

to satisfy. This was a dramatic scene.

No one had said anything to Jesus about the afflicted man but His every presence attracted the eye of Jesus who could detect needs wherever it might.

These long bearded hypocrites out of sympathy not for the poor fellow but for their own laws. You notice that they man does not say a thing. He does not say a word but yet he is in the public gaze.

I like what Jesus said to these ecclesiastical spies. He burns them up with two questions. Is it lawful to do good or to do evil on the Sabbath day? Is it lawful to save life or to kill? What could they say? Nothing and they haven't said anything yet. And they keep on holding their peace and we marvel at the scene.

When men did not know God they are always interested in trifles or trivial things. When men know God they know that the passion of his heart is ever full of understanding mercy. If David be hungry, he may eat of the show bread and the priests are warented in doing nothing on the Sabbath but this is an illustration of God is a mercy of which the rulers were ignorant. He was interpreting His Lordship of the Sabbath by what He did. Jesus knew their thought and He knew that they were whispering amogg themselves. Then he puts the question to them. Is it lawful to do good or evil?

INTRODUCTION: We come to the account of this incident where the disciples were in connection with the plucking of ears of corn on the Sabbath day and the observance of the Sabbath as to it place concerning work of necessity and mercy.

Where the Saviour was. He was in the synagogue, the public place of worship, the house of prayer and when Jesus is present there is sure to be interest. He loved to frequent the house of prayer. Do you love to frequent God's house of worship? If not you must be a stranger to Jesus.

I. Tradition

It is very interesting to note about this incident here that Matthew 12:9-14 tells us about and Luke 6:6-11. They tell us about the time and the place the time being the Sabbath, the place being the synagogue and Luke gives us some of the details about this man, and his ailment. He describes this man's hand as being the right hand that is withered or wasting away. The arm is small and useless loose flesh. It has lost it power and finally it is like a dead thing.

The note I would like to point out here is that tradition says that this man was a bricklayer who had come to our Lord and besought Him for a cure that he might be able to work for his bread and not have to beg. Disabled as he

was he was found in the place of public worship on the Sabbath day and got a blessing there. Now if we think about what tradition has to say we might use our imagination. Suppose this man had been a carpenter and he had been a right-handed man and that hand had been paralyzed and began to wither away. We can imagine how helpless he was to provide a living for his family, and therefore we do not know, this man might have been a bricklayer, he might have been a carpenter or if he had been a worker in an office and used his pencil with his right hand, he would have been at a loss to keep his job, to do the things that were necessary.

II. Trifles

When we come to think about the trifles we think of the group, the Pharisees, who were there in order they laid a snare for Jesus. They took prompt notice of His presence and the Bible said, they watched the Lord. Ever since the day when Jesus had said to the sick of the palsy, Thy sins are forgiven thee, they sought an occasion that they might get something against him.

They were always seeking to get a new accusation. Something they could bring up in the ways of rules of keeping the Sabbath or they could in the way of tradition. You remember according to the rules on the Sabbath day nothing of a medical kind could be done except in very extreme cases.

They evidently expected however, He would cure the man because it was His custom to help, to bless those wherever He might find them and there was only one man in the synagogue with any sort of disease that they could detect and they could not have overlooked this man because he had a withered hand, a paralyzed hand and arm and it was noticeable and therefore this was the thing that they were watching.

Now they were looking not with interest that Jesus might do something good, they were not interested in that. In the second place they were not concerned with the needs of any afflicted or suffering ones.

The rigid rules of their party was for keeping the Sabbath and transcended the importance of any other consideration. I wonder if you could just see this spious crowd with prejudice and hate, maliciously looking for the evidence upon which to accuse Jesus. It isn't any wonder that men today have little respect for these self-pious, self-righteous hypocritical people.

This gang saw Jesus go again in to the synagogue into which they knew a man had gone whose hand had become withered. This man perhaps because of some accident or some disease had this affliction. They cared nothing for the unfortunate man. They seemed to know that Jesus had the power to heal.

So one by one they filed in with their inhuman curiosity

because he would not have been allowed to enter in that condition in certain parts of the temple, but he found a place here to worship in the synagogue.

Perhaps he had been a regular attendant, going quietly from Sabbath to Sabbath therefore a regular worshipper.

It is evident that he was known, that the rulers knew about this man, the Pharisees knew about him. It is quite evident that they knew this man's condition ahead of time.

And we know that this man had a withered hand and if we could just use your imagination and see that he could not extend his fingers and they could not grasp anything. He could not put his hand to a plow. He could not take hold of the tools of a carpenter or a bricklayer.

And ~~these~~ this man had evidently they were not hostile against the man with the withered hand but they did expect Jesus to show him some concern and so they occupied the chief seats in the synagogue.

Here was a man who was severely handicapped. He could think of a lot of things that he wanted to do but his hand was withered and he could not translate his thoughts into deeds and work.

I have met a lot of people with this very same handicap. They had dreamed and they have planned and somehow they never seem to be able to carry out their dreams. The man was

To save life or destroy it? Here is a diseased person who has come or who has today enter into the synagogue in my presence. My attention is also yours and your eyes have been fixed upon this case and you say this is a question of work. But I will convince you in your own consciences that it is not a thing which may be lawfully be let alone. (Is) this poor man to be dismissed unhealed when the word can heal. Am I to do evil or Am I to do good?

It might be a good question for some Christians today? Are we to do evil or good on the Sabbath day? Are we seeking to save life or to destroy it on the Sabbath day?

In a story Matt. 11:11-12 Jesus talks to them, if it had been your own property what would you have done? Used a sheep that is fallen into the pit of the Sabbath day. How then much more is it better if a man than a sheep. He is their shepherd. They may hold one another, cheap and valueless but they have an immortal work in His eyes. A man is better than the sheep. Now this is really elementary teaching. It might be needful for these blind Pharisees of old to be told so. Yes, we know better but to do better is the thing.

There are people today who do not place a great deal of value upon man and upon individuals and laborers today may not be as well housed as the masters or as well housed as the animals that share in their labor. A man better than a sheep.

So the question is properly put. The objectors held their peace. They were silent.

They looked around about among themselves and Jesus looked among them, His searching glance ran the whole company to see what was going on in their hearts and here was holy resentment, anger in the hearts of Jesus because of the blindness of these people. Going from one to another there was anger. Nowhere are we told not to hate the Devil and the Devil never had more energetic representatives ~~xxx~~ than these Pharisees and we need some honest hatred of wrong today. And Jesus manifested His hatred of this wrong.

Jesus also was grieved in His heart because of the hardness of their hearts. Jesus saw their hearts as being withered. Those who watched to accuse this class never ceases out of the house of God. There are always the fault-finders and these people have withered hearts and Jesus said, Is it good for me to do when I can do so and to save when you might kill and these accusers were speechless and I wonder sometimes if we are among those who are just religious in form.

And when Jesus was here dealing with this man there was (no examination) of the disease, there was (no preparation) of the cure, there was (no touching) even of the withered limb. There was no outward act of healing at all. He just simply said to the man, Stretch out thine hand and the miracle took place,

we observe.

And this ~~group~~ who were given to thinking about trifles, were filled with madness and with rage at their defeat that He was breaking their traditional rules and there was the fall of their authority and already they were thinking of these early days about putting Him to death.

III. Things about This man

This man had a physical disability. A man who had a hand withered. It was easily the result of an (accident) or a contracted (disease). It was undoubtedly a (case) of disabling, disability resulting from some breaking of the law in some way at some time. All that may have had a bearing on this story. Of course there is no reference here to these facts but we may deduct such and we see that the work of our Lord, the Great Physician that every parable of Jesus was a miracle of wisdom and every miracle was a parable for teaching.

Our Lord's attitude, He (never divided) between the physical and spirit. He never recognized our division of life into the secular and sacred; All the things which we call secular when He touched them and dealt with them and he dealt with physical disability here and He deals with moral and spiritual things in the same way.

There are a few things that are revealed about this man. He was ~~found~~ found here in the synagogue which was really unusual

V. Tragic Inability

Our first reaction as we listen we will be conscious of the man's inability to do what he is told. To stretch forth his hand had probably been the desire of his ~~heart~~ heart for years. He perhaps had made numerous (tries) he had (massaged) his hand. He had probably (treated) his hand in some special way, but he did feel the life forces of his body passing through those fingers and that hand. This was an impossible thing. Because it was impossible the command we would have said, was unreasonable.

There would have been impatience among us had we been there. Nevertheless it is good for us to face this matter and to use our imagination as we look into the face of Jesus we know that the command is possible because Jesus commands it.

He was (not there) to reveal the man's disability but to save him and to put an end to it. Behind the person of Jesus there is the power of God. He commands him to stand forth and to stretch for his hand and this command came from the mercy of God which these critics were ignorant of and perhaps they were arguing that this is an impossibility, this is unreasonable mess, this is impossible.

VII. True Spiritual Experience

Now when we lift this whole story and put it in the realm of spiritual, we see only more the facts that Christ

telling me recently that for years he had wanted to become active in the work of the church and make his life count for more but he just kept putting it off and he ~~could~~ couldn't quite make the step. He has the right idea but his hand is withered.

I've talked with many people who have a liquor problem and I have never talked to very few of them but they ~~wanted~~ weren't quick to say that it was hurting their lives, they wanted to give it up but so often their hands are withered and they can't quit carry out their good thoughts.

I have heard people talk about becoming tithers. They have been talking about it for years and they have been thinking about it, they want to tithe but their hand is withered and they have never actually gotten around to tithing. There are many who make a pass at it some sort of an effort but they never truly come to the place where they will put their tithe into the church, God's storehouse to be used for His glory.

To some extent all of us are afflicted with a handicapped of the withered hand. We have so many good things in mind that we never put them in deeds. We never do them. At a funeral I heard a friend say that he had known for a long time this man who died and he heard about him being sick, he intended to visit him but he kept putting it off and now the man is dead and it is too late.

If wishes were horses, all beggars would ride, somebody

has said. Lindberg flew the Atlantic. He dreamed about it first, Edison thought about electricity for a long time and all great actions begin in our minds.

Your own mind, you see how many good things that you think about which you have thought about doing. You haven't had the right opportunity yet or you think you lack the ability or you believe you haven't had enough training or you haven't had the time or you don't feel like it all of these excuses are just other names for the withered hand.

IV. Twice the Lord Spoke

Let us not forget these two things. This man was disabled and second he was in a place of worship. He was where he could find Jesus. Now Jesus spoke to him twice. He gave him two commands.

Stand forth, quite literally means to arise into the midst. Evidently the man was seated somewhere in the synagogue and the Lord first called for his attention, his observation, and he commanded him to stand. Our Lord separated this man from the crowd. The man immediately obeyed and here so often we are haunted by things. Christ calls us and the fact remains that our Lord brought him to a place of visibility in order that what was about to take place might be seen by all. And Jesus commands today that a man come out on his side and confess Him publicly.

Now this is equal to our giving an invitation for a man to step out and walk this aisle and come and stand here before the people and separate himself from among the crowd. That he is opening his heart for the blessings of Christ.

This would be very pleasant exercise for this man to stand at the command of Jesus and we notice here that he did not conceal his need. He did not desire to conceal it. "He that covereth his sin shall not prosper. You cannot be in a fit state to be saved so long as you are ashamed to confess your need. Jesus could have cured this man as easily as standing. He could have allowed this man to remain in his seat in the midst of the crowd just as easily but He commands him to stand forth.

The second word that he said to him was, stretch forth thy hand, stretch forth thy hand. This is a brief and definite command. It may be rendered literally, Extent thy hand. And it is full of suggestion. It reveals the fact that our Lord called for an activity in the hand that was quite limp and helpless. If we place ourselves and imagination in that synagogue, we shall the better understand the thing that happened. Let us imagine that we are among the number of those attending the synagogue and that we know the man and we have seen this man quite often and we listen to these two statements from Jesus.

To receive the benefits that Christ is waiting to bestow there must first be a consciousness of needs.

Second, there must be a will and a determination to obey. However impossible it may seem and yes, I can do all things through Christ that strengtheneth me. And electric car cannot operate without that overhead contact with the wire. And we look at that car standing perfectly still in the dark but when that trolley wire is connected to the car then we see the lights and the motion of that car. And we look at this man and we see presently his arm move, his hand move, and there is power and there is movement.

Christ is God is all the power you need to move and to remove moral and spiritual disabilities.

The trouble with us has been so often that we have hesitated and failed to obey that they word of command the word which calls for complete abandonment and obedience. ~~There is~~ Dare we, to say in the presence of Christ, I can't do this thing. Oh but would we say, At thy command, at this moment, I will venture.

VI. Time for You to Act.

Now Jesus said, rise up stand forth. The courage of faith and second command was to stretch forth, thine hand. The test the deeper inner faith, the spiritual needs. Here is

always brings men face to face with the impossible. He lays upon them a command that in their own strength they cannot obey.

We see further the reasonableness of his command. Because he is waiting to communicate the very power that is necessary for obedience. Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous his thoughts and we say we cannot obey.

If any man will come after me, let him deny himself. That is where Christian experience always begins. If men are endeavoring to become Christians by cultivating pleasant ideas which are involved in the Christian message they have not begun to know Christianity really is. Christ compels us to face our disability.

Oliver Wendell Holmes said, Many people die with their music still in them. Well, to some extent this is true also for us. We have abilities to do many things, and we never actually do them.

Emerson said, You never know what you can do until you try. We need the power of religious faith.

Jesus met in church that day a man with a withered hand. He told him to stand forth. He wanted his full attention. Stretch forth thine hand. Jesus did not talk about how bad it was or what it was to have a withered hand. He did not ask the man how long it had been withered. He did not ask

him why it was withered, He just said, Stretch forth. And Jesus did not pass away a whole lot of time in talking to this man.

And we have witnessed that the man was incapable of action by himself. And many times he had wanted to use that hand but he couldn't. His will power was not strong enough to overcome the weakness of his body. We make a lot of resolutions but we fail to keep them.

An old colored man was trying to get a balky mule to move. Without success. Somebody said, Uncle, why don't you try your will power on that mule. He replied, I don't try it but it won't do no good. He's using his (won't) power.

Within each of us there is both will power and won't power. We have a high desire that it is no use to try to and if we say I will but our minds shout back at us and says, You can't or you won't. Your won't power is simply will power in reverse.

When I think about Moses that young man who had will power to deliver the children of Israel and he killed an Egyptian one day and he thought he was going to set them free but he saw and realized the task was hopeless and his hand was withered and he went off into the country and day after day watched the sheep. Well, he intended to do something about it some time but time slipped by. The days and the months

and finally 40 years had gone by and God had to take a hand. God first had to get Moses attention with the burning bush, the fire that did not consume the bush.

God may do many things to (get your attention) and mine. To give us a chance to do something. God spoke telling him to go and lead the people but Moses said, I do not have the power and God said, well, I am going to give you that power. And He helped him to overcome armies and obstacles.

This man obeyed God rather than men. Now he doubtless knew what was going on in this meeting. This man was doubtless aware of the malice of the Pharisees and he knew that they were watching Jesus to accuse Him of healing on the Sabbath day. But He was ready to obey God and when the heart responds to the guidance of the spirit it is quick to discern what Christ wants to do.

When we summarize this spiritually this man was conscious of his need and never more so than on this Sabbath day.

We see that this man launched out on a (venture of faith) and trust in response and of deeds.

We see that he immediately found salvation. It was not a case of waiting to obey until there was a consciousness of healing. We see these spiritual values here.

thing some time and we'll never get around to doing it. Our hands are withered. His power can make us what we ought to be.

Now remember as we think that it is time for you to act there are two things to keep in mind, about this whole thing.

First of all, the man was restored, his hand was restored.

Nothing is impossible with God. When this man stood forth and if you will make the fullest most honest confession for your sins, you may confidently expect forgiveness. Adam put forth his hand and took forbidden fruit and immediately his spiritual hand was withered and all his sons were born with a withered hand. They can deceive nothing unless it be given of God and God wants to heal you and save you.

The second thing to remember is that Jesus withdrew himself from this critical group of people. There are three classes of people from whom Jesus withdraws himself. First the faultfinding. We see that clearly in this story. People who are always criticizing and knocking and finding fault Jesus is going to withdraw from. Second the curious. John 12:21:36. Those who are just sightseers, onlookers and third from the unwilling, Luke 8:37. How sad it is when Jesus turns his back on those who are blind.

Here is your choice. Your solemn Restoration or withdrawal. Will you be made whole or must Jesus depart?

complete reliance on Christ. His hand was withered. He could not do this thing that he was bid to do.

You say, I have no spiritual ability, I cannot repent. I cannot believe? I cannot come to Christ. And yet the divine command is repent. Believe, come unto me and live.

You ought to come but God never bids you to come but what He gives strength for the decision to be made. Suppose this man had said, I cannot do this thing. It is my disease that I cannot move as many times as individuals say about some sinful habit they possess. Liquor has me, I can't move. I cannot give it up. But who was the speaker? This was no common passerby. This was Jesus. And who is the speaker who says today, Look unto me and be ye saved. Come unto me and rest. Believe and live. A single one of us say I cannot. If it were only the advice of a preacher or some friend then you might have answered the prescription and say I cannot believe this.

Use your imagination. Look at this man with his hand made whole. Suppose ~~that~~ now that he has been healed and goes home feeling wonderful but he says I feel the power going through these fingers. I can now stretch them forth, I can now use it. I can grasp something. It is now all so wonderful and so much better and he says in order to undertake this and treat this hand specially, I am going to bind it up with

bandages and I am going to put it in a sling and I am going to carefully place it in my bosom in order to take care of it. What do you think would happen to that hand. The answer is inevitable. It would have withered again. The only way in which to strengthen that restored hand could be maintained was by using it.

Our churches are filled with men and women today whose hands have been cured but they have bound up those hands and their spiritual lives are withering away.

You can do it. Stretch forth thine hand. Notice the complete confidence of Christ. No doubt the man would and would respond. Jesus is saying, (you can do it.) Up to now the man had (not been able) to do it. His own will power was insufficient.

Now this thing (often happens). In our church services quite often an individual will come to the altar and accept and confess Jesus Christ. What is this secret? It is the (presence of God). It is the support of the (praying people) in this congregation and we could write a book about the experiences of people who have been saved here at this altar. Who could imagine all that God has been able to accomplish through just giving a simple command.

For an illustration there was a man that I read about

who said, I quit my job. I knew something in the circumstances were hard and debts he had given up in despair and he thought about doing better but he never quite got the nerve to do it. And so one day he heard the Lord's voice saying to him, Go ahead and I'll help you. He decided to act on the basis of the Lord's command and he said for the first time in his life he felt relaxed and he felt that something wonderful was going to happen in his life. And that very morning on the parking lot he met a man who drove up behind him ~~xxx~~ who said, I would like to talk to you. And so the two of them talked a while and he said he told his friend about his decision and his friend promised to look around for him and before lunch that day he said that man called him and his partner in business had died and he said that he was looking for someone to take over that part of the interest. He told his friend that he did not have money to do that but his friend said, Well, I will work out a way so that you can use some of the profits of the business and we'll fix it up. Then he said this to his friend, (I wonder) why the Lord didn't do something like this 10 years ago. And his friend said to him, you were (not willing to listen to God until you got desperate.) Then you opened your heart to God and you became willing to do something.

Many times we hear (a voice) saying, stretch forth thine hand but we hold back. We hesitate. We are planning to do the