

Truths to the Withered

1. In order to receive His miracle, this man was in the right place

It was the Sabbath day, and he knew he was to be in the synagogue to worship God. This is where Jesus finds him. He finds him in the course of obedience to that which he knew to do.

2. In order to receive His miracle, this man was to obey the light that God was giving

His revelation goes from general to specific. His general revelation was to *Honor the Sabbath day to keep it holy*, but his special revelation was to stand up and stretch forth. The words “stand up” meant that he was to step into the middle of the room where all could see him and that he was to stretch forth his hands.

“And when he had looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts,”

Two emotions in one verse:

-anger- **orgē**- anger, wrath, indignation

-grief- **sullupeō**- to affect with grief together (from which we get our word sympathy)

3. In order to show appreciation for His miracle, this man was to use his hand as an instrument of love and compassion towards others

“And the LORD said unto him, What is that in thine hand? And he said, A rod.” (Exodus 4:2) What a rod that would become! May we give the Lord Jesus all that is in our hands— for service, worship, and usefulness both in the church and in His Kingdom.

Resources:

¹ Kirby, Stephanie. Retrieved from <https://www.betterhelp.com/advice/stress/are-you-suffering-from-emotional-exhaustion/>

² Essays, UK. (November 2018). The Major Function Of Human Hand Psychology Essay. Retrieved from <https://www.ukessays.com/essays/psychology/the-major-function-of-human-hand-psychology-essay.php?vref=1>

³ Wellman, Jack. <https://www.patheos.com/blogs/christiancrier/2015/06/13/what-does-the-right-hand-symbolize-or-mean-in-the-bible/>

⁴ Jacobs, Joseph and Einstren, Judah David. Retrieved from <http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/12757-right-and-left>

⁵ Retrieved from <https://www.worldatlas.com/articles/what-percentage-of-the-world-population-are-left-handed.html>

⁶ MacArthur, John. The Master's Plan for the Church. Retrieved from <https://www.gotquestions.org/right-hand-of-fellowship.html>



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Withered | Mark 3:1-6

What a word for the week! Do you feel withered? Drained? Exhausted? Spent? Limp? Dry?

Stephanie Kirby describes a few symptoms of emotional exhaustion. ¹

- **Difficulty Sleeping or Staying Awake**
- **Feeling Foggy**
- **Personality Changes**
- **Anxiety and Depression**

Maybe because of being home bound, quarantined, or overly stressed by the goings on in the outer life, the inner man cries out in fear, fatigue, and restlessness. These are signs of a withered spirit.

Withered spirits are not uncommon in the biblical narrative. Men like Elijah, who stood alone with Jehovah on the top of Mount Carmel, felt it. Men like Jonah, who pouted at the outpouring of God's mercy on Nineveh, knew it. Jacob cried out at word that the Vizier of Egypt called for Benjamin— all these things are against me. Even the mighty Paul worked through the pangs of withering experience, noting, “For we would not, brethren, have you ignorant of our trouble which came to us in Asia, that **we were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life:**” (II Corinthians 1:8)

However, each withered soul comes to know the invigorating power of Jesus Christ. In their own experience, yet in His own way, our Great God stands ready to come to the aid of the withered.

“For I the LORD thy God will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee,
Fear not; I will help thee.” (Isaiah 41:13)

A Withered Hand

For the second time in three chapters, the Lord Jesus enters the synagogue where the needs of the people will meet Him. It seems as if when He arrives in a sanctuary, He sees the needs no one else sees. He knows the needs that have not yet been revealed. On this day, a withered hand becomes the sermon itself.

The word "withered" is often used in the Bible to describe something that is dried up, wasted away, pining away, or shriveled up. For some reason, unknown to the synoptic accounts of this miracle, a Sabbath worshipper suffered from a withered, right hand.

"The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: because the spirit of the LORD bloweth upon it: surely the people is grass. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever." (Isaiah 40:7-8)

What Does the Withered Hand Teach us about the Spiritual Life?

• What does the hand speak of in the Bible?

Our hands are capable of great things or gross things— clean and unclean.

• What does the right hand speak of in the Bible? (Luke 6:6)

The expression "the right hand" is an often-used expression, found 166 times in the Bible. It is one of those ideas from the Bible that pervades our society and how we entreat one another. You may hear someone say, "This is my right-hand man" or other fond expressions. What, then, does this phrase mean in the biblical sense? ³

"So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God...Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;" (Mark 16:19, Hebrews 1:3)

The right hand of anything, then, holds a high and holy place.

• power

"And this is the blessing, wherewith Moses the man of God blessed the children of Israel before his death. And he said, The LORD came from Sinai, and rose up from Seir unto them; he shined forth from mount Paran, and he came with ten thousands of saints: from his right hand went a fiery law for them." (Deuteronomy 33:1-2)

• blessing

"And Israel stretched out his right hand, and laid it upon Ephraim's head, who was the younger, and his left hand upon Manasseh's head, guiding his hands wittingly; for Manasseh was the firstborn." (Genesis 48:14) ⁴

• majesty

"Thy right hand, O Lord, is become glorious in power" (Exodus 15:6)

• sovereignty

Throughout the Revelation of Jesus Christ, His right hand of sovereignty is very prominent. John notes, "And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals." (Rev 5:1) "And he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne" (Rev 5:7).

• honor

"Upon thy right hand did stand the queen in gold of Ophir." (Ps. 45:9) (see also I Kings 2:19)

• fellowship

In Galatians chapter two, Paul and Barnabas were extended the right hand of church fellowship. This signified that they were accepted into the group. The Bible notes, "And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, **they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship**; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision."⁶

Because this word speaks of power, authority, majesty, blessing sovereignty, and fellowship, it is not wonder it would be an awful thing to have a withered hand...yay, a withered right hand! Think how powerless, unwelcomed, dishonorable, and vain you would feel to walk around with a hand that subliminally said so much about your weakness. Yet, imagine if Jesus Christ came alongside you and held your hand. How awesome would it be if He held your hand...healed your hand...and became your "right-hand man." This arrangement would make it so that you were not operating in the strength of your own power, or authority, or honor, or blessing, or sovereignty, or fellowship, but rather than you were walking in all that He is. How awesome would it be to have as your promise His hand of power and blessing operating for you!

"And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last:" (Revelation 1:17)

"Therefore I was left alone, and saw this great vision, and there remained no strength in me: for my comeliness was turned in me into corruption, and I retained no strength. Yet heard I the voice of his words: and when I heard the voice of his words, then was I in a deep sleep on my face, and my face toward the ground. And, behold, an hand touched me, which set me upon my knees and upon the palms of my hands." (Daniel 10:8-10)