

The title of this morning's sermon is, *"Doing Good on the Sabbath."*

We're picking up right where we left off last week...

Jesus' disciples plucked grain on the Sabbath. The religious leaders questioned Jesus about it and He responded w/ the story about David being able to eat the showbread on the Sabbath.

Then He made this tremendous statement we read in verse 5...

⁵ And He said to them, "The Son of Man is also Lord of the Sabbath."

Jesus was claiming to be greater than the Sabbath, and since the Sabbath was created by God, Jesus was claiming to be equal w/ God; therefore, the religious leaders would assume He's speaking blasphemy.

Let me explain why this statement was so important for Jesus to make...

The religious leaders had a lot of authority, and they used that authority to make a mess of the Sabbath. They had added so many fences to the Sabbath that instead of being the blessing God wanted it to be, it became a curse. So Jesus had to come along and straighten out the mess they made, but the only way He could do that is if He demonstrated that He had more authority than the religious leaders. If He didn't do that their word would stand instead of His.

Verse 5 is a statement about Jesus' authority. He's saying He has authority over the Sabbath, and He did, b/c in **Matt 28:18** Jesus said, **"All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth."**

The religious leaders thought they had authority over the Sabbath. They thought they could interpret the Sabbath. They thought they could decide what could or couldn't happen on the Sabbath, but Jesus came along and said He's the One who's really in charge of the Sabbath:

- He will interpret it.
- He will declare what can and can't happen.
- He has the authority to lay down principles governing the Sabbath and the religious leaders don't.

Now that's important, b/c 4 times in verses 1 through 9 the Sabbath is mentioned. I've told you repetition is God's way of adding emphasis and the Holy Spirit really wants us to see the Sabbath as a theme in these verses. The even more specific theme is the religious leaders' conflict w/ Jesus OVER the Sabbath. In a way, these verses aren't ultimately about the Sabbath: they're about the conflict between Jesus and the religious leaders over who really has authority over the Sabbath...and by the time we get through verse 11, you're going to see it's not the religious leaders.

Now this situation w/ the man w/ the withered hand is a very intense moment between Jesus and the religious leaders. The only way to fully appreciate the situation and the hostility is to understand the events that led up to this, and this brings us to Lesson 1...

LESSON 1: (PART I) JESUS FACED TERRIBLE OPPOSITION...

If you had a harmony of the Gospels showing the events in Jesus' ministry up to the man w/ the withered hand, you'd see every situation involved conflict between Jesus and the religious leaders:

- First, please turn to the left and look at **Luke 5:17-26**. This is when Jesus healed the paralyzed man that was lowered through the roof, and the religious leaders got upset when Jesus said his sins were forgiven b/c they said only God could forgive sins.
- Right after that in **Luke 5:27-32** Jesus calls Matthew to be His disciple, and then He attends the feast Matthew throws for Him and the religious leaders criticize Jesus for eating w/ tax collectors and sinners.
- Right after that in **Luke 5:33-39** Jesus is criticized for having disciples that don't fast.
- The next event, which is only in John's Gospel, Jesus heals the man at the pool of Bethesda on the Sabbath. The religious leaders were so upset about it, **John 5:16** says, **[They] persecuted Jesus, and sought to kill Him, because He had done these things on the Sabbath.**
- Right after that is **Luke 6:1-5** when the religious leaders got upset about Jesus' disciples plucking grain on the Sabbath.

After all these conflicts is the confrontation we're about to read about over the man w/ the withered hand. Things have been really ugly, and now they're going to get even uglier.

I'm telling you all this simply b/c I want you to understand just how intense things were when Jesus and the religious leaders were in the synagogue together! The religious leaders have been persecuting Jesus, seeking to murder Him, and now they're in the synagogue listening to Him teach, wanting to find some reason to have Him arrested and killed.

And this is a very climatic moment and here's why...

There are two things about this situation that make it different than all the previous conflicts and it's this:

1. First, in the previous conflicts, Jesus was on the defensive. The religious leaders were attacking Him. In this situation Jesus takes the offensive: He goes after them.
2. Second, in this situation Jesus is going to humiliate the religious leaders. He's going to publicly shame them. He didn't do that before. It's almost like Jesus has had enough.

With all this background info in mind, look at verse 6...

^{6a} Now it happened on another Sabbath, also, that He entered the synagogue and taught.

Pause right here. This brings us to the rest of Lesson 1...

LESSON 1: (PART I) JESUS FACED TERRIBLE OPPOSITION (PART II) BUT HE DIDN'T LET IT STOP HIM...

Despite all the tension between Jesus and the religious leaders, He still continues w/ His ministry. He still continues going into the synagogue and teaching. He knows the religious leaders are there and they want Him dead, but He doesn't let that stop Him from doing what the Father wants Him to do.

Before I became a pastor, I was told pastors leave churches over seven people. I couldn't believe it was that low of a number. Now that I'm a pastor, I can't believe it's that high of a number.

My point in sharing that is opposition is discouraging. Opposition makes us want to quit or run away. We all face opposition in different forms, and we want to learn from Jesus' example: we want to make sure we don't let it stop us from doing what God wants us to do.

In my mind, Nehemiah is like THEE book about opposition. From beginning to end it's about the opposition he faced trying to rebuild the wall.

In the middle of the book, right when the opposition was at its worst, listen to these verses...

6:1 When Sanballat, Tobiah, Geshem the Arab, and the rest of our enemies (these guys are the opposition) heard that I had rebuilt the wall...² they said, "Come, let us meet together among the villages in the plain of Ono." But they thought to do me harm.

Nehemiah knew they were trying to hurt him or possibly even murder him.

Now listen to this wonderful verse from Nehemiah in the face of the opposition that's trying to get him to stop the work he's doing...

³ So I sent messengers to them, saying, "I *am* doing a great work, so that I cannot come down. Why should the work cease while I leave it and go down to you?"

⁴ But they sent me messages four times, and I answered them in the same manner [each time].

LESSON 1: (PART I) JESUS FACED TERRIBLE OPPOSITION (PART II) BUT HE DIDN'T LET IT STOP HIM (PART III) AND IT SHOULDN'T STOP US EITHER.

We can't let opposition stop the work God wants us to do.

- Nehemiah is a tremendous example for us: sometimes we just have to say, "*I'm not coming off this wall! I'm not getting down! Why should this work cease? Why should I let this opposition stop me?*"
- And Jesus is a tremendous example for us: sometimes we have to say, "*I know these people are against me, but I'm going to keep speaking the truth and doing what God wants me to do.*"

The truth is if we're going to follow Christ, we should expect opposition. It shouldn't surprise us.

And it's a good thing Jesus went to the synagogue, b/c something tremendous is going to happen. Look at the rest of verse 6...

^{6b} And a man was there whose right hand was withered.

The Greek tense of this verse tells us the man wasn't born this way; something happened later in life, but none of the accounts tell us what that is, so it's pointless to speculate.

⁷ So the scribes and Pharisees watched Him closely, whether He would heal on the Sabbath, that they might find an accusation against Him.

This is a fascinating situation...

The **scribes and Pharisees** were at the synagogue, but they weren't there to learn from Jesus. As we know, they were there to hopefully catch Jesus do something wrong. While they're there, they happen to see a man in attendance w/ a withered hand. They know Jesus. They know His character. They know He's healed countless people. So they're expecting Him to heal this man, which they would see as a violation of the Sabbath providing them w/ the accusation they desperately want.

So here's what's really hypocritical about them:

- They don't want Jesus to heal this man b/c they would consider that a violation of the Sabbath.
- But they actually want Jesus to heal this man, b/c then they think they'll have a reason to have Him arrested and killed.

Their hypocrisy is terrible.

^{8a} But He knew their thoughts,

This means Jesus **knew** two things:

1. First, He knew they were watching Him to see if He would heal the man.
2. Second, He knew they wanted to see Him heal the man so they could accuse Him of something and hopefully have Him killed.

So knowing all this, let's see what Jesus does...maybe He'll decide to heal the man privately, secretly, after the synagogue service is over so nobody knows about it and so it doesn't cause a commotion...

^{8b} and said to the man who had the withered hand, "Arise and stand here." And he arose and stood.

Now let me give you some background so you can appreciate what's about to happen...

We've talked extensively about the fences the religious leaders added to God's Law. One of the fences they added related to not helping people medically on the Sabbath, b/c practicing medicine is a profession and you can't engage in a profession or that would be work.

There was one exception though: if someone's life was in danger you could do whatever was necessary to keep the person alive...but you could do no more than that. For example:

- If people experienced a deep cut and they were in danger of bleeding to death, you could stop the bleeding by applying a tourniquet or compress, but as soon as the bleeding stopped you couldn't do any more:
 - You couldn't stitch them up.
 - Even when you applied the bandage to the wound, you couldn't apply any ointment...b/c that would be practicing medicine.
 - Stitches or ointment would have to wait until the following day.
- If a man broke a bone, you couldn't reset the bone b/c the man's life isn't in danger. If the bone was sticking out you couldn't do anything about it until the next day. They'd have to deal w/ the pain.
- If a wall or building fell on someone, you could remove enough of the rock or wood to make sure the person was still alive, but if you removed the rubble and found the person was dead you had to leave the person until the following day.
- Ladies, you'll be relieved to know if you went into labor, you could be assisted, but that's b/c the woman or the baby could possibly die if you tried to delay the labor to the following day.

If you briefly turn to **Luke 13**, I'll show you how bad it really was...

In verses 11 to 13 Jesus healed a woman who had been unable to stand for 18 years. Now look at **verse 14** **But the ruler of the synagogue answered with indignation** (he's furious, and look why he's so upset...), **BECAUSE JESUS HAD HEALED ON THE SABBATH; and he said to the crowd** (now he chastens the crowd), **“There are six days on which men ought to work; therefore come and be healed on them, and not on the Sabbath day.”**

This is outrageous, but it gives you an idea how they felt about people being healed on the Sabbath.

Now w/ all this in mind, think about the man w/ the withered hand:

- His life isn't in danger.
- He's isn't in any pain.
- He could come and sit through a synagogue service.
- He's lived w/ this condition for years.
- In their minds his situation could easily wait until the next day!

One of the parts of this story that makes it so great is the fact that this man had this specific affliction. Jesus was willing to stand up to the religious leaders over something that didn't look like that big of a deal.

Please turn back to **Luke 6:8** and look at the words **“Arise and stand here.”**

- NAS **“Get up and come forward.”**
- NIV **“Get up and stand in front of everyone.”**
- NLT **“Come and stand in front of everyone.”**

Jesus put all the attention on this man and Himself. There's no mistaking what's happening: Jesus purposely did this miracle in the open, before the religious leaders and before everyone else, so they would all see it. He isn't backing down to the religious leaders. He's dealing w/ them head on. He's opposing them as strongly and publicly as possible. He's showing a complete disregard for their

rules, and He's demonstrating His contempt for them. He's communicating, *"I know you don't want me to help this man, but I'm going to defy you and heal him anyway."*

And there's something that makes this situation even more dramatic...

I might be wrong, but every situation I could think of where Jesus healed people, it involved people coming to Him. I couldn't think of an example of Jesus ever healing someone who wasn't seeking to be healed. It was always about people pursuing Jesus, sometimes even begging Him to be healed.

Except for this situation...

There's no indication this man sought Jesus out. This man was just going to the synagogue like he would do on any other Sabbath. He had no expectation that His life was about to change. My suspicion is he'd lived w/ this affliction for so long, and he had gotten so used to it, he didn't think of it as something to be healed.

But Jesus sought him out anyway...and it almost looks like He did so He could call him out in front of the religious leaders. And after Jesus called him out, He called out the religious leaders. Look at verse 9...

⁹ Then Jesus said to them, "I will ask you one thing: Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do evil, to save life or to destroy?"

In my opinion, this would've been a tremendous scene to witness...

Jesus calls the man up front, but He doesn't heal him immediately. He gets him in front of everyone, but then He stops so He can question the religious leaders...and He questions them in front of everyone while He has everyone's attention.

Everyone knew Jesus is a miracle worker. They see the man w/ the withered hand. They know Jesus brought Him up front for a reason. They're clearly expecting Jesus to heal him. But then He stopped to ask this question and here's why...

Jesus knows the religious leaders would question Him if He healed this man. He knew this b/c they've been questioning Him constantly:

- **Luke 5:21 "Who is this who speaks blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God alone?"**
- **Luke 5:30 "Why do You eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?"**
- **Luke 5:33 "Why do the disciples of John fast often and make prayers, and...those of the Pharisees, but Yours eat and drink?"**
- **Luke 6:2 "Why are you doing what is not lawful to do on the Sabbath?"**

Apparently Jesus got tired of their questions, so He decided to do the questioning this time and it finally shut their mouths. He shut their mouths so tightly, we'll see they couldn't even answer His question.

Now Jesus' question looks pretty simple and straightforward: obviously it's lawful on the Sabbath to do good or save life, and it's not lawful to do evil or destroy. His question is so obvious a child could answer it...but they couldn't answer it and here's why:

- If they say it's lawful to do good on the Sabbath they'll be permitting Jesus to heal this man and that would make Him look good, and it would make them look bad b/c they'd be permitting Him to break one of their rules.
- But they also couldn't tell Jesus not to heal the man. The man is standing right next to Jesus in front of everyone. If they Jesus shouldn't heal the man they're going to look terribly unmerciful and cruel.

So they have to either make Jesus look good or they have to make themselves look bad.

One commentator said Jesus' questions were merciless and they were. He was brutal w/ the questions He asked the religious leaders to expose them and their hypocrisy. Jesus showed an amazing amount of compassion and grace to sinners and tax collectors, but when it came to the religious leaders He unloaded on them.

Now even though Jesus' question looks pretty simple, it's actually very deep and I'm going to try to unpack everything contained in it...

First, look at the words, **“Is it lawful?”** Now look back at **verse 2: And some of the Pharisees said to them, “Why are you doing WHAT IS NOT LAWFUL to do on the Sabbath?”** This is their language! They're the experts in what is and isn't lawful. They're always deciding what is and isn't lawful. Jesus is asking them to share their wisdom and expertise. If anyone in the whole world should've been able to answer His question it's them!

Second, Jesus' question exposed the religious leaders' wrong understanding of the Sabbath:

- They were always more concerned w/ the negatives than the positives: they were more concerned w/ what you shouldn't do on the Sabbath than what you should do.
- Jesus was more concerned w/ the positives: He focused on what you should do on the Sabbath: helping people and doing good...and that brings us to Lesson 2...

LESSON 2: (PART I) THE SABBATH WAS ABOUT DOING GOOD...

The Sabbath was about resting, so you could say it was about not working, but it was not about not doing good. That's a lot of negatives so let me say it like this: the Sabbath was about doing good. In the parallel account in **Matt 12:12 Jesus said, “It is lawful to do good on the Sabbath.”** JM said, *“Good works were especially appropriate on the Sabbath – particularly deeds of charity, mercy, and worship.”*

Now let me briefly explain something...

Even though God rested from working after the 6th day of creation, He didn't rest or cease doing good. If God ceased doing good none of us would know the grace and blessings we experience daily. **Psa 121:3-4 He who keeps you will not slumber. Behold, He who keeps Israel shall neither**

slumber nor sleep. So after the 6th day God rested from creating, but He didn't rest from doing good.

Now listen to this...

After Jesus healed the man at the pool of Bethesda, **John 5:16** says **The Jews persecuted Jesus and sought to kill Him, because He had done these things on the Sabbath. 17 But Jesus answered them, "My Father has been working until now, and I have been working."** Jesus is saying His Father has continued doing good, so He has to continue doing good too.

LESSON 2: (PART I) THE SABBATH WAS ABOUT DOING GOOD (PART II) AND NOBODY FULFILLED IT BETTER THAN JESUS...

Jesus fulfilled the Sabbath, not in the sense of fulfilling it by resting and doing nothing; He fulfilled it in the truest sense of doing good on it like people were supposed to do! Jesus was like the busiest man in history on the Sabbath b/c of all the good He engaged in on the Sabbath. The Sabbath seemed like Jesus' busiest day of the week.

So you didn't fulfill the Sabbath by sitting around and not moving a muscle like the religious leaders taught; you fulfilled the Sabbath by doing good. If you did fulfill the Sabbath by doing nothing, then Jesus actually would've been the worst violator of the Sabbath!

LESSON 2: (PART I) THE SABBATH WAS ABOUT DOING GOOD (PART II) AND NOBODY FULFILLED IT BETTER THAN JESUS (PART III) OR VIOLATED IT WORSE THAN THE RELIGIOUS LEADERS.

The real irony is the religious leaders always criticizing Jesus for violating the Sabbath, but they were actually the worst violators of the Sabbath, for two reasons...

1. First, they wouldn't do any good, which is what the Sabbath was about.
2. And second, if doing is what you're supposed to do on the Sabbath, then the worst way to violate the Sabbath would be by doing evil. Of course you shouldn't do evil on any day of the week, but you especially shouldn't do evil on the Sabbath, the holiest day of the week.

But Jesus read their thoughts and He knew this was exactly what they were doing! Please do me a favor: in verse 9...

- Circle the words "**do good**" and "**save life**" and write, "*Jesus' actions.*"
- Then circle the words, "**do evil**" and "**destroy**" and write, "*Pharisees' actions.*"

Now Jesus didn't mean they wanted to do evil or destroy the life of the man w/ the withered hand; He isn't talking about that man. He's talking about Himself! He's talking about them plotting evil against Him and seeking to destroy His life...on the Sabbath!

- John 5 took place chronologically before this, and **John 5:18** says [**They**] **sought all the more to kill Him.** They've been seeking to kill Him.

- If you look at verse 11 it says **But they were filled with rage, and discussed with one another what they might do to Jesus.** The parallel account in **Matt 12:14** says **The Pharisees went out and plotted against Him, HOW THEY MIGHT DESTROY HIM.**

This is what they were doing on the Sabbath! Wanting to engage in this kind of evil on the Sabbath made them the worst violators of the Sabbath and Jesus' question exposed that!

So here's another way to look at Jesus' question:

- He's saying, *"Is it lawful to do good on the Sabbath like I'm trying to do, or is it lawful to do evil on the Sabbath like you're trying to do?"*
- *"Who's really keeping the Sabbath and who's really violating it?"*

Now Jesus did something else pretty tremendous w/ this question and I want to make sure we don't miss it...

The Sabbath was ceremonial and not moral, which is why it could be violated. But right here, Jesus did something very interesting w/ His question: even though it's the Sabbath, He made the whole situation moral. Let me get you to circle a few things so you can see what I mean:

- In verse 9 circle the word "**Sabbath**" and write, *"ceremonial."*
- Then circle the words "**do good or evil**" and write, *"moral."*

Jesus moved from dealing w/ the Sabbath, or dealing w/ ceremony, to dealing w/ morality, or dealing w/ good and evil.

- They think healing the man would be violating the Sabbath, which would be violating ceremony.
- But Jesus says healing the man would be doing something good, which is about morality and not ceremony.

Jesus' point is this isn't really a ceremonial situation: it's a moral situation. It's not really about the Sabbath, it's about this man's good, and since the Sabbath calls for people to do good, the right thing for Jesus to do on the Sabbath is heal this man!

¹⁰ And when He had looked around at them all, He said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." And he did so, and his hand was restored as whole as the other.

Notice the words **He...looked around at them all.** What that means is Jesus asked the question in verse 9, then looked at them as if to say, *"What do you have to say?"* This wasn't a friendly look. This wasn't Jesus looking at them like, *"Do you have any thoughts?"* This was Jesus looking at them like, *"You look really bad in front of everyone right now. Do you have anything to say for yourselves?"* Hendrikson said, *"The confrontation was as sharp, dramatic, and bold as imaginable."*

I'm sure nobody in the synagogue was making a sound!

Now look at verse 11...

“Then they were filled with belief, because they realized only the Son of God could do something like this, and they discussed how they might worship Him and make Him known to others.”

Nope...

¹¹ But they were filled with rage, and discussed with one another what they might do to Jesus.

Now I see two simple lessons we can learn from the Pharisees that I want to share w/ you...

LESSON 3: LEARN FROM THE PHARISEES (PART I) MIRACLES DON'T GUARANTEE SAVING FAITH.

There's a common false belief that if people will just see a miracle, then they'll come to salvation. In my mind the religious leaders are the best example in Scripture debunking this false belief.

If there's anyone who had faith in Jesus to perform miraculous it was the religious leaders. They had so much confidence in Jesus to perform miracles that they expected Him to perform them before He performed them. But even though they had this faith, it didn't lead to salvation.

In the story of the Rich Man and Lazarus, the Rich Man is in torment, and he doesn't want his brothers to join him there, so he begs Abraham to send Lazarus back from the dead to warn them. Abraham responds by saying, *“They have the Scriptures. They have what Moses wrote.”* Then the Rich man disagrees w/ him in **Luke 16:30 “No, if someone is sent to them from the dead, then they'll repent!”** And Abraham says this tremendous statement in return: **Luke 16:31 “If they do not hear Moses and the prophets (which is to say if the Scriptures aren't enough to convince them), neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead.**

Think about Pharaoh and the Egyptians...

They saw more miracles than anyone in history. They experienced them firsthand. They were the recipients of them. They were completely convinced God could perform miracles. But at the same time they were the picture of hard-heartedness.

The point is, witnessing miracles is no guarantee of saving faith.

LESSON 3: LEARN FROM THE PHARISEES:

- **(PART I) MIRACLES DON'T GUARANTEE SAVING FAITH.**
- **(PART II) PRIDE LEADS TO HUMILIATION.**

The hatred of the religious leaders seems irrational, but we have to consider how prideful these men were:

- In **Matt 6:5** Jesus said the religious leaders **love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men.**

- **In Matt 23:6-7** Jesus said the religious leaders **love the best places at feasts, the best seats in the synagogues, greetings in the marketplaces, and to be called by men, ‘Rabbi, Rabbi.’**

These are men who love to look good. They care what everyone thinks. They want everyone to think they’re perfect. But Jesus just humiliated them:

1. First, He asked them a question they couldn’t answer, making them look foolish and ignorant.
2. Then He performed a miracle w/ all the people knowing the religious leaders wouldn’t want Him to do it. He completely defied them in front of everyone.

When you’re as prideful as they were, when the attention of men is the greatest desire in your life, being publicly humiliated like this would be your biggest nightmare.

But it’s even worse than this...

If you look back at verse 7, it says they wanted to **find an accusation against Him**, but Jesus healed the man w/ so few words they couldn’t accuse Him of anything. JM said, *“He had performed no actual work w/ which they could charge Him.”* They were filled w/ rage, completely furious, and they couldn’t do anything about it except just stand there humiliated...and all this stemmed from their pride...and one of the most common themes in Scripture is pride leads to humiliation:

- **Pro 16:18** *Pride goes before destruction, And a haughty spirit before a fall*
- **Luke 14:11** *Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.*

This past week we were back in our hometown and we decided to take our children to see the high school Katie and I graduated from, and at one moment I was reminded of an embarrassing situation from my life...

There’s a big mural on the wall w/ the pictures of the Outstanding Athlete of the Year. They introduce the winner of this award each year at graduation. I was more excited about this announcement than I was about actually graduating. I remember when they were going to announce the winner. I sat up straighter. Made sure my clothes were in place. They said, “And this year’s outstanding student of the year is...” and I practically started to stand up...and then they said someone’s name, but it wasn’t my name!

I was embarrassed, but I wouldn’t have been embarrassed if I hadn’t been so prideful and actually thought I should win the award.

LESSON 4: JESUS WANTS TO HEAL THE WITHERED PARTS OF OUR LIVES.

One of the reasons I really like this story is it sort of reminds me of my testimony...

I told you this man basically showed up at the synagogue w/o any expectations. When I went to a Christian church for the first time, I didn’t have any expectations. I went there simply b/c I had been invited to speak to the pastor about the death of his brother, b/c my brother had died recently and someone thought he might have some encouragement for me.

I didn't bring a Bible w/ me b/c I grew up in the Catholic Church and you never brought a Bible to church. But someone gave me a Bible when I arrived and when the pastor taught from it, it was a life-changing moment for me. For the first time ever I thought God was speaking to me, and He was through His Word. I became a Christian soon after that.

When I walked into that Christian church that day, I thought I was a good person. I didn't realize there were withered parts of my life the Lord wanted to heal. Jesus sought me out like He sought this man out.

While we might not have physically withered parts of our bodies, we all have spiritually withered parts of our bodies. This man had no idea Jesus wanted to heal his withered hand, but I can tell you Jesus wants just as much to heal the withered parts of our lives:

- Maybe it's a critical spirit
- Maybe it's a mouth given to gossip
- Maybe it's a covetous heart
- Maybe it's eyes given to lust
- Maybe it's a root of bitterness
- Maybe it's a lying tongue

We all have withered parts of our lives and these are areas the Lord wants to heal. This man had to stretch out his hand, and we have to stretch out these areas to the Lord and ask Him to heal them.

This past week I took my kids to the fair in our hometown. Someone said, "Hey, that's so-and-so." It was actually one of my best friends in high school. It was a guy who had won the Outstanding Athlete of the Year Award previously. He was a great athlete. Big, strong, healthy.

But when I saw him at the fair I didn't even recognize him. He looked terrible. He looked so beat up and withered. He hadn't had any health problems, but the years of abusing sin had really taken a toll on him. I thought if he'd known Jesus his life could've taken a completely different course. He could've been healed of some of the sins he'd been fighting.

If you've never surrendered your life to Jesus I want to let you know that you're spiritually withered. You're filled w/ unforgiven sin and unrighteousness. But if you surrender your life to Christ, He'll remove your sins and give you His righteousness. He'll spiritually make you as right as this man's hand after it was healed.

If that's something you'd like done in your life, Pastor Doug and I will be up front after service and we'd love the opportunity to talk to you.

LET'S REVIEW THESE LESSONS:

LESSON 1: (PART I) JESUS FACED TERRIBLE OPPOSITION, (PART II) BUT HE DIDN'T LET IT STOP HIM (PART III) AND IT SHOULDN'T STOP US EITHER.

LESSON 2: (PART I) THE SABBATH WAS ABOUT DOING GOOD (PART II) AND NOBODY FULFILLED IT BETTER THAN JESUS (PART III) OR VIOLATED IT WORSE THAN THE RELIGIOUS LEADERS.

LESSON 3: LEARN FROM THE PHARISEES:

- PART I: MIRACLES DON'T GUARANTEE SAVING FAITH.
- PART II: PRIDE LEADS TO HUMILIATION.

LESSON 4: JESUS WANTS TO HEAL THE WITHERED PARTS OF OUR LIVES.