



Come and See: the Beatitudes

Transcript, episode four – the medicine

So welcome to Come and See week four: The Medicine and the Mender.

If you could have any superpower what would it be? Flying, super strength, time travel, super speed... I wonder what you would choose.

I asked my three kids what they thought their favourite superhero character and film was and they all agreed that they loved Spider Man the most. They love his ability to climb walls, swing on webs; his strength and agility also ranked high, but also he's very human too a lot of the time .

The latest film Spider Man: No Way Home they reckon was an adventurous addition to the Spider Man films, but when they tried to explain the plotline they lost me within seconds, it was so complicated!

But superhero films usually follow a similar pattern. The hero usually uses his powers for the good of the world, to avert disaster and to curb the dark powers of enemy forces. They depict a world then in which things are broken and in need of help and healing.

I wonder if you remember the second session, Mind the Gap, when we talked about the difference between how the world is and how it could be. The vision of how it could be is what the Beatitudes talk about.

The world we live in can sometimes feel as bad as the superhero film, especially if you're living in a war zone or in a country in famine or indeed in a pandemic, but actually for most of us, most of the time it's not actually as disastrous as that.

Nonetheless it can still feel though that it's not as it should be. We all need healing, help, repairing and change, all of the time in our daily lives, and in our relationships with each other, and, if we have faith, in our relationship with God.

And so a question to reflect on: I wonder where you see the hurting places in the world today? I wonder who might need healing and help in your life, in your relationships?

So in Come and See this week we're thinking about Jesus as the medicine and the mender. Jesus didn't come just to show us a different way to look at life or how to live better, though he did do this in an amazing and powerful way, as we saw last week when we thought about Jesus as a role model who turns our perspective of the world upside down, but the main reason people still talk about Jesus is that he came to do something. To change things once and for all.

So what was Jesus's superpower? It's simple. It was to love and to forgive - to love and forgive.

In the story of the paralysed man in Matthew 9, the first thing that Jesus says when the paralysed man is lowered through the ceiling by his friends is that your sins are forgiven. In this story from the Bible, Jesus makes a call that what is needed even more than being healed of his condition is his forgiveness.

You see, Christians believe Jesus comes to our world to live a life of love, a life of peacemaking, a life of forgiveness in our relationships with each other and in our relationship with God. But ultimately this radical love and forgiveness led him to give his own life by dying on the cross. How much does God love us? This much. This much.

What was the result? When I share with Jesus the ways I have hurt, have injured others and myself, then I am forgiven for everything I have ever done or will do. Even if it might feel shameful or embarrassing, even if I'm struggling to forgive myself, God forgives, and when I'm struggling to forgive others, he helps me to do that to.

So another question to reflect on now. I wonder whether you have experienced forgiveness, either receiving it or giving it? Have you ever felt forgiven by God? If so, how did it feel?

OK, so let's come back to those superhero stories again. In these stories the superheroes are special people. They're like us sure, but not completely. Unlike most superhero stories though, God asks us to become like superheroes ourselves - to start developing our own superpowers.

What is that power? Well it's forgiveness. When we experience the depth and power of God's love and forgiveness ourselves, then we can begin to offer it to others too. We can begin to live cross-shaped lives when we understand how much God loves and forgives us. We can then begin to love and forgive others this much too.

And the Beatitudes describe a world in which this begins to happen. 'Blessed are the merciful', those who forgive, says Jesus. 'Blessed are the pure in heart', those who don't hold on to grudges. 'Blessed are the peacemakers', who build a life and world of peace, love and forgiveness around them.

However, we struggle to do this on our own power, in our own power, so the Christian faith says that we need the help of the Holy Spirit.

We'll find out more about this next week, so Come and See...