

**“Lessons from the Miracles of Christ”:
Healing the Withered Hand**

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by W. S. Sadler

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**Sources for Healing the Withered Hand,
in the order in which they first appear**

- (1) Wm. Arnold Stevens and Ernest DeWitt Burton, *A Harmony of the Gospels for Historical Study: An Analytical Synopsis of the Four Gospels in the Version of 1881* (Boston: Silver, Burdett and Company, 1893)
- (2) Mrs. E. G. White, *The Desire of Ages* (Takoma Park, Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Assn., 1898)
- (3) Charles Haddon Spurgeon, “The Withered Hand” (1879)

Note: Spurgeon delivered this sermon in London on May 22, 1879 and it was published in Vol. 25 of *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit* (1880). I have been unable to access this volume, so have used *The Treasury of Spurgeon on the Life and Work of Our Lord, Vol. IV, The Miracles of Our Lord, 2*, published by Baker Book House in 1979.

Key

- (a) **Green** indicates where a source author first appears, or where he/she reappears.
- (b) **Yellow** highlights most parallelisms.
- (c) **Tan** highlights parallelisms not occurring on the same row, or parallelisms separated by yellowed parallelisms.
- (d) An underlined word or words indicates where the source and the Sadlers pointedly differ from one another.

(e) **Red** indicates an obvious mistake.

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HEALING THE WITHERED HAND

INTRODUCTORY

0.1 *Preceding Events*.—The only important event in the Saviour’s life since the last miracle, the healing of the impotent man, was the instance of the disciples’ plucking grain on the Sabbath. Matt. 12:1-8.

0.2 **Main** *Reference*.—Luke 6:6-11.

0.3 *Other References*.—Mark 3:1-6; Matt. 12:9-13.

0.4 *Bible Story of the Miracle*.—

[*Note*: Sadler drew as much from Matt. 12:9-14 and Mark 3:1-6 as from Luke 6:6-11.]

XIII: GROWING HOSTILITY OF THE
SCRIBES AND PHARISEES (*A Harmony
of the Gospels* 49)

§46. THE MAN WITH THE WITHERED
HAND. Matt. 12:9-14. Mark 3:1-6. Luke 6:6-11.

Matt. 12:[9] And he departed thence,

Luke 6:[6] And it came to pass on another sabbath, that he entered into the synagogue and taught:

Matt. 12:[10] and behold,

Luke 6:[6] and there was a man there, and his right hand was withered.

[7] And the scribes and the Pharisees watched him,

Mark 3:[2] whether he would heal him on the sabbath day;

“And he departed thence:

and it came to pass on another Sabbath, that he entered again into the **the** synagogue and taught:

and behold

there was a man there, and his right hand was withered.

And the scribes and Pharisees watched him,

whether he would heal him on the Sabbath day,

SOURCE

“ LESSONS FROM THE MIRACLES OF CHRIST”

Luke 6:[7] that they might find how to accuse him.

that they might find how to accuse him.

Matt. 12:[10] And they asked him, saying, Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath day?

And they asked him, saying, Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath day?

Luke 6:8 But he knew their thoughts; and he said to the man that had his hand withered, Rise up, and stand forth in the midst.

But he knew their thoughts, and he said to the man that had his hand withered, Rise up, and stand forth in the midst.

And he arose and stood forth.

And he arose and stood forth.

9 And Jesus said unto them, I ask you,

And Jesus said unto them, I ask you,

Is it lawful on the sabbath day to do good, or to do harm? to save a life, or to destroy it?

Is it lawful on the Sabbath day to do good, or to do harm; to save a life or to destroy it?

Mark 3:[4] But they held their peace.

But they held their peace.

Matt. 12:11 And he said unto them, What man shall there be of you, that shall have one sheep, and if this fall into a pit on the sabbath day, will he not lay hold on it, and lift it out?

And he said unto them, What man shall there be of you, that shall have one sheep, and if this fall into a pit, on the Sabbath day, will he not lay hold on it and lift it out?

12 How much then is a man of more value than a sheep!

How much then is a man of more value than a sheep?

Wherefore it is lawful to do good on the sabbath day.

Wherefore it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath day.

Mark 3:[5] And when he had looked round about on them with anger, being grieved at the hardening of their heart, he saith unto the man, Stretch forth thy hand.

And when he had looked round about on them **all** with anger, being grieved at the hardening of their heart, he saith unto the man, Stretch forth thy hand.

And he stretched it forth:

And he stretched it forth,

and his hand was restored.

and his hand was restored

Matt. 12:[13] whole, as the other.

whole, as the other.

SOURCE

Luke 6:11 But they were filled with madness; and communed one with another what they might do to Jesus.

Mark 3:[6] And the Pharisees went out, and straightway with the Herodians took counsel against him, how they might destroy him.

“LESSONS FROM THE MIRACLES OF CHRIST”

And the Pharisees were filled with madness, and communed one with another what they might do to Jesus;

and went out, and straightway with the Herodians took counsel against him, how they might destroy him.”

(This quotation is an interwoven story of the miracle, gathered from Matt. 12:9-14; Mark 3:1-6; and Luke 6:6-41, but in the exact language of the Bible.)

0.5 *Place*.—Not mentioned.

0.6 *Circumstances*.—This miracle of the restoration of the withered hand was performed on a Sabbath day of rather uncertain date. Perhaps it immediately followed the accusation of Jesus and his disciples for plucking corn on the Sabbath. It would appear that he was especially watched on this occasion, to see whether he would heal this man on the Sabbath day. In this way they hoped to secure sufficient evidence to accuse and convict him as a Sabbath-breaker,—a transgressor of the law. The Saviour, understanding their motives, asked them, “Is it lawful on the Sabbath days to do good, or to do evil? to save life, or to destroy it?” “But they held their peace.” Having thus, for the time being, silenced those who sought to “destroy” his life, Jesus set about to “save” the life of an afflicted man.

0.7 *Great Lesson*.—This miracle teaches us a great and important lesson concerning the proper observance of the Sabbath. Caring for the sick, relieving suffering, and administering necessary treatment to the afflicted, are clearly shown by the Master’s conduct and words to be proper Sabbath work.

STUDY OF THE MIRACLE

1.1 *Is It Lawful to Save Life?*—This miracle seems to have been deliberately planned and worked for the purpose of bringing to a focus the criticisms of the Jews concerning Christ’s observance of the Sabbath, and perhaps also to make a great object-lesson for the good of his disciples, and his followers down through the ages.

XXIX: THE SABBATH (White 281)

It was a maxim among the Jews that

a failure to do good, when one had opportunity, was to do evil; to neglect to save life, was to kill.

Thus Jesus met the rabbis on their own ground (W 286).

The Pharisees taught that

to neglect to save a life was to kill;

so Jesus took them on their own ground,

and showed that in healing the withered hand, he was doing no more than a Jew would do for a dumb animal.

While they found fault with Jesus for “giving life” on the Sabbath day, they themselves were planning and plotting to “take life”—even the life of the Prince of Life.

1.2 *Stretch Forth Thy Hand.*—This is an instance where “He sent his word, and healed them.” Christ did not touch the withered hand. He simply spoke the word, “Stretch forth thy hand.” When God speaks the word, only willingness to obey is required on our part to reveal the power contained in the spoken word.

SOURCE

[*Compare:* When you have so many commands, (and God's commands are all promises and all enablings), you may come boldly unto the Throne of Grace by the new and living way through the rent veil (C. H. Spurgeon, "The Golden Key of Prayer," March 12, 1865).]

[?]

"THE WITHERED HAND" (Spurgeon 339)

[I]f you happen to be here with a spiritually withered hand

so that you cannot do the things that you would, and you are wanting to have that hand restored to you, there shall be a "*behold*" put to that ... (S 340).]

"Then said Jesus to the man, stretch forth thine hand" (S 342).

[contd] This command

was addressed, then, to a man who was hopelessly incapable of obeying (S 342).

"LESSONS FROM THE MIRACLES OF CHRIST"

Every command is a promise,¹

which to the willing and obedient, contains the power to effect obedience to its own requirement.

God's commands are all positive, as well as negative.

Many a Christian to-day bears about in his experience the evidence of spiritually withered hands,—withered purposes and aspirations.

To such Jesus says, "Stretch forth thy hand." Our being made whole is dependent upon the willingness with which we will yield obedience to his command to stretch forth the withered faculty or member. It is this withering influence of compromise with sin that brings us into such a debilitated condition spiritually

that we are unable to do that which we would.

The command, "Stretch forth thine hand,"

was addressed to one who, to all human appearance, was utterly unable to yield obedience.

Here, again, we learn the lesson that every command of God is enabling.

Power goes with his word to enable us to obey.

1.3 *And He Did So.*—

[contd from five rows up] But, mark you, it came to *one who was perfectly willing*, for this man was quite prepared to do whatever Jesus bade him do (S 342).

The man with the withered hand was *willing* to obey.

He was willing to be healed in Christ’s way; therefore his restoration was quickly wrought.

That stretching forth of the hand was entirely *an act of faith*.... I say it was a *pure act of faith*, that stretching out of his hand (S 345).

The stretching forth of his hand was an *act of pure, simple faith*.

To will to put forth the withered hand was an indication of the perfect faith he had in the power of the Master who had commanded him to “stretch forth” his hand.

He decided to believe,

[W]hen we talk about salvation, we mean being saved from the habit of wrongdoing; being saved from ... the very power to find pleasure in transgression. Do you wish to be saved from pleasurable and gainful sins? ... Why, *half the battle* is won in such cases (S 342).

and it is a decision of this sort that constitutes *half the battle* in forsaking sin and turning to God.

W. S. SADLER.

1. *Every command of God implies a promise*, and every promise a command (Rev. James Lee, M.A., *Bible Illustrations*, Vol. 5 [1868], p. 60.)

The commands of God are really divine promises (W. S. Sadler, “Water Changed into Wine,” 3.7).