

Healing of the withered hand

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[0 : 0 0] to the topics we read a few minutes ago in the Gospel according to Mark, chapter 3, and reading from verse 1, we look at this section down to the beginning of verse 7. Last week we saw how the disciples plucked the ears of corn in the field and the Pharisees found fault with them. And we saw the principles that Jesus laid down as far as Sabbath keeping was concerned. Jesus said that what was necessary was lawful on the Sabbath, what was done for God was lawful, works of mercy were lawful. He said that the Sabbath was made for the good of man rather than man being made for the Sabbath. And he finally said that he himself was Lord also of the Sabbath. And yet in the story before us tonight, it is clear that in spite of all that Jesus has said, that these Pharisees are still trying to find fault with him. They are watching him to see if he will heal on the Sabbath in order that they might accuse him. And I would like tonight to look with you at the story of the healing of the man with the withered hand. And I would like to lay the emphasis tonight, not so much on the Sabbath as on the Saviour. After all, we saw last week that he is Lord of the Sabbath. And it is surely profitable for us to look tonight at what our Lord does on the Sabbath day. If you look at the verses before us, you will find again and again that the emphasis is put on Jesus. The pronouns he and him are used at least ten times in the time. And I would like to take from that the idea that the emphasis that we ought to have tonight should be on Jesus himself.

Now, having said that, there are five points that I want just to consider with you briefly this evening. And I'll try and make the sermon as simple and as straightforward as I can. The first point is this, where Jesus was. The second, whom Jesus met. The third, what Jesus said.

Yes, felt. And the fifth, what Jesus did. And I think that if we hang our thoughts on these headings, that there might be something in our world, that there might be something in our world. And so, that will be of some benefit to us. So, the first point is where Jesus was. We read that he entered again into the synagogue. Now, you might think that there was nothing startling about that. After all, it was Jesus' custom to go to the synagogue on the Sabbath. And yet, if you bear in mind that the the context of the context, Jesus has just about had enough of the scribes and the Pharisees. He has found himself arguing with them. And he is painfully aware of their hypocrisy and of their opposition. And yet, he doesn't make these things excuses for keeping them.

And in order that he is. And in order that he might perform miracles. He went to the synagogue to glorify God. And it was very interesting that it was in the synagogue that we find Jesus performing this miracle. Now, applying this to ourselves, I wonder if we like to be where God's people are.

And you're gathered together to worship. Or you might say there's a lot of hypocrites go to church. And you're dead right. There's a lot of hypocrites go to church. You might say, they've no time for me, these people who go to the house of God.

[5 : 4 3] I wouldn't judge as to whether that kind of judgment. There's no doubt that you will find people in churches who don't care very much for the man and woman who's outside.

But the word of God doesn't allow us to make an excuse of us. And we're not an excuse of that for absenting ourselves from the public place of worship.

Jesus has promised to be present. But two or three gathered together in his name. And that ought to be sent to the church.

Let us not be ashamed of being identified with the worshiping people of God. Well, I wonder if any of us know anything of what it is to be afraid of what people think of us for coming to public worship.

I wonder if any of us.

[7 : 39] And that brings me conveniently to the second of the five points. Whom Jesus met in the synagogue.

And I want to answer this question, who did Jesus meet, in two ways. First of all we read that he met a man who had a withered hand.

And then I think in verse 2 we can say that he met men who had withered hearts. A man with a withered hand and men with withered hearts.

Now let me explain what I mean. Let's take each of these in turn. Luke tells us that it was the man's white hand that had been rendered useless.

A hand that used to be healthy and strong is now rendered absolutely useless.

[8 : 47] It is weak and it is without strength. But it is interesting to find that the man with his hand is found under the instruction of Christ.

He is not only looking for help. He wants to learn of God. There are some who think that he was a man who in the past was quite an active character.

And now is unable to do anything. And if that's true then that reminds us of the way it is with many Christians. Sadly there are Christians who are tonight in a backslidden condition.

Who once used to work for God. Who once were employed in the Lord's service. And whose hands are tonight withered.

I don't know if there's any such in here. But if there is. Surely your desire ought to be to be renewed by God.

[9 : 54] There may be some. We certainly know of some. Who were once active in the Lord's service. And who have now rendered themselves inactive.

Well God can restore that person to his former usefulness. There are others who suggest that the man's hand had always been worthy.

And if that's the case. Then it reminds us of the condition of man by nature. And of the fact that by nature.

We can do nothing to serve God. Until God changes our condition. Again. Whichever way you want to take it.

The important thing is that the man was present. And that the Saviour was ready to meet him. He is always ready to meet.

[10 : 54] With the man, with the woman. Who realises hers and her need of his help. And so I ask you to know. If you're backslidden.

Do you want to be restored? Do you want to be renewed? And if you've never known the Lord. Do you want to find him? Do you want spiritual healing for your soul?

Do you want to meet with Jesus? Well Jesus met with this man. We'll see what happened later on. But we notice that Jesus met with others.

In the synagogue as well. He met with the religious people. Who were watching. To see if he would heal on the Sabbath day.

In order that they might accuse him. We can say that they were men with widowed hearts. Men who had no time for Jesus. Who wanted to trip him up.

[11 : 59] There are at least nine references in the New Testament. I say at least because there may very well be more. To men trying to craft Christ.

Trying to lay snares for Jesus. Those of us who were able to be here in the morning. We saw how the devil is always lurking around.

In order to devour the Christian. Well we find tonight. That men are also looking out.

For opportunities to trip up. Not only the Christian. But Christ himself. Trying to find fault with the Saviour.

And if they were like this with Christ. If they were watching Christ. In order to try and find fault with him. How much more.

[12 : 58] We who say we're Christ. Ought to watch. As these men are certainly. Trying to destroy. Our Christian commitment.

In our day. Well these men. They were there. With this purpose in mind. To accuse Christ. In order.

To be able to accuse. Of having done. That was the law. Down through the centuries. Christians have been.

Not only open to this kind of attack. But on many occasions. Christians have been brought to nothing. As a result.

Of the schemes. Of such people. Now I'm not going to say. That we have any such person present. In this congregation tonight.

[13 : 57] I would certainly. Trust. And pray. That none of us. Would ever have the spirit of the Pharisee. The spirit of the.

Religious non-Christian. Who wants to trip up. Those who name. The name of Christ. Christ. But I know. That these have been present.

In every age. And that we need to be on our guard. From them. And so Jesus met them. As well. He encountered.

That kind. Of individual. But we see next. Not only where Jesus was. And those whom Jesus met.

But we see next. What Jesus said. Jesus didn't stay silent. When he met these men. Jesus spoke.

[14 : 57] First of all. To the man with the withered hands. And then. To the men. With the withered hearts. What did Jesus say. To the man with the withered hand.

In verse 3 we read. He said. To the man with the withered hand. Stand. For. Now that means. Stand up. In the middle.

Of the congregation. And stand up. In a place. Where the people. Can see. Maybe the man. Was trying to hide.

The back. But his hand. Was withered. Maybe. Maybe he was trying to pretend. That he was just as able-bodied. As everybody else.

But Jesus sees him. And Jesus knows. That he has need. And Jesus makes the man. Confess his need.

[15 : 56] In public. God. And then applying that to ourselves. There are many Christians. In a backslidden condition. Who try to hide that fact.

From others. There are many Christians. who try even. To cover up. The sin. Of which they know. They're guilty. The Bible tells us.

That he that covers up the sins. Will not prosper. We need. To confess. Our sin. We need. If I can use a term.

That's often used today. We need. To come clean. We need. To confess. Our need. Of Christ. And I believe in this congregation tonight.

There are two types of need. Among us. Those of us. Who say we're Christians. All of us I believe. Without exception.

[16 : 59] We need. To be renewed. In our. Christian lives. In order that we might become. More like Christ.

And if there's any Christian. Imagining that he or she. Doesn't need. To be made more like Christ. Than he or she is. I would say that there's something.

Radically wrong. With your thinking. We all. To be made more like Christ. Than we are. And we need to confess that.

Before the Lord. Not only in private. But in public. That's why. As I live. In public prayer. I confess.

Sin. Before God. Not only my own. But a collective sin. In order. That God. May forgive us. And in order.

[17 : 56] That God. May renew us. And so we need to come. For a public confession. Of our need. Of more. Of Christ. And of what he has for.

And as far as those who are. Unconverted. Are concerned. There is nothing that. God may be longing for more. Than for you.

To make. Open confession. Of your need. Of Christ. You might. And I haven't intended to say this.

But say it. I feel I must. You might. Tonight. Be here. Deep down in your heart. You know.

That there is something wrong with you. You know. That spiritually. You need to be healed. Maybe you have even thought of. Of asking some Christian.

[18 : 52] That you know for help. And I would like. To think. That all who say that Christians. In our congregation. Would be willing.

To try and help. I would like to think that. But maybe you are thinking. I don't want to bother them. With my silly questions. I don't want.

You to bother them. To waste their time. Maybe they can't help me. Well we can't heal them. That's for sure. But we can help.

By pointing to Christ. And if you feel lovely. And that's. Quite honestly. There's nothing I long to hope. That for somebody.

In the congregation. To come and to say. How can I. Be made right with God. There's nothing that thrills a pastor's heart.

[19 : 53] More than to have people come. And ask them. To be pointed. To the way of salvation. There's nothing. That gives us more of a thrill.

Than to be able to point people to the Lord. To be able to. And maybe sometimes. Our highlight. Westerston keeps us back. From coming with these kind.

Of questions. But you need. Certainly tonight. Before God. To confess your need of him. If you're not his. And.

I want you to know tonight. That there are Christians. In this congregation. Who are prepared to help you. If you go to.

And to do so. In complete confidence. It is. A healthy sign. When in a fellowship. Of men and women.

[20 : 52] There are those who are. Able. And ready. And willing. To help us. Get right. With God. And I would love. To hear those.

Who know. That they need to save. Asking the age old question. What must I do. To be saved.

Coming out. And confessing. Need. Need. And so this man. Comes out. And this man. Confesses. Need.

But maybe you're worried. About doing that. On account of what some people. Might think. Or even. Say. And do. What will people think.

If they discover. That I'm seeking the Lord. What will people say. If they find out. That. I want.

[21 : 51] To be a Christian. What will people do. If I come. After Christ. Well people.

May think. All sorts of things. And people may say. And do. All sorts of things. That Jesus. Has a word.

To say. Not only to you. But to them. And Jesus. Will. See to it. That they.

Who. Dare. Opposed. Dare. Try to support him. As you see to the Savior. He will see to it. That they will be put.

In that place. And he fairly puts. The religious. People. Whom he confronts. In our story tonight. In that place. He says to them.

[22 : 48] Is it lawful. To do good. On the Sabbath day. Or to do evil. To save life. Or. To kill.

Jesus is going back. To the principle. That we looked at last week. That it is good. To show mercy. On the Sabbath. On the Sabbath. Jesus is saying more than that.

I believe Jesus is saying this. That if we don't do good. When the opportunity arises. Then we're doing evil. If we don't take the opportunities presented to us.

To do good. Even on the Sabbath. Then we're doing evil. If we don't go out of our way to save men and women.

Then we're guilty of murder. Then we're guilty of murder. And that has all kinds of implications for the question of dyslexia. Which has been raised in our society today.

[23 : 53] But Jesus is clear on it. That if we don't do what we can to save. Then we are guilty of murder. And Jesus is saying to them.

Is it law which could save life? Obsolete. You people who are always stressing what's right. You people who are always laying down the law.

After what's permitted on the Sabbath. You people who are always stressing minor things. Are you not guilty of neglecting much more important things?

Is it not lawful to do good? Is it not lawful to save life? Is it not lawful to help one another on the Sabbath?

Now it's very interesting that the man in the story tonight. He wasn't dying. It wasn't as if he would have died if he hadn't been healed.

[25 : 00] Until the following days. The disciples wouldn't have died of hunger. If they hadn't held themselves to the cross. But you see Jesus isn't saying that we've got to wait.

Until people are at the point of death. Before helping them on the Sabbath. Not at all. He doesn't say that. What he says is. If they're in need, have them.

If the opportunity arises to do good. Do it. And in Matthew's account. Jesus speaks of the sheep that fall into the pit.

And he says. Which one of you won't rest with your sheep? If your sheep falls into a pit. On the Sabbath. Of course you will rest with you. You won't leave it there.

How much more is a man better than a sheep? Now don't say from that that the Lord wasn't interested in sheep. Of course he was.

[26 : 01] Of course he was. Very interested in sheep. And he cared very much for sheep. The Lord cares for the animal. He preserved man and beast.

God is good to the animal as well as to the human. But the Bible stresses that man is much more important to God.

On account of the fact, as we saw the other evening, that man is created in God's image. And as I said then, man is not a higher form of animal.

Man and man alone is created in the image of God. And so Jesus told to these men, he says, is it not lawful for me to help this man on this Sabbath?

And how do they react? They're silenced before him. But they held that peace. I think there's two things there that I've just mentioned.

[27 : 00] They don't want to admit to the fact that what Jesus is saying is true. But on the other hand, they don't dare deny it. They don't want to admit to it on the one hand, and they don't dare deny it on the other.

And so they're silenced before God. You believe the word of God. As far as those who would try to criticize or condemn you for being associated with Christianity of concern, your critics will be silenced.

Just as true as these critics were silenced. And they would be silenced at last on the great day when they appear before God and have nothing to say in their own defense.

And you will be openly acknowledged and acquitted on the day of judgment. But we know this is important. What Jesus felt.

What Jesus felt. He looked round about on them with anger. Being grieved for the hardness of their hearts.

[28 : 20] There are two things that Jesus felt according to these words. First of all, he felt anger. There are some who try to tell us that there's no word of God's anger in the New Testament.

Those who try to tell us that Christ was never angry. And they're wrong. Christ was angry. Christ knew what it was to burn with holy indignation.

He threw up the temple. Those who were abusing the house of God. And he was angry with those who dared take to do with those whom he was trying to help.

He was angry with them. Now let's be careful. As far as following Christ's example is concerned.

There is a place for intolerance within the Christian church. Intolerance of evil. There is a place for that.

[29 : 35] The church must be intolerant of evil. The Christian must be intolerant of evil in his own heart. And so there is a place for anger at that level.

But as far as our anger is concerned. The Bible says, And we can't quote better than the Bible. Be ye angry and sin not.

Let not the sun go down on your fire. Jesus was angry. Jesus was angry. And yet there was no sinfulness in his anger.

I've never been angry without sin. I've never yet managed to fulfill the biblical injunction. To be angry without sin. I wonder if anyone here has.

But not only did he feel anger. Jesus also felt grief. The two went together. He was grieved.

- [30 : 40] But what was it that grieved? It was the hardness. Of the parisacal heart. Their stubbornness. Their blindness.
- Their ignorance. Their reaction. Called Christ. Now I wonder tonight. that Christ screamed. With the reaction of anyone here. Jesus Christ. Because according to scripture. Christ is grieved. When men and women. Would accept.
- Christ said. On another occasion. Weep not. For me. But weep. For yourselves.
- And for your children. There is nothing. Causes. God more grief. Than for men and women.
- [31 : 40] To reject. The gospel. And for men and women. To harden. Their hearts. Under. The gospel. And I'll be quite astonished.
- If there's no one here. Of whom it is true. That his heart is not hardening. Under the word of God. And I want you.
- If tonight. You are hardening. Under the word. And if you are. I want you to know. What Jesus sees. Of his heart. If tonight.
- You are willing to. Rejecting the gospel. Turning a death a year. Or applying right to it. You could do nothing. To cause.
- More grief than that. That's what Jesus said. Anger. And grief. But next. And finally. We see.
- [32 : 38] What Jesus said. Where Jesus was. Whom Jesus met. What Jesus said. What Jesus said.
- And now. What Jesus did. There are several things. First of all. He said to the man. Stretch forth his hand.
- And he stretched it out. And his hand. His sword. Whole. As the other. In other words. Christ. Gave a command. The man.
- Complied. And his hand. Was cured. There's nothing. Impossible. The third. The man. Doesn't say. But I can't. Stretch out. My hand. It's will. As the command. Came. So he complied. Until he knew the truth.
- [33 : 34] Now let me apply that. A little bit. God's calling on. Those who have wandered away from him. To come back to him. He gives you no.
- Place for sin. I can't come back. He's commanding you. To come back. O sons of men. O sons of men. Richard. And as you hear back a minute.
- You come back to Christ. And you will receive. More than you thought possible. As the blessedness you knew when first you saw the Lord.
- To restore it to your soul. What about the unconverted person? What does God command all men everywhere to do? Not just some men.
- Not even those who hear the gospel. But all men. He calls upon all men everywhere to repent. And be. To come to themselves. And he gives you no reason at all to say I can't.
- [34 : 38] After God's own speech. It is God's power to salvation. He doesn't give you enough. But he commands. You are.
- To comply. To come. And to be cured. He doesn't want you to stay away. He doesn't want you to disobey.
- Your duty is to believe. Your duty is. To accept. I'm not going into all the theological complexities tonight.

Of inability and so on. Because I don't believe that that is. The point that I ought to stress in this service. What I ought to stress in this service. Is the power of God to do the impossible.

Humanly speaking it was impossible for a man. To do what he did. But by the power of God he was able to do. Humanly speaking it's impossible. For a sinner on his own to come to Christ.

[35 : 39] But by the power of God he comes. And if you say tonight. Well I haven't come yet. And I can't come. Ask the Lord. He sends forth his word. And he will not only bring the good sense.

But he will be needed. He sends forth his word. And then from their destruction.

I don't find Christ saying. Keep clear. Keep with it. Christ comes. Christ comes. And Christ says.

Come to me. I read some of this verse. O sinners. Come to Jesus. All other trust is vain.

Your every hope must fail you. Unless you're born again. You need to be cleansed in fountain. To purge your heart within. And purify your conscience.

[36 : 38] From all the stains of sin. Will you come tonight. And will you be cleansed by Christ. Who thy diseases all and pains.

Death heals. And be relieved. But that's only one aspect. Of the past. Not only does Jesus do this for the man.

Jesus also encourages the wrath. Of those who are there. This is what he does to them.

This is the reaction. That we find coming from them. When the man is cured. The Pharisees went forth. And immediately took counsel.

With the Herodians against him. How they might destroy him. Luke tells us very interestingly. That they were filled with madness.

[37 : 34] They were given to an unholy rage. When they saw what happened. And according to this gospel. They went and they took counsel.

With the Herodians. Now you say. Who were the Herodians? The Herodians. The Herodians were those. Who looked after the interests. Of the Romans. And who were the servants.

Of the Romans. And normally. The Pharisees. And the Herodians. Were a Jewish. Most bitter end. They couldn't stand. On another voice.

They were always a Jewish. And yet. When it comes. To Christ. They combine together. Against her. The Pharisees. Well. As it were.

The abhorrent. Of the. Religious side. Of the nations. Of the. And the Herodians. Who could. On themselves. To move after. The more secular. Or social side.

[38 : 28] And the one. Couldn't stand. The other. But here. They come together. Against Christ. Now do I really have to refer.

To the psalm we were singing. Just before the sale. A psalm that reminds us. Of the reaction of those. Who. Are against Christ. Kings of the earth.

And princes combined. To plot. Against. The Lord. And to the earth. It doesn't matter. It doesn't matter. Whether we're religious.

Or worldly. I mean religious. In a non-Christian. Then. With the Lord. Then. And we've. Vent on one thing. And that is.

The destruction. Of Christianity. Saul of Tarshish. Was a very religious man. But his. Intent was. To destroy.

[39 : 27] The Christians. The Pharisees. And the Herodians. To counsel. Together. How. They might.

Destroy him. That was. Their aim. That was. Their desire. Amen. I would claim. That there's no way. Of that can be.

But I know. That there are men and women. In the world. Tonight. Of this kind. Of spirit. And what does Jesus do? As he.

Realizes. The opposition. That has been. Aroused. Jesus. With. Through. With. His disciples.

To the same. Now in the Bible. We read. Of Jesus. Withdrawing. On three different locations. Jesus. He withdrew. From the Greeks.

[40 : 23] Who were. Going to see him. Because there were. Chiris. About him. He withdrew. From them. He withdrew. From the Gadarenes. Because they were.

Unwilling to have him. In their midst. For us. If you just. Curious. About Christ. Then. He may withdraw. From you as well.

If it's only. Curious. if you're unwilling to have Christ in your life he will certainly withdraw from you but in our story tonight we find him withdrawing from those who find fault with him and not only does he withdraw but his disciples go with him now I wonder this evening what our reaction is to Christ I believe that we're presented with only two choices tonight as we come face to face with Jesus the choices are being on the one hand that we be restored by Christ as the man had his withered hand restored restored either to what we once had or restored in the sense of coming to know the God from whom we not have we felt the only alternative to that is that we will know Christ taking his leave of us withdrawing from us my spirit says Jesus will not always strive with man

Jesus also tells us not to grieve the Holy Spirit there have been community there have been camps where God was once present and where tonight he's absent there were churches that were filled and have now been raised to the ground the Lord has removed the candle stick from that nest it hasn't happened to you yet praise the Lord for that and we're encouraged to see tonight you've got so many who can't hear the gospel but let's be warned that if we will not receive then we will withdraw I hope that none of us want to make Christ withdraw from us that none of us want to grieve him in that way but that we want him to carry and that we want him to restore us into his image in which we were made in the precious and from which we fall on account of sin and so as I conclude this sermon tonight

I ask the question has Jesus done anything for you if he has praise him for it and ask that you will know more of his work in your life if he has it is really tonight to meet you to deal with you and to make you his own and where God begins that work he will bring it to perfection in the day of Christ that then is just a little of what we are told in this narrative about the Lord of the Sabbath what our Sabbath this day would be for us if we came to know Jesus for ourselves I trust that all will be able to say tonight about Christ my Lord and my God will you go with this man and she said I will will you go with Jesus who is called to have or will you go away and follow no longer the choice is the

[44 : 33] Jesus follow the man and no longer to our fidelity Amen Lord of the choices you brought to our attention again to us that we have to move may thy spirit work in our hearts and may we all say that we will follow the Lord we thank thee that the disciples follow thee yourix and mayindi want to