

## The Withered Hand mark 3:1

Jesus has just told the Pharisees who it is that is Lord of the Sabbath. It is Jesus of course. and in the text He is illustrating how to use the Sabbath. He entered the church. I imagine Jesus went to the church because He loved to go. There was no drudgery in it for Him, I can see Him with the quickened step when He faced the church. Did you ever notice people going to various functions? yonder is the business man due at his office at 7 and the town clock announces from this exalted place that the hour has arrived watch the man as he quickens his step, yonder is the man preparing to go hunting and fishing and he seems to become as he hits the ground. But do you see people generally hurrying to get to church? If there is any place in the world that you do not feel that you have to hurry to it is the church. Is the ball game you have to hurry if you get a seat it is the circus you have to hurry to avoid the crush, to the picture show if you want a certain distance from the screen so we get a lively step - get the habit, but why slow to church? Well you know there is always an empty seat - a waiting for - any part of the house.

Jesus entered again. He had been there before and did not lose the table for it. It meant something to Him to go into the synagogue. It means much to any any man to enter the church if he comes like Christ did. The service meant much to Jesus because He meant so much to the service. This will happen to any person if he means something to the service the service will mean much to him. yes He entered again - some people come the first Sunday the new preacher comes and that the last because

They get another new broom. It all depends on whether that preacher's style suits them. He may have mannerisms. They do not like it if this be true then they hands off all some better entertainers comes. Jesus did not enter for entertainment but for service - to render a blessing. Some women were discussing one of our preachers when he was first sent to their church. One said, "How if you see his legs from the side he looks graceful but if from the front he is dreadfully bow legged." Jesus entered again into the synagogue and did not pay any attention whether or not people were bow legged, rock kneed or what not but entered for service and if we come for that purpose bless your heart it will be said of us too "He entered again."

"And there was a man there which had a grudge - which had an unforgiving spirit, which had his feelings shaking out - which had a stingy heart. Well it does not read that way. "And there was a man there which had a contrary hand."

I wonder how this man came to be there! It is not likely that he just staggered in. Some body likely told him about Jesus and he went up to see for himself. He could have said "I have had a stroke so I will stay at home but he went. And in his mercy had left his cane and feet which carried him up to church. He need what he had left to get him to the place of blessing and Christ met him there and healed him.

St Jerome says that this man was a mason by trade and sought Jesus to heal him that he might not have to beg. That he might go on building. The

The hand is a very important member of the body. God has given us hands to work with and with the hands we make a living and with our hands we distribute to the needy and point out directions. But if the hand another

it loses its usefulness -

now it is bad to have a withered hand but it is worse to have a withered body but even more still to have a withered life. withered lives make up the tragedies around us. The picture of such people is drawn in John 12. "press whose fruit withereth, you have seen the tree as it is loaded with life, green fruit, a bright bark or the tree is disturbed at its roots and the fruit withers and never ripens. This is a sad picture in life.

you look back now and recall some one whose life was full of possibilities for a very fruitful life - vitally connected with the church and that person cuts himself or herself off from the divine nourishment and the fruit withers.

and there was a man there which had a withered hand. The hand was once all right but now it isn't. But he had life enough left to get back to meet Jesus and Jesus renewed him.

Jesus said "stretch forth your hand". He stretched it forth and it was healed. It took faith to do it but he did it. The old hand which he had been unable to move now could be believed now that he could move it? He tried and he moved.

Jesus says to you in your withered life "come unto me" present yourself and the renewal will come.

we do not hear any more about this man. But our eyes follow him. I see him as he goes off swinging the old arm like it used to giving - exercising it. soon he is laying brick again - building walls.

yes and my eyes rapidly pass to another picture - the withered life which reconnects with Jesus and it goes away exercising itself and sooner it is back in the class - back in the mission society - back in the church building character.