



24-7 SPACES

LENT 2012

WALK WITH US

week 6

JESUS: TOUCH

**use this deeper guide alone, with
family or friends or your
church small group**

40 DAYS. 5 MINUTES. 1 GOSPEL.

CONTENTS

1. **Reflect**: thinking time
2. **React**: Journaling or discussion
3. **Respond**: get practical

MATERIALS NEEDED

- A Bible
- Film 'The Blind Side' (2009)

REFLECT:

Use the following Bible passages, film excerpts and quotes for reflection.

Read John: 8-11

"Let us touch the dying, the poor, the lonely and the unwanted according to the graces we have received and let us not be ashamed or slow to do the humble work."

- **Mother Teresa**

"When we honestly ask ourselves which person in our lives means the most to us, we often find that it is those who, instead of giving advice, solutions, or cures, have chosen rather to share our pain and touch our wounds with a warm and tender hand."

- **Henri Nouwen**

"It's the sense of touch. In any real city, you walk, you know? You brush past people, people bump into you. In L.A., nobody touches you. We're always behind this metal and glass. I think we miss that touch so much, that we crash into each other, just so we can feel something." - **Film 'Crash' (2004)**

Amélie [to blind man] "Let me help you. Step down. Here we go! The drum major's widow! She's worn his coat since the day he died. The horse's head has lost an ear! That's the florist laughing. He has crinkly eyes. In the bakery window, lollipops. Smell that! They're giving out melon slices! Sugarplum, ice cream! We're passing the park butcher. Ham, 79 francs. Spareribs, 45! Now the cheese shop. Picadors are 12.90. Cabecaus 23.50. A baby's watching a dog that's watching the chickens. Now we're at the kiosk by the metro. I'll leave you here. Bye!" - **Film 'Amélie' (2001)**

"So greatly loathsome was the sight of lepers to him at one time, he used to say, that, in the days of his vanity, he would look at their houses only from a distance of two miles and he would hold his nostrils with his hands. But now, when by the grace and the power of the Most High he was beginning to think of holy and useful things, while he was still clad in

secular garments, he met a leper one day and, made stronger than himself, he kissed him. From then on he began to despise himself more and more, until, by the mercy of the Redeemer, he came to perfect victory over himself."

- **Thomas of Celano, "First Life of St. Francis"**

REACT:

(1) Consider the quote from the film 'Crash'. Reflect on the importance of human touch. Psychological research shows the benefits of touch - premature babies gain weight, it alleviates depression, reduces stress, alleviates pain syndromes like fibromyalgia and migraines, improves immune cell counts in HIV and natural killer cells which kill cancer...

In what ways do people crave human touch? What are the barriers in our world that prevent touch? Where do we 'crash into each other just so we can feel something'?

(2) Reflect on John 9:1-7 and the way Jesus touched the blind man to heal him. Consider how touch and physicality was often part of the way Jesus healed. Think about the way St. Francis broke barriers in touching the untouchable, a leper. Who are the 'untouchables' in our world today and how can we break the barriers?

(3) In John 8:3-11 Jesus responds to the woman in a way no-one expects. How does the way Jesus treats the woman speak to you? How does this reflect the way we should treat others? How can you show the same touch and grace that Jesus shows?

(4) Read John 11:21&32 where Mary and Martha say "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." Where in our own lives and in the world around us do we find ourselves saying God, "if you had been here" this wouldn't have happened? Where do we long for the physicality of Jesus' touch in our lives and in our world?

(5) Consider Henri Nouwen's words. When someone close to you is going through a difficult time, Is it easier for you to give advice, solutions and cures or to actually share in someone's pain and touch their wounds with a warm and tender hand. What does it mean to be more like the latter? Why do you think this could more deeply impact someone's life?

(6) Reflect on the extract from the film 'Amélie' describing her encounter with the blind man. Amélie on a quest for love decides to change the lives of those around her for the better. The film, set in the city of Paris; describes a series of brief encounters where Amélie touches the lives of those around her, helping others. Consider this encounter with the blind man. Think of your city or town, how could you in small ways touch the lives of those around you for the better?

RESPOND:

1. Personal:

Our world longs for 'touch', to experience love, affection and relationship, how can you touch someone's life this week? Do it.

In these few chapters of John, Jesus heals many people. His touch changes lives and many turn to him also longing for that touch. How could a weakness in our life turn into an opportunity for God to show his power? What is something in your life today that you long for God to 'touch'? Surrender it to Him today and pray for His touch.

2. Practical:

Consider the longing for physical touch in our world, as reflected in the quote from the film 'Crash'. Try being more aware of physical touch; both that which you give and that which you receive. What is its impact?

Watch the movie 'The Blind Side' (2009), Leigh Anne Tuohy (played by Sandra Bullock) 'touches' Mike's life and changes it forever. Consider the journey (the ups and downs) of impacting someone's life. Is there anyone that God is prompting you to reach out to and be part of changing their life?

3. Prayerful:

Walk around places in need of Jesus' touch. Use the sense of touch to explore the area around you. Notice the contrasts in textures: the rough and the smooth, the hard and the soft, the delicate and fragile and the coarse and unrefined. As you walk, ask Jesus to touch these places of need.

Use these words from the prayer of St. Francis:

'make me a channel of your peace'

St. Francis so often became the prayer. He loved and cared for lepers, gave to the poor and cared for widows - be the prayer today!

NEXT WEEK...

JESUS: PASSION

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