

THE POWER OF CHRIST

SERMONS BY TEXAS BAPTIST PASTORS

Compiled by

Chester M. Savage

Copyright © 1938

SERMON TEN

THE HANDS OF JESUS

By

Dr. Millard A. Jenkins,
Pastor, First Baptist Church, Abilene, Texas

“He showed unto them His hands” (John 20: 20).

I. A wonderful and indispensable member of the human body is the hand

Its construction, bone articulated to bone, muscles and tendons perfectly functioning, its mathematical order, beauty of construction and deftness of use declare it to be such as only the Divine Artist could have fashioned. To lose one's hands would mean to be, to a great extent, rendered helpless.

It is one of the body's most useful members and as God's gift to man is a marvelous revelation of His wisdom and goodness. There is the wrist with its eight bones, bands of fibers and hinged joint. There is the palm with its five bones; the fingers with their fourteen bones, and each with its own tendons; and the thumb working in harmony with them; and forty-six muscles with nerves reaching from the armpit holding them under control. Wonders of the hand! So important it is that the Bible mentions it fourteen hundred and thirty-three times.

And then the hand is symbolical. It may stand for everything in life that is good, and it may stand for all that is bad, as the owner may elect. It may stand for oppression, greed, hate, persecution, tyranny; and it may represent achievement, courage, charity, friendship, fellowship, love, hospitality, deliverance, sympathy, sacrifice and service.

These virtues reached their sublimest heights in the cross-scarred hands of Jesus. Raphael, Quinten Matsys, Albert Durer, Leonardo da Vinci and Titian painted marvelous pictures of the face of Christ, but only Ary Scheffer excelled in painting His hands; and even he could not do them justice, for the mercy of those hands, the gentleness of those hands, the sympathy of those hands are beyond the power of artist's brush, or poet's imagination.

The incident referred to in our text came at the close of the eventful day of our Lord's resurrection.

He had appeared to Mary Magdalene and Mary the Mother of James that morning, and in the late afternoon He had appeared to Cleopas and his friend on the way to Emmaus. At some time during the day He had appeared to Simon Peter.

And now **“the same day at evening”** the disciples, fearing that the Jews who had slain their Lord would turn upon them, being assembled behind closed doors, Jesus, without the turning of a key, or the shooting of a bolt, stood in the midst of them. The accounts of the memorable event given by Luke and John, while seeming to differ, in reality differ not at all, but complete the story.

- John records that Jesus made His salutation of peace twice, and that after the first salutation **“He showed unto them His hands and His side.”**

- Luke records that when He appeared to the eleven and **“them that were with them”** with this salutation, **“they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit”** (Luke 24: 36-37).

But when He had shown them the wound prints, as John records, they were glad and rejoiced. **“Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you”** (John 20: 21).

His approach was the approach of peace. It has ever been His approach to man. He comes not in wrath until His peace has been rejected. He came to destroy the enmity of sin that separates man from God. For that He gave His life. Wrath He never visits upon the sinner till His offered peace has been rejected. He turns none away. Men are lost because they go away from Him.

Those who come to God through Him He will **“keep in perfect peace”** (Isaiah 26:3). **“The peace of God which passeth all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus”** (Philippians 4:7).

His brief life had been one of outstanding events: His virgin birth; His baptism in the Jordan, foreshadowing His death, burial and resurrection; His temptation in the wilderness; His transfiguration on the mountain; His crucifixion on Calvary; and now His appearing alive in His resurrection body climaxes them all.

The scarred hands were the disciples’ assurance: **“Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord.”**

- They proclaimed the disciples’ mission: **“As My Father hath sent Me, so send I you.”**

- They laid upon the disciples their responsibility: **“Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained.”**

- They pointed the disciples to the source of their power: **“He breathed on them, and said: ‘Receive ye the Holy Ghost.’”**

He is still showing His hands, and they remind us that His mission **“to seek and to save the lost”** is our mission, and it begins with the one next door, and reaches **“unto the uttermost part of the earth.”**

**II. Never did hands bear such importance,
or mean so much to the world as the nail-scarred hands of Jesus;
hands that reached down to the sin-darkened world to lift it into the light**

“He showed unto them His hands.”

1. The Hands of Jesus Were Wounded Hands.

The scars were the credentials of His Saviourhood. The religion that is not founded on the vicarious death of Christ has no foundation at all. It matters not how brilliant the minds that proclaim it; or how magnificent the temples that house it; or how ornate the ritual that adorns it, it has no power to save from sin.

“Modernism,” which is not modern at all, but a rehash of the materialistic philosophies handed down by a Pagan past, may be judged by its fruits. Plentiful is its harvest of empty pews, dwindling church rolls, the lowering of moral standards and disregard for law that always follows the loss of the consciousness of sin, and the fear of the judgments of Almighty God.

In our own country, with population increasing and some of our Christian denominations decreasing, and in a world that is going heathen by sixty millions a year, surely there is need for vigorous preaching of the cross of Christ as the soul’s only hope, and instead of lulling the consciences of people to sleep with a “beautiful isle of somewhere,” declaring the judgments of God against sin, and for all who reject His salvation, the certainty of a burning hell.

The appeal of the Saviour’s wounded hands is the appeal of love. It was upon love He founded His Kingdom. Eminently right was Napoleon when he said: “Alexander, Charlemagne and myself founded our empires on force, and they crumbled and fell; Jesus Christ founded His Kingdom on love, and it has spread over the earth, and today millions would die for Him.”

The story of His sacrifice is the story of His love, the story that takes away the ugliness of the scarred hands and makes them the most beautiful things a trusting soul ever saw.

You have heard the story of the mother who always kept her hands covered, and one day her little daughter chanced to see them uncovered, and looking at the scars and twisted fingers, asked, “What made your hands so ugly? They are the ugliest hands I ever saw.”

“They got their ugliness, my dear,” said the mother, “rescuing you from the fire you fell into when you were learning to walk.”

And tears came into the child’s eyes, and she said, “Mother, let me kiss them; they are the prettiest hands I ever saw.”

Jesus got his scars snatching your soul and mine from the eternal burning. Those scarred hands are the price of my sin; that is why they are the most beautiful hands I ever expect to see, and I shall ever love them for the scars they bear for me.

2. The Hands of Jesus Were Friendly Hands.

That is why the people thronged Him. That is why little children climbed up into His lap. No one was ever disappointed in His friendship. Always He is the **“Friend that sticketh closer than a brother”** (Proverbs 18:24).

It is wonderful what friendliness can do. Rosa Bonheur was famous for her paintings of animals. Her “Horse Fair” in the Metropolitan Gallery of New York City, placed her as an artist among the great.

She had a pet lion whose confidence and love she had so completely won that when she went away to Europe and placed it in a zoo, it pined itself into illness for its friend. Veterinaries were called, but their treatment availed nothing. It became blind, and lost all interest in life. When Rosa Bonheur returned and was taken to see the lion, it made no response to its keepers, but when it heard her voice it pricked its ears, turned its head and feebly rising stood listening for her voice again. She went to the cage and reached her hand through the bars, and called its name.

Its haggard face lighted and it began licking her hand. If friendliness would have that effect on a lion, how much greater the effect of Christian friendliness on a human being. Jesus’ hands were friendly hands.

I was pastor in a city cursed with scores of saloons. One day I said, “I will visit the saloons and let their keepers know there is someone who has an interest in their souls.”

The first saloon I came to, an old man hearing me talking with the bartender showed that he wanted to say something to me. I gave him the chance. He said, “Why do you come into a place like this?”

I said, “Because I believe Jesus loves these saloonkeepers, and that He would come too, if He were here.”

And then I asked him if he did not want to go to heaven. He said, “This is no place for a man like you,” and pulled at my sleeve to follow him. When we were outside he said, “There is no hope for a man like me.”

I said, “You are mistaken about that, and I want you to come to our meeting tonight.”

He said, “No, I am going to hell tonight,” and drawing a quantity of morphine from his pocket said, “This is what I am going to do it with.”

I said, “Why do you want to do an awful thing like that?”

He replied, “Because I haven’t a friend in all the world.”

I said, “Will you believe me if I tell you I will be your friend?”

It was my joy to save that friendless man from suicide. I got his morphine. I got him treated in a good hospital, but that which was my greatest joy, I got him introduced to the Divine Friend, and saw him saved and rejoicing in the Lord.

3. The Hands of Jesus Were Charitable Hands.

Some men brought to Him a poor sinful woman, demanding that she be stoned to death.

Each had his rock in hand. Jesus looked at them and said, "Alright: the one among you who is guiltless, haul away and throw your stone." And then He stooped down and with His finger wrote upon the sand.

Haven't you wished you knew what He wrote? I have thought that perhaps He was writing the names of those hypocrites and the sins they had committed. Whatever it was, it so terrified them that when He looked up not one remained. He said to the woman: "**Neither do I condemn thee; go and sin no more**" (John 8:11).

"O the rarity of Christian charity
Under the sun."

And yet Christian charity is one of the high marks of sainthood. When we judge a brother harshly how different would be our judgment did we put ourselves in his place!

"Judge not that ye be not judged, for with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged; and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again. And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Or how wilt thou say to thy brother: 'Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and behold, a beam is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye'" (Matthew 7:1-5).

An honest look at one's self is the shortest route to thinking less about the faults of others. Usually the one who finds most faults in others, is the one who is full of faults himself. It is the gold hunter who finds gold, not the hunter for dross. It is the unclean bird that feeds on carion. It is a prayer we all do well to pray:

"Teach me to feel another's woe,
To hide the faults I see;
The mercy I to others show,
That mercy show to me."

- How many pillows have been wet with tears caused by our unkind words?
- How much sorrow have we caused by our injustice?
- How many hearts have we robbed of their lark song because we were disloyal or ungrateful?

These, like ravening dogs, should be chained lest they wound and maim others, and then turn and rend us. May we be as those who love, and whose buoyant gladness overflows into the lives of others.

4. The Hands of Jesus Were Ministering Hands.

To the poor, the troubled, the sick, and the distressed, they were stretched out to comfort, bless and heal.

- Witness blind Bartimeus.
- Witness the poor man sick of the palsy let down by his friends through the roof of the building.
- Witness the helpless cripple at the pool of Bethesda.
- Witness the afflicted woman who touched the hem of His garment.
- Witness the leper, and the demon possessed man of Gadara.
- Witness His tears at the grave side.
- Witness His compassion for the multitude straying like sheep without a shepherd.

He spared not Himself when there was an opportunity to minister to the needs of others.

At Oxford when honorary degrees were being conferred upon some of England and America's notables, among them Lloyd George and Theodore Roosevelt, as one by one they were conducted to the platform to be invested with the institution's honors, the students would hurl their playful jibes. But when General Booth, old and infirm, supported by the strong arm of one of the professors, appeared there were no jibes. All laughter ceased. There was a moment of intense silence, and then those young men put their faces in their hands and wept. His had been a life of service to the down-and-outs. His had been a service for the joy of serving. Millions of dollars had passed through his hands, but he himself was poor. He had lived his life and spent his strength for the neediest of mankind, and living up to his life motto, "Others," he had sent the Salvation Army flag into the slums of the cities, and among the poor and the despised, and its drumbeat had been heard around the world.

Oh, let us be as those who serve. **"Whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant. Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many"** (Matthew 20:26-28).

That is why God's blessing is so manifestly upon Christian hospitals, orphanages and medical missions. In Atlanta, Georgia, our Baptist people have one of the greatest hospitals in the South. It was founded by Dr. Len G. Broughton who gave up the practice of medicine and surgery for the Christian ministry, but whose heart turned constantly to sick and suffering mankind. It was he who provided the first place in America for the treatment of pellagra.

In the beginning of the institution, now the pride of Georgia Baptists, its founder had many a struggle. He put into it of his own means till he had little left, and went from place to place raising funds to keep it going.

One incident explains its success.

One day an old Confederate veteran was run down by an automobile. He had no money and had been refused admittance at other hospitals. An ambulance driver phoned Dr. Broughton, and the great hearted preacher said: "Certainly, why ask? Bring him on."

A Christian nurse was assigned to him and instructed that if he became conscious to find out if he were a Christian. It was the rule of the institution that no patient die there without Christ, or to recover go out without becoming a Christian, if by the help of God they might be led to accept the Saviour. Flowers were placed in the room, and the white-clad nurse watched by the bedside.

After hours of unconsciousness he awoke, and looking around at the room, and the flowers, and at the nurse, he said, "Am I still here? Why I thought I was in heaven and that you were an angel."

She already had her Bible open. There were passages of assurance, and a prayer.

"I am ready to go now," he said, and as the evening shadows lengthened he passed into the land where there is no night. No wonder that institution goes on blessing mankind, when it was founded on that kind of service.

5. The Hands of Jesus Were Sympathetic Hands.

Jesus' sympathy drew people to Him when He was upon the earth, and Christian sympathy on the part of His people will draw them to Him now.

I know a missionary who won his way into the hearts of the Chinese people because of his sympathetic ministry to the needy and the suffering. The word went the rounds with them: "He feels for us."

It is the "feel" that is too often lacking.

Nothing will empty our churches quicker than the loss of it; and nothing will fill them quicker than the presence of it. Orthodoxy is essential, but not when it is on ice. A refrigerator is no place for a freezing man.

Sympathy is a language all hearts can understand. It is a bond that makes brothers of us all.

I learned that lesson when I was a young pastor. Coming upon a lonely man one night on the street, I took him by the hand and inquired if he were a stranger. He told me a sad story of trying reverses and great financial losses. His family was in another state and he had a small-paying job at a little nearby factory. He said, "My boss wanted me to meet him here tonight and be initiated into his lodge; he wants to do this for me, and thinks it may be a help to me."

I asked, "Are you a member of the church?"

He answered that he was not. “Well,” I said, “the lodge is all right, but the church of Jesus Christ is the grandest institution under God’s stars, and I try to preach down at the Baptist Church,” pointing him to its location, “and you will make me very happy if you will come down there next Sunday.”

He said, “I’ll be there,” and he was there, and not only that Sunday, but the next, and the next, and on, and on. The Fall came, and with it his family, for he had saved up enough to bring them.

A revival broke out, and there were scores of conversions. I baptized him and his two sons and his two daughters, and received his wife on her letter, and had the joy of visiting in one of the happiest homes I ever saw.

One day he said to me, “Do you know what it was that led me to become a Christian?”

I said, “I would very much like to know.”

He said, “It wasn’t anything you ever said, any sermon you preached.”

I said, “Oh, wasn’t it?” expecting that he would mention some sermon.

“No,” he replied, “it was the sympathy you expressed to a man almost in despair that night in your handshake.”

I said, “O Lord God of love and sympathy, if souls can be won from sin and death by the touch of a handshake, put the tenderness of Thy sympathy for a lost world into our hearts, and teach us to shake hands for Jesus’ sake.”

How many are being lost because no one cares! But it is our duty to care. It is our obligation to care. The cultivation of the sympathy of Jesus will teach us to care.

6. The Hands of Jesus Were Sacrificial Hands.

There is a legend that comes down from Ancient Rome concerning their greatly prized Coliseum. Theirs was the saying: “While stand the Coliseum Rome stands; When falls the Coliseum Rome falls; When Rome falls, falls the world.”

A chasm had formed, and was ever widening and threatening to swallow the Coliseum up. The gods were sought for advice, and it was told them that if a prince of royal blood would sacrifice his life by leaping into the chasm, its yawning mouth would be closed.

Prince Cirgeuf volunteered to make the sacrifice, and on the appointed day amid great religious ceremony, he mounted his horse and leaped into the chasm which at once, closed and never opened again.

But I know a story that is not a legend. When death was about to swallow up our soul, Jesus Christ, the Prince of Glory leaped into the chasm, and gave His life that we might live.

“Sweet are the memories of Thy grace,
O Christ my Lord and King:
Let age to age Thy sacrifice,
In songs of glory sing.”

He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life, and no one cometh unto the Father but by Him.

7. The Hands of Jesus Were Consecrated Hands.

“The Father hath not left Me alone, for I do always those things that please Him” (John 8:29), said the Master. That is consecration, living in the will of God, and doing the things that please Him. A self-pleasing Christianity is void of power, and misrepresents Him whose name it bears.

When we sing, if we sing meaningfully,

“Consecrate me now to Thy service Lord,
By the power of Grace Divine;
Let my soul look up with a steadfast hope,
And my will be lost in Thine,”

we own His claim on our time, our talents, our influence, our substance, our service, our all. Consecration means full-handed religion. **“Gold for things of gold, and silver for things of silver . . . and who then is willing to consecrate his service (fill his hands) this day unto the Lord?”** (I Chronicles 29:5).

We are consecrated to the things our hands are filled with, whether they be the things of the Lord or the things of the world. There is no such thing as empty hands. They will be filled with something. They will be filled with that which is right, or with that which is wrong. The way to empty them of what they should not hold is to fill them unto the Lord.

Full-handed religion brings fulness of reward, while empty hands brings poverty of soul. **“Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep; so shall thy poverty come as one that travaileth”** (Proverbs 24:33, 34).

Full-handed religion says: **“Let us not sleep as do others; but let us watch, and be sober”** (I Thessalonians 5:6).

If an idle brain is the Devil’s workshop, idle hands are his tools.

“If empty, Lord, my hands have been,
Forgive, forgive I pray the sin;
O take them now and let them be,
Forever, only, all for Thee.”

III. The hands Jesus showed His disciples still bear their scars

He ascended with the scars, and He will come back with the scars. They will be the credentials of His Messiahship when He comes again. **“His feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives”** (Zechariah 14:4). **“And one shall say unto Him: ‘What are those wounds in Thine hands?’”** Then He shall answer: **“Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends”** (Zechariah 13:6). **“He came unto His own, and His own received Him not”** (John 1:11). Instead, they nailed Him to a cross, and He bears the scars for us today in the glory as the pledge of our salvation.

1. *They Are Wounds That Appeal to Our Christian Loyalty.*

They bring us under everlasting obligation to Him and the work to which He calls us.

When Gen. John B. Gordon was a candidate for the United States Senate from Georgia, he met with unexpected opposition. The State Senators in those days elected the United States Senators, and State Senator Smith of the town of Barnesville was openly opposing Gen. Gordon's election. Senator Smith had himself been a soldier in the Civil War, but he said he was “opposed to the old war-horses riding into power on their war records.”

The opposition had gained ground till Gen. Gordon's friends thought best to have him present when the vote was taken. It stood a tie with one more vote to be cast, that of the man who had led the opposition. His name was called. Just then the Old Warrior happened to turn his head so that the side of his face that was almost shot away as he was leading his troops into battle, exposed the ghastly scar. Senator Smith arose and stood looking, as one transfixed.

“Gen. Gordon,” he said, “I have said I would not vote for you, and I have been working against you; but I am sorry, and I want you to forgive me; I had forgotten that scar.” And then, “Gentlemen of the Senate, my vote is aye.”

It was one of the most dramatic scenes ever witnessed in that chamber. Surely we cannot be disloyal to Jesus, if we keep ever in mind the scars He received for us when He met and conquered the powers of death and hell, that had set themselves in array for our destruction.

2. *Those Wounds Pledge Us His Power.*

With His tomb empty, and death vanquished, He speaks with the voice of the Victor: **“All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth”** (Matthew 28:18).

“Go,” says He, **“and my power goes with you.”**

When I went to college, the thing that first impressed me was the mottoes over the two doors of the chapel. Over one were the words: “Attempt Great Things For God,” and over the other: “Expect Great Things From God,” the two divisions of the sermon of William Carey that introduced the movement of modern missions, and the truth of which he demonstrated in his great and useful life.

Attempt! Expect! Our Lord is worthy of the greatest efforts possible on the part of His people. How often we dishonor Him by the pitiful smallness of our plans. Large plans for ourselves and pygmy plans for His church.

Those wounded hands obligate us who are Christians to bring to Him the full measure of service He brought to us. Jesus gave His best, and nothing short of the best we have can satisfy the obligation which we owe Him. Jesus gave His all for us and claims our all in return.

Mrs. Will Carlton, wife of the great American poet, in her mission work in the slums of Brooklyn tells of a dying mother who called Mary, elder of the two children to her bedside, and committed to her the care of her little sister. The drunken father had abandoned them long months before. She said, "Mary, if your poor father ever comes back, be kind to him; I have lost all hope for him in this world and the next. Be a good girl, take care of your little sister, and meet me in heaven."

The child promised. The father never returned. Mary's only means of support was her mother's washboard. Before the summer was over typhoid claimed her frail body. The health physician told the nurse he would not come back unless called, for the child would soon die. They thought her unconscious but she heard. The little sister saw her weeping and said, "Mary, what are you crying about?" She said, "I heard the doctor say I was going to die. I promised mother to meet her in heaven, but heaven is a great fine place, and I am afraid Jesus won't know me; and I won't know what to say to Him."

And the little sister took hold of the hand that had on it the marks of the washboard, and said, "I wouldn't say anything to Jesus; I would just go up to Him, and show Him my hands."

When you and I, dear fellow Christians, meet Him, we will see in His hands the evidence of His sacrifice for us; what evidence of sacrifice for Him will He be able to see in ours? No wonder Paul could boast of his scars as "**the marks of the Lord Jesus Christ**" (Galatians 6:17). Surely no one could carry with him into heaven a richer treasure.

The abundantly fruitful life of Dwight L. Moody is explained by a motto, found after his death, on the fly-leaf of his Bible: "If God is thy partner, make thy plans large."

The Senior member of the firm says, "You furnish the instrument, and I will supply the power."

A promise like that is worthy of the greatest faith; and if we attempt great things in the faith of that promise, we shall not be disappointed in the expectation of great results.

3. In the Saviour's Hands the Sinner Reads His Only Hope of Salvation.

"All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid (caused to smite) on Him the iniquity of us all" (Isaiah 53:6). The nail prints are the marks of that smiting. Sinner, He took the blow for you. They are the plea of a boundless love that you turn from your sin, and accept His salvation.

“The hands of my Saviour I see,
The hands that were wounded for me;
They’re beckoning now to souls that roam,
And pointing the way to the heavenly home.”

They are beckoning you, O Christian, to a closer walk with God, to a deeper experience of grace, and to a more abundant life of usefulness and joy. They are beckoning you, O sinner, to come to the feast of salvation which they have spread. Shall not the answer be from every heart now and from this time forth:

“O Lamb of God, I come.”

Millard Alford Jenkins was born at Asheville, N. C, Nov. 17, 1872. Education, Judson College, Wake Forest College, Bethel College, and research work in Europe (A.B. and D.D.). Ordained, Sept., 1892. Pastorates: Biltmore, N. C, 1891-92; Waynesville, N. C, 1893-95; Tattreall Square Baptist Church, Macon, Ga., 1896-98; East Side Baptist Church, Macon, Ga., 1899-1901; First Baptist Church, Dublin, Ga., 1902-05; First Baptist Church, Hopkinsville, Ky., 1906-08; First Baptist Church, Athens, Ga., 1909-10; First Baptist Church, Owensboro, Ky., 1911; 22nd and Walnut St. Baptist Church, Louisville, Ky., 1913; Calvary Baptist Church, Asheville, N. C, 1914-15; First Baptist Church, Abilene, Texas, Nov., 1915, to date. Preacher, Texas Baptist Convention sermon, 1931. Author, *“Archangel of Death”* and *“Sunday School for the Times.”*

The First Baptist Church, Abilene, has 3,000 members Since Nov., 1915, under Dr. Jenkins’ ministry, there have been 7,425 additions. Total contributions during this period have been \$1,104,204.11. The total value of all their church property is \$450,000 (All statistics as of Dec. 15, 1937).

~ end of sermon 10 ~

<http://www.baptistbiblebelievers.com/>
