole.*

*--Milton Bourgeois*