

Matthew 12:9-13. Christ Heals the Man With the Withered Hand.

by Favell Lee Mortimer

Jesus heals the man with the withered hand, demonstrating his power and compassion, and commanding us to repent and believe.

Scripture: 1 Samuel 2:9, Psalm 63:11, Mark 3:1, Mark 11:22, 2 Peter 3:9

Topics: "Divine Mercy", "Redemption"

Description

Favell Lee Mortimer preaches about Jesus' compassion and mercy, highlighting how He honored public worship, taught at the synagogue, and showed mercy to a man with a withered hand despite opposition from his enemies. Jesus, perceiving the wicked hearts of his enemies, challenged them to do good on the Sabbath, revealing their hardness of heart. He viewed humanity as lost sheep in need of redemption, displaying both anger and grief towards those hindering the healing of souls. Through the story of the man with the withered hand, Mortimer emphasizes the importance of obeying Jesus' commands, even when they seem impossible, like repentance and belief.

Transcript

It was upon the way to the synagogue that the disciples had plucked the ears of corn; for our Savior did honor to the ordinances of public worship by attending them himself. He taught at the synagogue, he sat among the readers, and expounded. His enemies were present; for they observed the forms of religion, though they knew not its power.

Jesus noticed among the congregation a man with a withered hand. He would not be restrained by the malice of his enemies from displaying his mercy. The Pharisees observed what he was going to do, and asked him whether it was lawful to heal on the Sabbath-day. Jesus answered their question by another; for, in Mark's gospel, we find that He replied, "Is it lawful to do good on the Sabbath, or to do evil? To save life or to kill?" Thus he showed that he read the wicked hearts of his enemies, and perceived their design of killing him. It was impossible for them to resist this appeal to their consciences; they held their peace, as all the wicked shall do at the judgment-seat of Christ. "The mouths of those who speak lies shall be stopped;" (Ps. 63:11.) "The wicked shall be silent in darkness." (1 Sam. 2:9.) Jesus regarded this poor man as a sheep fallen into a pit of affliction. He had looked upon all mankind as such a sheep, and had come down to redeem their precious souls from death. With what compassion he viewed his poor sheep,

"plunged in a gulf of dark despair," whence it never could extricate itself?

Mark describes our Savior's feelings towards his enemies on this occasion. "He looked round about him with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts." Well might it grieve him to behold sinners endeavoring to hinder the healing of a poor sufferer, only because the Savior's glory would shine forth the more brightly on that account. What a dreadful instance of hardness of heart! But are there not some in these days who commit similar sins, by opposing the preaching of the Gospel, which can alone restore a withered soul? Does not Jesus view such people now with anger and with grief?

The manner in which he healed the poor man is very remarkable. He could have cured him by a word; but he desired him to stretch forth his hand. Was not this a strange command? It was the man's disease, that he could not stretch forth his hand. The man might have replied, "I have often endeavored to stretch forth my hand, and have not been able. Why should I try again?" But he made no such unbelieving answer; he confided in the power of Jesus, and his attempt was successful.

The Lord in his Gospel commands us to do things that seem to be impossible. He says, "Repent and believe." We are sinners, and cannot repent and believe, except by a miracle of grace. Our hearts are hard--how can they repent and feel grieved because we have sinned against God? Our minds are blind, how can we believe and see the glorious salvation of Christ? Let us beware of saying, "We cannot repent and believe--we have often tried, and we have not been able." There is a dreadful history of one who reasoned thus. It was Dr. Priestly. In his youth he discovered that he was not born again--at first he was greatly distressed at finding he could not repent and believe; but instead of looking to the power of Christ to enable him, he listened to the devil, who suggested that there was no such thing as repentance, faith, or regeneration. He believed the lie; he preached it; and how did he die? Comforting himself with the thought that there was no eternal punishment--another lie suggested by Satan. He said to a friend, "Reach down that book--(he did not mean the Bible--he did not desire to hear its precious promises)--that book has greatly consoled me; it has convinced me that we shall all come to heaven at last, whatever sufferings we may endure first." Thus he died, expecting to be cast into hell for a time, and then to be translated to heaven. But who could bear the thoughts of passing one day in the lake of fire, or even one hour! Let us beware of the first unbelieving thought, lest it should increase to more ungodliness. Jesus commands, "Stretch forth your hand--Repent--believe." If we have not repented or believed, let us make the effort now, confiding in his strength who gave the command.

Source:

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