

## STRETCH FORTH THY HAND

**TEXT:**     **Mark 3:1: And He entered again into the Synagogue; and there was a man there which had a withered hand.**

**Mark 3:5: And when He had looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts, He saith unto the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched it out: and his hand was restored whole as the other.**

Imagine yourself in Capernaum on a Sabbath Day as the synagogue is rapidly being filled with people.

Capernaum was the center of much of Jesus' ministry in Galilee. Here He healed the centurion's servant, and Simon Peter's mother-in-law was healed here. There was also was the healing of the one sick with palsy.

**Mark 2:1: And again He entered into Capernaum after some days; and it was noised that He was in the house.**



He healed a demon possessed man, a nobleman's son — and more. Matthew calls it Jesus' own city

**Matthew 9:1: And He entered into a ship, and passed over, and came into His Own city.**

It was one of the cities wherein most of His mighty works were done.

**Matthew 11:10: For this is he, of whom it is written, Behold, I send My messenger before Thy face, which shall prepare Thy way before Thee.**

The ordinary men and women of Capernaum came to the synagogue, they who had seen miracles.

The Pharisees were there, too. They were known for their devotion to the law — so devoted that they were exclusive and narrow minded, hypocritical, and severe in judging others. They worshipped the traditions but neglected charity.

There was one very special man in the synagogue that day. This man had a need. He knew his need and wanted to be rid of his handicap. And Jesus, moved by divine compassion, healed him.

A withered hand is in need of healing, for it has no power to hold things. This is what is wrong with the 21st century church. It has a withered hand and can't take firm hold of God's promises. It has even lost grip on God Himself!

Most church people's hands have little resemblance to the hands of the great men of God, like:

**Jacob — who clung to God and would not let go until he received a blessing.**

**Moses -- whose hands held a rod of authority; and whose hands uplifted in prayer were enabling instruments to bring victory to Joshua's men fighting Amalek.**

**Samson -- whose hands were mighty in battle against the Philistines.**

How was the withered hand healed? The man wanted it healed — enough to stretch it forth to Jesus. He had probably not moved his hand in years, and it took real faith to even try to move it now.

**God rewards faith. When we reach out to Him, He supplies our deepest need.**

Churches can be healed and can become hands to work for God -- doing good.

A healed, sound hand can:

***Hold a Bible -- open its pages so they can be read. This is holding the very Sword of the Spirit.***

***Feed — with a sound hand you can feed yourself. You don't always have to be fed the Word of God by your minister or Sunday School Teacher. You can help yourself, and help others when Jesus makes you whole.***



So, the man with a withered hand was healed. Capernaum had seen another miracle.

This was also the means of revealing the hypocrisy of the Pharisees. Even before they came into the synagogue on the Sabbath morning, they had seen the man with the withered hand, and they were watching for Jesus' reaction. Would He respect THEIR version of Sabbath keeping?

Jesus knew the whole situation. The man needed help. The Pharisees and people of Capernaum needed a revelation of who Jesus really is. He began to reveal their misunderstanding of the law, even before He began the healing.



***Mark 3:4: Is it lawful to do good on the Sabbath days, or to do evil? to save life, or to kill?***

Who was killing anyone? The Pharisees! In their mind, they plotted against Him – and He counted this as murder.

Often the people with the least obvious faults are the ones with the greatest needs. Everyone could see the man with the withered hand needed Jesus — but

they didn't understand the spiritual sickness which held the Pharisees. He would have healed them, too, but was prevented because of the hardness of their hearts. Hard hearts need a miracle more than paralyzed bodies.

**One appointment was kept; the other was broken. The man with the withered hand went away whole; the Pharisees went away more hardened and condemned.**

Are you like the man with the withered hand? Do you have a glaring sin; an obvious need? Jesus stands ready to forgive your sin and to supply your need.

Are you like the Pharisees? Do you have a hidden sin that stands between you and God — a need that no one else knows about? As



He was grieved for the Pharisees, so He has compassion for you.

The healing hands of Christ are reaching out. Whatever your problem — NOW — stretch forth your hand. Receive His healing.



**Akron Shalom Bible Learning Center**  
[www.AkronShalomMinistries.org](http://www.AkronShalomMinistries.org)