



Sunday 21st June 2026
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Stretch out your hand

Luke 6:6-11

Introduction

Jesus released many miracles—so many that not all could be recorded. John tells us that if everything Jesus did was written down, the world itself could not contain the books. Yet the Holy Spirit chose to preserve certain miracles for us.

Why? Because every miracle is more than a demonstration of power. Within every miracle account there are deeper spiritual issues that Jesus wanted to reveal & confront. The physical condition was real, but it often pointed to a deeper spiritual condition.

The same conditions Jesus confronted then still exist today - People still suffer from them. Families still suffer from them. Communities still suffer from them.

This account is recorded in three Gospels. Each writer records the same central event while emphasizing different details. This is also the first of seven miracles Jesus performed on the Sabbath.

Scripture

Luke 6:6-11

*[6] And it occurred on another Sabbath that when He went into the synagogue and taught, a man was present whose **right hand was withered**.*

*Everyone watched Jesus closely, especially the Jewish religious leaders and the religious scholars, to see if Jesus would heal on a Sabbath, for **they were eager to find a reason to accuse him of breaking the Jewish laws**.*

*[8] Jesus, knowing their every thought, said to the man with the withered hand, "**Arise and stand here in the middle of the room.**" **So he got up and came forward.***

[9] Jesus said to all who were there, "Let me ask you a question. Which is better: to heal or to do harm on the Sabbath? I have come to save a life, but you have come to find a life to destroy."

(Mark records that nobody answered Him a word.)

[10] One by one Jesus looked into the eyes of each person in the room.

(Mark says Jesus was moved with indignation and grieved by the hardness of their hearts.)

*Then He said to the man, "**Now stretch out your arm and open your hand!**" With everyone watching intently, he stretched out his arm, and his hand was completely healed!*

[11] The room erupted with bitter rage

(AMPC: "They were filled with lack of understanding and senseless rage.")

From that moment on, the religious leaders plotted among themselves about how they might harm Jesus.

The First Issue

A significant part of this encounter is a **man's physical condition — a withered right hand**. Luke does not tell us what caused it. Some traditions suggest the man was a stonemason whose hand had been damaged through a trauma.

The Symbolism Of The Right Hand

In Scripture the right hand symbolizes **authority, influence, strength, blessing, fellowship, stewardship, creativity, and service**.

A withered hand is not a hand that was never there. It is a hand that has lost its function — something that once worked, expressed life, and contributed, but has now become restricted.

A withered hand represents any area of life where the life of God is no longer being fully expressed.

Something God intended to flow through you has become restricted, dormant, shrunken, or inactive.

A Withered Hand

A healthy hand reaches outward. It **develops, serves, gives, receives, blesses, builds, and participates**.

A withered hand loses that capacity.

Physically, a contracted hand often curls inward toward itself. **It loses its ability to extend outward and engage with & influence the world.**

There are areas in life & the world that needs your hand on!

What a powerful spiritual picture. **Many people live with inwardly turned lives** — not because they are evil, but because they have been wounded, disappointed, rejected, traumatized, discouraged, or fearful. Isolation and trauma tend to fold people inward. Healing restores the ability to move outward again.

The Real Condition In The Room

Notice what happens before the miracle. Jesus looked around the room — into the eyes of each person present...Pharisees

The hand was symbolic of the real condition in the room.

Who were these Pharisees?

They were the religious leaders and teachers of God's law — the ones who were supposed to represent God to the nation. Externally they presented impeccable. They knew the Scriptures, the history, and the law. **They were highly respected and occupied seats of influence.**

Yet Jesus exposes a deeper reality. Their hearts had become hardened. **Their spirits had become withered.**

The deeper condition Jesus was revealing was not primarily the withered hand of the man — **it was the withered hearts of those who claimed to represent God.**

This condition kept people oppressed, burdened, and suffering.

This is significant. Before He addresses the man's condition, He addresses the deeper condition that effected many.

These Pharisees are not merely historical figures.

Jesus is exposing a condition that can appear anywhere—including religious institutions, governments, workplaces, and our own hearts.

It projects a form of godliness externally. It wants recognition and control.

It becomes jealous when not the centre of attention. It becomes angry when exposed.

It values position more than people.
Wherever it operates, people remain impoverished.

(Note: Not every person in religious leadership falls into this trap. Genuine love for God's Word can and should produce compassion. But whenever position, control, or external appearance matter more than people, this spirit is at work.)

The atmosphere is tense. The Pharisees are watching Jesus. Jesus is watching the Pharisees. The man with the withered hand stands in the middle. Everyone is being revealed.

Mark tells us Jesus experienced two emotions simultaneously:
"He looked around at them with anger, grieved by the hardness of their hearts."

Anger

- at the injustice.
- at the lack of compassion.
- at the misuse of God's law.
- at a system, spirit, and attitude that kept people bound.

Grief

Because the people themselves had become trapped in that hardness. The man had a withered hand. The Pharisees had withered hearts.
The man's condition was visible. Theirs was hidden but effected a nation.

Miracle

Jesus turned to the man & said **"Now stretch out your hand"**
Jesus does not say, "Once you feel better, stretch out your hand."

He says, "Stretch out your hand." The man is asked to attempt what he thinks is out of reach. As he responds in obedience, restoration comes.
The miracle happens in the stretching...the activation.

Post Miracle

Everyone sees undeniable evidence of God's goodness. After the miracle they become furious.

Logically, their reaction makes no sense. A man who had been disabled is now whole. Possibly a family got their husband, father, and provider back. A human being is restored. Yet instead of celebration, there is rage.

The Amplified captures it well: *"They were filled with lack of understanding and senseless rage."*

In other words, they were no longer thinking clearly...**manifested!**
Jesus had touched something deep in their hearts. He had exposed their identity. Their position had given them status, recognition, influence, and control. When Jesus healed the man, the crowd's attention shifted from the Pharisees to the goodness of God. The moment revealed that they loved their position more than the people they were supposed to serve.

Withered Hand Today

- **Withered Purpose:** Someone who once dreamed, built, created, or led but has withdrawn. The potential remains; the expression has stopped.
- **Withered Faith:** Someone who still passively believes in God but no longer steps out in faith. Prayer becomes dry. Expectation fades.
- **Withered Relationships:** The ability to trust, love, and connect has been damaged.
- **Withered Gifts:** Many carry gifts that have become dormant because of criticism, failure, fear, or rejection. Gifts/finance once freely given, now wanting returned

God's Kingdom Moves & Extends Outward

Sin, fear, disappointment, religion, trauma, and isolation all tend to curve life inward upon itself. The Kingdom moves in the opposite direction. **Jesus continually calls people outward** — out of hiding, out of isolation, out of self-protection, out of fear — and into participation, relationship, purpose, and life.

Three Instructions

Jesus never condemns the man. He never tells him to hide his condition. Instead, He gives three clear instructions:

1. **Arise** — Leave the place where you have settled. Step up on the inside...shift your posture
2. **Stand Here in the Middle** — Bring the condition into the light. Stand where everyone can see. Stand where God can deal with it openly.
3. **Stretch Out Your Hand** — This is the key. Jesus does not say, "Once I heal you, stretch out your hand." He says, "Stretch out your hand." And as he responds in obedience, restoration comes. The miracle happens in the stretching. The miracle happens in the activation.

Conclusion

The very thing the man may have wanted to hide became the place where God's power was revealed. That is often how restoration works.

What we hide, Jesus brings into the light — not to shame us, but to heal us.

Restoration does not come by permanently covering /bandaging what is broken.

It comes when the life of God begins flowing again.

What had become contracted was extended. What had become inward was turned outward. What had become dormant became functional. What had become withered became whole.

And while the man's hand was restored, the story leaves us with questions:

First, What is withered in you — whether visible or hidden — that Jesus is calling you to bring into the light today?

The same condition existed in two places in that synagogue: a withered hand and withered hearts. Ask the Holy Spirit honestly: Where in me has my spirit/heart become restricted, dormant, or curled inward?

How is that expressed? Jealousy?

Maybe been under a religious system that has crushed you?

Maybe your identity is more tied to external things of your life & react when challenged over it.

Second, respond with obedience. Hear Jesus speaking directly to you:

Rise. Stand in the middle. Stretch out your hand.

The miracle is still in the stretching. As you step out in faith and attempt the very thing that feels impossible in your own strength, you will discover the restoring power of God.

What is withered in us that Jesus is still calling to rise, stand, and stretch out today?