**Pastor Tim’s Message Notes 5-8-2022
Held by the Hands of Jesus**

This past weekend was a very musical one for my family. My daughter Anna had an Orchestra Concert, our oldest three girls participated in a music festival with piano, and then Kara had many of her violin and viola students come to Chestnut Grove to have their recital here.

All of those musical things were opportunities to use their hands as expressions of worship. Truly, our hands are capable of doing so much good, but they are also capable of doing just the opposite – doing so much harm.

When we look at Jesus, we see His hands were always instruments of righteousness, of goodness, of compassion, of love.

Over the last several weeks we have been looking at the hands of Jesus. We’ve seen Jesus using His hands to bless, to serve, to heal.

We’ve seen Jesus using His hands to purify. To purify the Temple, to make the leper clean. On Holy Week we remember Jesus using His hands to begin the New Covenant as He took the bread and the wine and gave them new meaning and significance.

 We remembered Jesus’ hands on the cross, spread out as a sacrifice for you and for me.

We saw Jesus using His hands to help prove to His disciples that He was indeed risen from the dead.

Today, as we conclude this series on the hands of Jesus, we are reminded that even though Jesus was taken up to heaven several weeks after His resurrection, Jesus continues to use His hands today to lead and empower His church.

I invite you to turn with me to Revelation 1:9-20. John the apostle writes the following:

**9I, John, your brother and companion in the suffering and kingdom and patient endurance that are ours in Jesus, was on the island of Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus. 10On the Lord’s Day I was in the Spirit, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet, 11which said: “Write on a scroll what you see and send it to the seven churches: to Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea.”**

**12I turned around to see the voice that was speaking to me. And when I turned I saw seven golden lampstands, 13and among the lampstands was someone like a son of man,[**[**a**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Revelation+1%3A9-20&version=NIV#fen-NIV-30711a)**] dressed in a robe reaching down to his feet and with a golden sash around his chest. 14The hair on his head was white like wool, as white as snow, and his eyes were like blazing fire. 15His feet were like bronze glowing in a furnace, and his voice was like the sound of rushing waters. 16In his right hand he held seven stars, and coming out of his mouth was a sharp, double-edged sword. His face was like the sun shining in all its brilliance.**

**17When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. Then he placed his right hand on me and said: “Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last. 18I am the Living One; I was dead, and now look, I am alive for ever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades.**

**19“Write, therefore, what you have seen, what is now and what will take place later. 20The mystery of the seven stars that you saw in my right hand and of the seven golden lampstands is this: The seven stars are the angels[**[**b**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Revelation+1%3A9-20&version=NIV#fen-NIV-30718b)**] of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches.**

In this passage from the Book of Revelation, John shares this breathtaking encounter with Jesus in His glory.

There is so much in this passage that we could unpack today, with lots of symbolism throughout. But today we are going to focus again on the hands of Jesus.

But before we zero in on the hands of Jesus, let’s just explain the scene a little bit. John is on the Island of Patmos. It was on this island that the Romans exiled people for a time.

Why would they exile them instead of killing them? They thought that it would cause less trouble for them. Many people would just forget about them there.

But here, on Patmos, John has a series of visions of Jesus and the things that Jesus would show him.

And here, in this opening vision of our Lord, John mentioned the hands of Jesus twice. We are told in verse 16 that in His right hand He held seven stars. Then, in verse 20, the seven stars are described as the seven angels or messages to the seven churches.

What does all this mean? In the Bible, the number 7 represents completeness or fullness.

What Jesus was revealing to John is that Jesus holds all of the church in His hands.

The church, friends, is Jesus’ idea. Jesus is the One who is building His church. **You are here today because Jesus has led you here.**

Perhaps you remember the classic song, “He’s got the whole world in His hands, He’s got the whole wide world, in His hands. He’s got the whole world in His hands, He’s got the whole world in His hands.”

Sisters and Brothers, while Jesus does hold all of the world in His hands and it was He who knit each person together in their mother’s womb, but **Jesus especially has the whole church in His hands.**

This church is His plan to reach the world with the good news of Jesus.

In chapters 2 & 3 of the book of Revelation, Jesus demonstrates how He holds the church in His hands by offering encouragement as well as correction. He gives comfort as well as warning, depending on the specifics of each of those seven churches. But these 7 churches are representative of all churches.

So friends, as we think about this passage and the hands of Jesus holding and guiding Chestnut Grove, what would He have to say to us today? What would be the big takeaway?

And I think it would be this.

***Jesus wants us to let Him hold us in His hands and to use us as His hands.* Let me repeat that: *Jesus wants us to let Him hold us in His hands and to use us as His hands.***

Friends, I believe that Jesus is pleased with how we are doing with this, but there is always room to grow.

So how do we actually let Jesus hold us in His hands? We do this by staying close to Jesus.

We are to abide in Jesus. Jesus said, ‘If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.’

***The biggest way that we do this is though prayer!***

We let Him hold us in His hands by tending to our relationship with Him each day. Talking with Him in prayer about anything and everything is so important. He loves you. He wants you to turn to Him about everything, to seek His wisdom and guidance and direction. He desires that we invite Him to hold us in every part of our lives.

***And as we seek to let the hands of Jesus hold us closely, we must make His Word a huge priority in our lives.***

Back in February of 2020, when I learned that God was calling me to Chestnut Grove, I was told by Charlie Salisbury, the York District Superintendent as the time, that the biggest thing that Chestnut Grove was looking for in a pastor was someone that has a high view of the Bible. This is so important for any church and I was really honored that Charlie thought of me as a good fit for that. That is not always a priority in every church, but it should be.

I believe that Jesus would commend you for Your desire to prioritize His Book and He would exhort you to keep it up. Keep His Word at the center of Your life.

There are challenges to this, as you know. One challenge is that the Bible is viewed in a negative light by many in our culture. Many misunderstand the Bible and view it is as a harmful book rather than the life-giving Book that it is.

Another challenge that Christians face is letting the Bible become secondary to other books, even godly books.

Jesus wants us to always have His Word as the meat and potatoes of our spiritual walk, not as something secondary.

While there is nothing wrong with other godly books, they must be supplements, rather than the main course, so to speak.

We have our Bible book of the month here at Chestnut Grove, where we highlight a particular book of Scripture to read together as a community.

We have our Thursday morning Bible study as well. And there are other opportunities that are coming to be in the Bible together.

So church, let us let Jesus hold us in His hands by cultivating growing in Him by prayer and time in His Word.

But we are also to BE the hands of Jesus.

We become the hands of Christ by reaching out in love to others. I believe we do this very well in the way that we care for and love one another. We are the hands of Jesus to each other, encouraging one another and supporting one another.

And we are the hands of the Jesus to the world as well. We are a generous church and we demonstrate that we are His hands by the way we give to missions and the ways that we have community outreaches.

But always remember that each of us is the hands of Jesus to those around us. The way that we carry His love, the way that we build genuine relationships, the way that we seek the let the light of Jesus shine through us, to that extent we are being the hands of Jesus.

Finally, I believe Jesus would exhort us to press on. Grow in our praying and in our time in the Word of God and grow in being the hands of Jesus to those around you. There is no more vibrant of a church than when each person is actively seeking to be held by the hands of Jesus and to be the hands of Jesus in this world. Every day is a new opportunity.

He will lead us forward. He has led us this far and He will never fail us. Let us keep our eyes on Jesus as He continues to build His church in us and through us.

Let’s pray…

Sources: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G8j8nVbzdtI>

[www.biblegateway.com](http://www.biblegateway.com)