

# Lutheran Women in Mission

---



## **That Human Touch** *by Gretchen Gebhardt*

### **Opening**

Sing together "Jesus Sinners Will Receive" (*LW 229, TLH 324, LBW 291*) or "Freely, Freely" from *The Other Song Book*.

"When I saw you from across the room, I just had to come over and give you a hug! I'm so glad you're here!" When might this greeting be especially welcome? What difference might it make to someone who is visiting in your church?

### **Jesus Touched People**

During His ministry here on earth, Jesus was not merely an observer in the lives of people-He participated fully! Jesus taught large groups of people and He visited with people on a one-to-one basis. Often His ministry included physically touching people. Read the following Bible references and note the circumstances of His touch and what He may have been trying to communicate with that touch.



- **Matthew 8:1-3**
- **Matthew 17:5-8**
- **Mark 7:32-35**
- **Luke 22:49-51**
- **John 9:6-7**

### **The Earthly and the Divine**

Because Jesus is God, He was able to perform many miracles during His ministry here on earth. He touched people and they were healed. This healing showed them His almighty power and His compassion for them. As sinful human beings we strive to be Christ-like, but we can never be divine. Read the following verses and identify the things that are unique to Christ and the things that help us to be more like Him.

#### **Characteristics unique to Christ      Help for us to be more like Jesus**

**Matthew 17:5**

**Matthew 28:18-20**

**1 Corinthians 8:5-6**

**Philippians 2:5-8**

## 1 John 1:7

### When Touch is Controversial

Jesus did not consider it beneath His dignity to minister to people others considered unworthy. Read the following texts to discover why touching certain people was controversial. Explain the motivation of Jesus and the reasoning of those who disagreed with Him.

#### Motivation of Jesus

#### Reasoning of those who disagreed

**Mark 10:13-16**

**Luke 7:36-48**

Can you think of examples in which ministering to people today may be controversial?

Can you think of instances when touching people should be avoided?

### Touching Lives Through Relationships

Whether we are with family, friends or people we don't know, the Bible has suggestions for how we can touch the hearts and lives of others. What purposes do the following verses suggest for our relationships?

- **Luke 6:35-36**
- **Galatians 6:2**
- **Ephesians 6:7**
- **James 2:15-16**
- **1 Peter 3:15**

How might touching others help us do these things?

### Closing

Sing together "Lord, Take My Hand and Lead Me" (*LW 512, LBW 333, All God's People Sing 171*).

*Gretchen Gebhardt is the Bible study editor of Lutheran Woman's Quarterly and author of A Single Thread in God's Tapestry. She recently moved from Charter Oak, Iowa to Seward, Nebraska with her husband who is a retired pastor.*

---