

Mark 3:1-6 “Withered No More!”

David was 11 yrs old when he received a parrot for his birthday.

This parrot was fully grown with a bad attitude and worse vocabulary. **Always using foul language./ Rude**

David tried hard to change the bird's attitude and was constantly saying **polite words, playing soft music**, anything he could think of to try and set a good example

... Nothing worked. He yelled at the bird and the bird got worse. He shook the bird and the bird **got more angry and more rude.**

Finally, in a moment of desperation, David put the parrot in the freezer. For a few moments he heard the bird squawking and **kicking & screaming**--then suddenly there was quiet.

David was frightened that he might have actually hurt the bird and quickly opened the freezer door.

The parrot calmly stepped out onto David's extended arm and said: **"I'm sorry that I might have offended you with my language and actions and ask for your forgiveness. I will endeavor to correct my behavior."**

David was astounded at the bird's change in attitude and was about to ask what had made such a drastic change when parrot continued:

"May I ask what the chicken did?"

Seeing that type of transformation is something we are interested in for ourselves & others

How do we change – how do we improve -

One of the Reasons self help books are so popular today - #1 Best sellers – Usually it is the recycling of old ideas. -

A)And often times these books lay out a bunch of principles or some programs to follow

B) Personally I just don't think it is that complicated

1) The story we are looking at today is a good example of that.

C)Set the scene: **Jesus is still in Capernaum – it is the Sabbath day – so He heads to the synagogue for worship. – Interesting encounter**

RD Mark 3:1-6

Today as we look at this encounter of Christ – I want to key in on 4 things.

#1 The man with the withered hand

A)Jesus is drawn to this guy – He always sees those who are hurting

B) This man's life was affected on 3 plains

PHYSICALLY

C) The historian Jerome tells us there is strong traditional evidence that the man with the paralyzed hand was a **stone mason.**

D) If so, his paralysis would have very definitely affected his income.

1) Almost impossible to make a living.

E) Therefore the well being of his entire family would have been affected.

Emotionally

A) Medicine in those days was pretty primitive.

B) So there would **have been no painkillers to help alleviate the pain he undoubtedly felt in his arm and through his chest.**

C) Plus we can only imagine the emotional discouragement he dealt w/ because his life had been so affected.

Spiritually

A) The Guy was at Church – Right place to be when you are hurting!

B) Time you need to be here the most is when you least feel like being here.

1) Giving God that opportunity to speak and work

C) **On this day this man's life would be forever changed**

So first we are drawn to the man with the withered hand - #2 Watchful Clan: Scribes & Pharisees

A) Luke 6 “They were looking for a reason to accuse Jesus!

B) They were obsessed with laws:

C) Not unusual even in our day:

Crazy laws:

Alabama

*It is illegal for a driver to be blindfolded while operating a motor vehicle.

What prompted the need for that law?

Two guys, let's see how far we can get on the freeway driving blind folded !

*It is illegal to wear a fake mustache that causes laughter in church.

Someone next to you has facial hair give it a pull make sure it's real – no laughter in Church.

California

Women may not drive in a house coat.

Now all you ladies who take your kids to school in your PJs – Busted – I have seen some of you

Washington

You can't carry a concealed weapon that is over 6 feet in length.

So if you are 6'2 and you want to conceal a Bazooka –make sure it is only 5'11 at the most

Florida

A special law prohibits unmarried women from parachuting on Sunday

It is illegal to sing in a public place while attired in a swimsuit.

Men may not be seen publicly in any kind of strapless gown.

They say California is weird !!!!

Memphis, Tennessee,

A woman is not to drive a car unless a man warns approaching motorists or pedestrians by walking in front of the car that is being driven.

Picture that – “ Woman driver approaching”

CRAZY LAWS

Who thinks these things up

People obsessed with laws:

The Scribes and the Pharisees were obsessed with laws

We saw in our study last time, where Jesus addressed the Sabbath day issue:

V. 27-28 "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath. 28 Therefore the Son of Man is also Lord of the Sabbath."

The Sabbath was made for Man – not man for the Sabbath!

A)Awesome God – Put in his top ten – Take a day off
He knows that we need it!

B)But the religious leaders turned this day of rest into a day of Burden-

C)**In the Talmud**- a book describing the Jewish civil and ceremonial law.

1)Rabbis took what God instructed Moses to write in Exodus, Leviticus and Duet. –

2)They sought to give commentary and explanation on what it meant to keep those laws

So God said: I want you to take one day in 7 off! Sabbath day:

A)They wrote a book (that devoted 24 chapters to what it meant to keep the Sabbath.) that devoted

B) They had **39 different violations** and a host of categories that went along with those violations

C)According to the Talmud -On the Sabbath day; all work was forbidden and **to heal was to work.**

The Jewish law was definite and detailed about this.

A)Medical attention could be given only if a life was in danger.

B)To take some examples:

- a woman in childbirth might be helped on the Sabbath;
- an infection of the throat might be treated;
- if a wall fell on anyone, enough might be cleared away to see whether he was dead or alive;

C)if he was alive he might be helped, if he was dead the body must be left until the next day.

- A fracture could not be attended to.
- Cold water might not be poured on a sprained hand or foot.
- A cut finger might be bandaged with a plain bandage but not with ointment.

D)The rule was basically this: an injury could be kept from getting worse; it must not be made better.

E)So here was this man – who did not have a life threatening injury – What would Jesus do!

#3 The Compassionate Son of Man - Jesus

A)I think it really says a lot about Jesus – that these religious leaders knew this: –

B)Jesus would have been drawn to the person in that synagogue with the greatest need!

C)His heart of compassion: Feel the pain of others –

1)He was always drawn to the person with the greatest need!

D)Still true today: This sanctuary – this gathering

1)Goodnews – Right now over here – that is me – greatest need.

E)No one knows – Jesus does!

Right now someone over here is thinking – I have the greatest need – no idea-

A)His heart is toward all the needs in this ROOM TODAY!

V.3 And He said to the man who had the withered hand, "Step forward."

B)It is interesting to me that the Lord separated the man from the crowd and brought his disability into view

C) God will often do that with us – He will bring an area of weakness or struggle into view

D) Purpose? He exposes our weakness – so He can be glorified in our weakness – by showing Himself strong on our behalf

Now Jesus knew what the religious leaders were thinking:

A) If I were a disciple – always asking – what are they thinking now?

B) Jesus addresses them with a question: V4
"Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do evil, to save life or to kill?"

Bb) Little dig since they were plotting His death

C) Matthew adds that Jesus also asked

Matthew 12:11-12

"What man is there among you who has one sheep, and if it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will not lay hold of it and lift it out? 12 Of how much more value then is a man than a sheep? Therefore it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath."

D) Here is a point Jesus is always teaching in regards to this matter:

"Human need always supersedes religious ritual."

E) When religious ritual ignores human need – it is always wrong.

Last week – why was it ok for David's men to pick grain on the Sabbath? "Human need always supersedes religious ritual."

A) In the story of the good Samaritan – two religious leaders on their way to temple – too busy in their religious duties – to help the beaten man

B) Jesus commends the Samaritan who stopped and cared for Him –

1) One thing He was illustrating there: "Human need always supersedes religious ritual."

C) So here Jesus is in this synagogue – this man with the withered hand.

This man's life was not in life threatening danger.

A) Physically he would be no worse off if he were left until to-morrow.

B) But this was an opportunity to do good! – To bless

C) So Jesus called the man front and center:

#4 A Powerful Command – Stretch forth your hand

A) This was a command that was filled with wonder – how was this man supposed to do that?

B) It was impossible for this man to stretch forth his hand

C) Some might have considered it mean or insensitive – Jesus asking this man to do what he couldn't do –

D) Like asking a blind person to look at a picture –
1) That would be cruel

But that is what Jesus does:

“Jesus always brings man face to face with the impossible and lays upon them a command that in their own strength they cannot obey” Morgan

Now this man could have argued: . *‘That’s easy for You to say. My hand is paralyzed. How can I stretch it forth?’*

A) The man could have argued with Jesus.

B) He didn’t do that - Instead, he simply obeyed. **He didn’t argue. He didn’t debate.**

1) He simply said, ‘OK,’ — **and as he stretched out his hand, the Lord met him in that place.**

This reminds us of a powerful and important biblical principle.

A) God’s commandments are God’s enablements

B) When God speaks, power is released.

1) If you can grab that simple concept, the Word will become extremely exciting to you.

C) If I am looking at myself alone – **His commands are impossible and unreasonable.**

D) But **when I see** that the power of God is behind the command – it becomes both possible and reasonable

Maybe you are here today saying: I am really depressed –

A) I have been prayed for / I’ve read all the self help books / followed all the techniques – to no avail

B) The Lord’s word to you today is simply: **‘Rejoice evermore... For this is the will of God, in Christ Jesus concerning you.’**

(I Thessalonians 5:16).

C) Now you can argue and give 101 reason why you can’t do that – can’t rejoice

1) or you can say, **‘If the Word tells me to rejoice evermore, I will now start rejoicing.’**

D) And in the very act of beginning to rejoice, you’ll find reason & power to continue to rejoice.

Maybe your struggle is w/ bitterness & unforgiveness.

A) The Lord’s word to you today is simply

Ephesians 4:31-32

“Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.”

B) Now again you can come up with 1000 reasons why you can’t do that – or why U shouldn’t do that

1) Or you can say – if the word tells me to not be bitter and to forgive

C) God's commandments are God's enablements

1) Today I am going to stretch forth my withered hand and forgive – speak what is right

D) Your heart is cured- even though in that relationship time and consistent behavior are essential to there being absolute restoration

Now understand – it is that simple – but it is not easy

A) Our flesh rebels against this – that is why it is a daily practice –

B) Where you say: Today Lord in your Power and in your strength – **ACCORDING TO YOUR WORD – I will do what you command me to do.**

C) As I look at myself – seems unreasonable and impossible

1) But when I take my eyes off of me and put them on to you – Your power – Your grace – Your strength in my weakness – Possible – reasonable – RIGHT ON!

The Word says, 'Husbands, love your wives,' (Ephesians 5:25).

A) Now you can argue – but Lord you don't know my wife 'You don't know what we've been through,'

B) You can come up with a myriad of reasons why that is an impossible and unreasonable request

1) Or you can say – Lord Your word tells me to love my wife. So I will love my wife.'

C) And because you're doing it, God will give you the power to carry it out.

'Wives, submit to your husbands,' (Ephesians 5:22).

A) You can argue and say why this is impossible.

B) Or you can say, 'Lord, in Your commandment is Your enablement. I will do it today.'

1) And you will receive power.

B) If you're struggling with **drugs, alcohol, pornography**, the Lord would say to you today, '**Reckon yourself dead unto sin, but alive to Jesus Christ,**' (Romans 6:11).

C) So if you go home, throw it away and say, '**I'm going to obey the command of Christ,**' you'll find power and victory.

D) **Daily you ask** the Lord to help you do that reckon yourself dead to those things – temptation comes....

We could go on and on – Stop here say this

A) Every one of us is withered in some area of our lives. **We know that.**

B) But we do not have to be !

C) The solution is simply to obey the command of Christ. And as you do, He'll meet you at that point and give you the power to carry it out.

Here is the problem: Often times we make this mistake: We say –

- I will rejoice when I stop feeling depressed.
- Or I will forgive when my bitterness goes away- **Lord take it away.**
- I will Love my spouse, when Jesus takes away my anger – **Lord please take away my anger.**
- I will quit using when –my craving for my addiction goes away – **Lord take away the craving.**

The Lord would say you have it backwards –

A)I am giving you a command to walk in a new way of life.

B)In the command is the power to carry out the command –

1)What you are desiring to take place in your life will take place as you walk in my Word.

Once I quit saying why I can't; once I quit arguing w/ the Word and saying, 'It's not that easy';

A)Once I quit saying, 'I'm an exception to the rule,'

B)and instead say, **'Lord, if You say it, I'll do it. Period.'**

He meets me there and a miracle takes place.

Can I encourage you today: take the Lord up on His command and Stretch forth your hand

A)Whatever that means for you – today

B)**Some life – Withered by Sin** – Don't know Jesus – initial step today –

C)Jesus said this about the Devil –“He is a thief.”
John 10:10

The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy.

D)Your heart has been stolen – joy killed – Satan wants to destroy your life.

1)Up to now – done a good job – Wasted – mess

E)Jesus said of Himself

“ I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.”

He says to you today- Come to Me

Stand forth.

Stretch out your hand.

And be made whole.

Pray:

In need of transformation today?

**Wrestling: Marriage –
Depression
Addiction**

**Some other place in your life – You want to see the
power of God working**

Stand forth.

Stretch out your hand.

And be made whole.

TRANSFORMATION CAN OCCUR TODAY

RIGHT NOW!