

Let Me Touch Your Hands

Կը Փափաքիմ Ձեռքերուդ Դպշիլ

John 20: 24-29

Now Thomas, one of the twelve, called the Twin, was not with them when Jesus came. ²⁵So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see in his hands the mark of the nails, and place my finger into the mark of the nails, and place my hand into his side, I will never believe."

²⁶Eight days later, his disciples were inside again, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." ²⁷Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side. Do not disbelieve, but believe." ²⁸Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!" ²⁹Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed." (John 20:24-29 ESV)

Hands are a special part of our bodies. Lately with this virus issue, we are everyday constantly reminded not to touch anyone, anywhere, anything. If we ever touch something, someone, we should wash our hands carefully. We are going to receive college degrees in hand washing.

Ok, we all get it, stay away from people. In this process we lost an important human greeting- shaking hands. Hand shaking conveys welcome, agreement, peace, goodbye, or Not anymore....

Hands... how can I play the piano without hands? Hands are God's creation in enabling us to write, create, bake, cook, saw, cut, build, ...and more.

When you lose something, you realize how important that thing was. Have you had any accident that disabled your hand for a while? How was the feeling? Hands are miraculous.

Our scripture today we read from Gospel of John chapter 20, starting from verse 24. If we read from verse 19 we find that shortly after His resurrection, when the disciples were together, **Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you."** ²⁰ **When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side** (vs 19).

His hands comforted the troubled disciples. Looking at His hands, they remembered the same hands

- patting the young children
- making mud and touching the blind man's eyes
- breaking the bread and giving thanks to the Lord
- touching the leper, comforting the weak and the outcast.

Now they were looking at the same hands with nail marks on them. The hands of their dear Lord ...

-We do not know why Thomas was not there with the other disciples that evening. Perhaps he was disappointed or he needed to be alone. How could his Lord be crucified? He could not grasp all that had happened.

All of us experience periods of disappointment, especially when some expectation has not been realized. Withdrawals are helpful for a short while. They are dangerous when they last for long periods without any fellowship.

Although Thomas was away that evening, he soon got back into fellowship with his brothers, the disciples. A week later, when he was among them, Jesus came and stood there. He showed Thomas his hands and said; **"Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side"** (vs. 27).

The hands of Jesus tell us a message. What is the message this morning?

1. The hands of Jesus tell us of his suffering for us.

1. Յիսուսի վիրաւոր ձեռքերը կը պատմեն անոր չարչարանքը մեզի համար

- Have you seen the hands of a car mechanic? They are rough.
- Have you touched the hands of a tailor? They have the marks of a needle.
- How about hands of a shoemaker? Rough...
- This is Fresno, have you touched hands of a farmer?
- How about the hands of Computer Engineers?

-Do you remember your mother's hands and her soft touch?

I was a little boy when my grandfather Balaban Khoja died.

They tell me about his hands. One of them had missing fingers. Why? When he was 5- 6 years old, the Turks tried to kill him. The vicious sword did a terrible thing to my grandfather's hand. He was rescued by a miracle. Then he learned to use his wounded hand. If you touched his hands, you would feel history written all over them. How can we forget the stories of our grandfathers?

As Armenians, many of us today have similar stories to tell to this new generation. **Our hands are books of history. Just take a moment and look at your hands.**

The best story is in the hands of Jesus. His hands have a special place in our lives.

Those scars are reminding us of his suffering for our salvation.

How can I ignore this? How can I turn around and not see those hands...

During Easter more people attend church. Well, we don't have attendance anymore. We have more people wishing each other Happy Easter, which is great.

But you see it cannot stop on Easter morning. Resurrection of our Lord continues.

His hands reminding us that daily we should go to him for repentance and forgiveness of sins. My God, suffered for me...how can I ignore that.

Thomas had a doubt. He wanted to **see** those hands, see his wounds. He wanted to **put** his **fingers** in those marks. He knew Jesus. He had spent years with Jesus. He had been touched by hands of Jesus before. Now He knows that these hands were nailed when at the crucifixion- the worst punishment that Romans gave to humans.

It is strange that many today try to live a life as if they have not seen his hands. **We try to ignore hands of Jesus.**

A man was in a plane ready for take off on the runway. Suddenly the plane started taxiing and went back to where it was. He asked why. They said the pilot felt that something was wrong with the plane.

After a while, they went to the runway again. Again the plane was returned to where it was. Once again they were notified that the pilot heard something from the plane engine.

At the third attempt, this man was happy that they were going to fly; he told the flight attendant that he is glad that they fixed the problem. She said: "Oh Yes, You know, they changed the pilot."

How long we can ignore Jesus? How long we can think we can “fly” safely by changing the “pilot?” How long can one say ‘I have not touched by HANDS OF JESUS?’

Unfortunately, we live in a deceitful world. And our lives are self-deceit.

2. Thomas was a realistic man. He wanted to touch to believe.

Let’s face it. Thomas wants to touch Jesus. We want to do like Thomas, too. Have you realized that instead of Thomas touching Jesus first, Jesus touched Thomas?

What do I mean?

We read in Verse 25

“So the other disciples told him, “We have seen the Lord!” But he said to them, “Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe it.”

This was week ago. Then Jesus appeared at a gathering when Thomas was there. Jesus took the initiative and said to Thomas: Verse 27

“Then he(Jesus) said to Thomas, **“Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side. Do not disbelieve, but believe.”**

We do not know whether Thomas did touch Jesus after this sentence.

We know definitely that Jesus touched Thomas in many ways. You have to see that Jesus’ love to us is so enormous; He does not wait for THOMAS TO TAKE ACTION. Jesus takes the initiative to touch us.

In fact, his cross and resurrection is an initiative to justify and redeem us. How can we **be silent?** How can we be **so ignorant** and not **responsive** towards such LOVE?

Let me tell you real life story.

A house catches fire. Unfortunately, the parents of the child die while rescuing their only son. The son is on the roof. The fire fighters are late. Neighbors were around. The son is on the roof. No one wants to go to the roof. One man takes

action. He touches the hot metal of rainwater pipes, climbs to the roof, and he rescues the child.

Everyone was happy. Some weeks later, the city court wanted to give this child for adoption. The decision was left to the judge. He wanted to give him to the best family who could raise him.

A couple approached. The man was the banker of the town. He said he could give the best comfortable house to this child. He could secure his future.

The school teacher asked the judge to give him the child. He believed he could provide the best education.

The judge was thinking about these two choices, when suddenly a man approached. He was not wearing very good clothes. He was not very popular. He was not a banker, nor a teacher. Then he took his hand out of his pocket and **showing his burned hands** said: **“I can give my love to this child.”** Hands... Once the child saw the hands, he jumped toward this man.

Jesus said: **“Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side. Do not disbelieve, but believe.”** Put your finger in the hands of Jesus. What do we see?

I see my sins. I see the scars of nails. Whose nails? My nails. My SINS. He was crucified for my and your sins. Therefore, he is asking me:

“Come, touch me because I touched you first.”

3. What was Thomas’ reaction?

He came to his knees. **“My Lord and My God”**.

It reminds me of Peter when he was in the fishing boat. He did have a bad night of fishing. When Jesus took him to another place for fishing, the result was enormous. Many saw the fish and were amazed. Peter saw something different. Peter, instead of saying, “Wow I will have good business today”, **he fell on his knees and said: “Go away from me, I am a sinful man” (Luke 5:8).**

You have doubts. Fine, come to Jesus, he is there to help you. You have many questions. Fine, come to Jesus, he is there to answer you.

Now we live in a different age. We do not see Jesus face to face. Jesus knew that many will not have the same encounter like Thomas. Therefore, he said: **“Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”**

We do not see, but we believe. Like that little boy who washed his hands. It is **time to grow** and **believe without touching**, because he touched you first. Just allow him to touch you.

Once a theologian (Patrick Overton) said: **“Faith is walking to the edge of all the light you have and taking one more step.”** We do have the light. Let us not ignore it. Many of you have seen the light. Now the decision is yours to say: **“My Lord and My God, I want to walk with you. Touch me everyday.”**

Amen