

I Know The Lord Has Laid His Hands On Me  
Sermon preached by  
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Big Bay

Psalm 139, Luke 13:10-13

Annabel sang it wonderfully this morning:

“I know de Lord has laid his hands on me,  
I know de Lord has laid his hands on me,  
I *know* de Lord has laid his hands on me  
Did you ever see the like before?”

David said the same thing when he wrote:

“You created my inmost being;  
you knit me together in my mother’s womb.  
I praise you because I am fearfully and  
wonderfully made. (Ps. 139:13-14)

Knitted—by His skillful hand. That’s how we are made—by his explicit intention, care and creative genius. Have you seen an ultra-sound of a baby 3 months along? it is astounding. You get the call, “Gramma! We’re going to have a girl!” That little shadow is a spectacular bit of child, with hands and feet and head and heart.

Much as we would like to think we are omnipotent, we cannot create a human being. We can clone them—or at least animals but we cannot make this intricate, extraordinarily complex system with soul and mind and body.

Think of the brain that sends a message to the foot to move forward, to step over a stone, to stand still. Think of the pancreas that sends out insulin when you had an ice cream cone. Think of the mind that can remember a telephone number, invent an automobile or create a love letter. We are ‘fearfully and wonderfully made’ by the loving hand of God, not just as art objects but for a purpose—to worship Him, to love others, to do His will (Ps. 143:10)

The song goes on:

“I know de Lord laid His hands on me  
Oh, wasn’t that a happy day,  
Jesus washed my sins away.  
I know de Lord laid His hands on me.”

Of course, we have wills and so will to do *our* will instead of His. We know it as sin and that we are sinners. Can’t you see a child about to run across the street? He has been told repeatedly to stay on his own side but the temptation to explore shuts out the voice of His father. So off he goes, across the street in front of a car and Dad’s hand goes *Whomp!* on the shoulder, stopping that child in his tracks and dragging him back to safety. That child knows that a hand has been ‘laid’ on him!

And so God stops us cold in our tracks to say we are on our way to hell if we do not confess our sin and ask for his saving grace. That moment is a really happy day. It is His hands that were nailed to the cross, paying for our salvation. His hands reach out to save us. He made us and saved us.

There was a little boy who decided to make a sailboat. He found some wood in the basement and began to saw it and carve it into a proper boat with a long sleek hull and a sharp bow that would cut through water and a blunt stern. He sanded it carefully, under the watchful eye of his father and then painted it a bright blue. He put a white stripe along its side and wrote the name on the transom—*All Mine*. He cut out a sail from a piece of old sheet and struggled to hand sew the edges into the right shape. He made a mast out of stake he found and tied the sail to it with string. Finally it was ready for the lake. He threw it in the water and watched it bob up and down in the waves and with horror watched a wave catch it and tear away the string he had attached to control it. The boat sailed away and there was nothing he could do.

Day after day that followed he would search the beach but there was no blue boat.

A couple years later he was walking home from school past an old second hand store when he caught sight of a worn and battered boat—still faintly blue. He rushed into the shop and asked the owner if he could see the boat. There, on the stern, in faded letters were the words “All Mine”. “Mister, this is my boat!” No, the owner replied. It’s mine. I got it with a bunch of stuff in a sale.

“But it’s mine!” said the boy, “I made it.” There was no way that he could win the argument. It was for sale for \$4. and he would have to buy it.

He went home and got his penny bank with money that he had saved. It would take it all but he emptied the bank and ran to the shop, demanding the boat. “Here’s my \$4!” he said. As he took it into his hands he clutched it and said under his breath, “You are twice mine. I made you and I bought you.”

We are twice His. Jesus made us with his hands and bought us at the cross of Calvary.

Those are that hands that reach out to hold us in protection. David wrote

“You hem me in—behind and before;

You have laid your hand upon me.

Such knowledge is too wonderful for me,

too lofty for me to attain.” ((139:5-6)

We are kept, protected from harm. His hands hold us, guard us from the evil that surrounds us.

The touch of his hands are healing. The woman outside the synagogue, crippled for 18 years, waited, bent and suffering. He reached out and touched her, telling her she was free of her infirmity. His touch took away all the pain and healed her body. What a day that was for her! She would remember that touch forever.

The touch of his hands lead and guide us. He is by our side. You know how helpful it is when someone takes you by the arm and supports you over rocky ground or in a dark place to somewhere secure. By ourselves we can get into trouble.

The old hymn goes:

Is your burden heavy as you bear it all alone?

Does the road you travel harbor danger yet unknown?

Are you growing weary in the struggle of it all?

Jesus will help you when on His name you call.

He is always there hearing every prayer,

Faithful and true.

Walking by our side, in His love we hide all the day through.  
When you get discouraged just remember what to do,  
Reach out to Jesus, He's reaching out to you.

Ralph Carmichael

The amazing thing is that Jesus has given us hands to reach out to others, in His name, as His servants. We become his hands as we feed the homeless, hold a grieving person while they weep, give grace to someone who does not believe that God can love them. We can be his hands.

Reach out and touch a soul that is hungry,  
Reach out and touch a spirit in despair;  
Reach out and touch, a life torn and dirty,  
A man who is lonely, if you care!  
Reach out and touch that neighbor who hates you,  
Reach out and touch that stranger who meets you,  
Reach out and touch the brother who need you,  
Reach out and let the smile of God touch through you.

Charles Brown

If God has laid His hand on you, be His hands to reach out and touch others with the love of God. Begin in your home. Extend that love to the grocery store clerk, the bank teller, a driver on the road. Let it be the reputation, the ministry of this congregation.

God has His hand on this congregation—protecting it, leading and guiding it and giving us work to do—ministry in caring for others. Be His hands, touching the needy of the world, letting them know of His love and care.