



STRETCH OUT YOUR HAND

KEY TEXT

Mark 3:1–6 (NKJV)

V1 – And He entered the synagogue again, and a man was there who had a withered hand.

V2 – So they watched Him closely, whether He would heal him on the Sabbath, so that they might accuse Him.

V3 – And He said to the man who had the withered hand, “Step forward.”

V4- Then He said to them, “Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do evil, to save life or to kill?” But they kept silent.

V5- And when He had looked around at them with anger, being grieved by the hardness of their hearts, He said to the man, “Stretch out your hand.” And he stretched it out, and his hand was restored as whole as the other.

V6- Then the Pharisees went out and immediately plotted with the Herodians against Him, how they might destroy him.

Several years ago, a physical therapist described something interesting about patients recovering from injury.

Sometimes a person injures an arm or hand so badly that they stop using it for months. The muscles weaken, the joints stiffen, and the brain almost forgets how to move it.

Then during rehabilitation, the therapist will say something surprising:

“Try to move it.”

The patient often replies,
“I can’t.”

The therapist gently insists,
“Try.”

And slowly—very slowly—the fingers begin to move.

The movement is weak. Imperfect. Painful.

But that first small movement is the **turning point**.

Because once the limb begins to move, the healing process **accelerates**.

Movement releases restoration.

Jesus is in a synagogue on the Sabbath. Inside is a man with a withered hand. But the tension in the room is not coming from the man. The Pharisees are watching Jesus closely. They are not looking for mercy. They are looking for a reason to accuse Him.

In the middle of that tension, Jesus calls the man forward and asks a question: **“Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do evil, to save life or to kill?”**

Then Jesus gives a simple command that sounds just like that therapist’s instruction: **“Stretch out your hand.”**

And immediately, the hand is restored. The very thing he could not do became the **doorway to his miracle.**

But this miracle is not only about healing a hand.

It reveals how God works in our **weakness**. Often the place where we feel the most **powerless** is the very place where Christ invites us to **trust Him**.

In a world that celebrates playing safe and staying silent, Jesus' command in **Gospel of Mark 3** calls us to step out of fear and “stretch out our hand” — choosing courageous obedience over comfortable caution. This morning, I would like to share a sermon entitled, “STRETCH OUT YOUR HAND”.

The outline of my sermon will be as follows:

- Your Weakness
- Your Obedience
- Your Opposition

How does God work in our weakness?

1

WEAKNESS

BRING YOUR WEAKNESS INTO THE LIGHT

Jesus says to the man: **“Step forward”** (verse 3).



Imagine that moment.

Everyone in the synagogue turns and looks.

The man with the withered hand walks to the center of the room.

In that culture, **a withered hand** meant more than physical disability.

It meant:

- Embarrassment

- Economic hardship
- Dependence
- Social stigma

He could easily have stayed in the back row.

But Jesus brings him **FORWARD**.

Why?

Because what is brought into Christ's presence can be restored by Christ's power.

Illustration: Imagine a cracked porcelain cup placed at the back of a cabinet. No one uses it because it is broken. But because it stays hidden, it never gets repaired. However, when a skilled craftsman takes it and repairs it with care, the cup becomes even more beautiful than before.

But the restoration only begins when the broken piece is **brought out into the OPEN**.

Lessons:

- **Hidden weakness remains broken.**
- **Exposed weakness can be healed.**

Application:

Many people come to church the way this man could have stayed in the synagogue.

They worship.

They smile.

But they hide the broken areas of their lives.

- **Hidden wounds**
- **Secret fears**
- **Silent struggles**
- **Deep disappointments**

Notice this carefully. The miracle in our key text did not begin when the hand moved. It began

when the man **stepped forward**. The moment he stopped hiding his weakness and stood before Jesus, restoration had already begun.

Healing begins where **HONESTY BEGINS**.

God already knows our weakness.

The only question is whether we will bring it to Him.

Sometimes miracles are delayed not because God is unwilling to act, but because we are still **protecting our image**.

But when we step forward with **humility, grace begins to work**.

2

OBEDIENCE

OBEY BEFORE YOU SEE THE MIRACLE

Then Jesus says something remarkable:

“Stretch out your hand.”



Think about how strange this command sounds.

The man's problem is that he cannot stretch it.

Jesus is asking him to do the very thing **HE CANNOT DO.**

Application: God does not ask you to stretch what is **strong**. He asks you to stretch what is **weak**. If the hand had been healthy, stretching it would mean nothing. But Jesus asks him to stretch the very thing that is **broken**. God often asks us to trust Him exactly in the place where we feel **LEAST CAPABLE.**

The man could have responded in many ways:

"Lord, I tried that for years."

"Lord, you don't understand my condition."

"Lord, it's impossible."

But instead, he obeys. And as he obeys, the miracle happens.

This reveals an important spiritual principle:

GOD'S POWER OFTEN MEETS US ON THE ROAD OF OBEDIENCE.

Illustration: Imagine an old rusty water tap that has not been turned for years. Someone finally tries to turn it. At first nothing happens. But as the tap begins to move, suddenly water flows. The water was always in the pipes. But **movement released the flow**. In the same way, **obedience releases the flow of God's grace**.

Application: Many believers wait for perfect conditions before obeying God.

But Scripture shows a different pattern.

God often says:

- forgive before you feel ready
- Step forward before confidence arrives
- Serve before strength feels sufficient
- Trust before understanding comes

Faith is not the absence of weakness.

Faith is **OBEDIENCE IN THE PRESENCE OF WEAKNESS.**

The miracle did not come **before** the movement. It began when the man **stepped forward.**

It came **DURING** the movement.

MOVEMENT RELEASES RESTORATION.

3

OPPOSITION

EXPECT OPPOSITION WHEN YOU OBEY

You might expect the synagogue to erupt in celebration.

A man has just been healed!

But instead, the Pharisees leave the building and begin plotting how to destroy Jesus.

Grace offended their pride.

Compassion threatened their system.

Light exposed their darkness.

Illustration: When light enters a dark room, it does not negotiate with darkness. It simply shines. And darkness resists. The brighter the light, the stronger the resistance.

Application:

When God begins to work in your life, not everyone will celebrate.

- **Some may misunderstand your change.**

- Some may criticize your obedience.
- Some may resist your growth.

Do not measure God's will by **human approval**.

Faithfulness is not proven by applause.

It is proven by **OBEDIENCE**.

Ultimately, this story points beyond the man to Jesus Himself.

The man stretched out his withered hand and was restored.

But later, Jesus Himself would stretch out His hands.

Not in a synagogue.

But on a cross.

The man stretched out his hand in weakness and received life.

Jesus stretched out His hands in sacrifice and gave His life.

His hands were not withered.

They were perfect.

Yet they were pierced.

Where our hands were crippled by sin, His hands were wounded for redemption.

Because Christ stretched out His hands on Calvary, our broken lives can now be restored.

Story: A missionary once told the story of visiting a leper colony many years ago. As he was preaching, he asked if anyone had a request for a hymn. From the back of the room, a woman slowly stood. Her face was disfigured by disease, and one of her hands was badly damaged. She asked quietly, “Can we sing ‘*Amazing Grace*’?”

As the congregation began to sing, the missionary noticed something moving. The woman slowly lifted her damaged hand.

Not perfectly.

Not easily.

But she lifted it in worship.

After the service, the missionary said he had to step outside because he was overwhelmed with emotion. A friend asked him what was wrong.

He said, “I have led worship for years, but tonight I saw something I will never forget. A woman whose hand could barely move... stretching it out to praise the God who saved her.”

That is what this story in **Mark 3 is about.
Not perfect hands.**

But surrendered hands.

Allow me to ask you a question in closing:

What is your withered hand?

Maybe it is:

- **A wounded heart**
- **A fearful decision**
- **A strained relationship**
- **A tired calling**
- **A season of transition**

You may feel weak.

You may feel unable.

But hear the voice of Jesus today:

“Stretch it out.”

Bring your weakness into the light.

Obey even when you feel unable.

Trust Him even if others resist.

And when you stretch out your hand in faith, you may discover the restoring power of Christ waiting for you.

Your miracle may be waiting on the other side of ONE ACT OF OBEDIENCE.

MY TESTIMONY

I was doing my devo on March 6 in Singapore on Mark 3. And God showed me that my **TRANSITION PERIOD is like the withered hand in **Mark 3**.**

A withered hand represents something that **cannot function anymore. Spiritually for me, this symbolizes a season when:**

- **What used to work no longer works.**
- **My previous ministry strength feels weakened.**
- **I feel limited or unable to continue the same way.**

God showed me I am not a failure. My withered hand season is not a failure. Rather, it means that **SEASON HAS REACHED ITS LIMIT**. The “withered hand” for my 40-year ministry symbolizes a **MINISTRY METHOD OR SEASON THAT HAS COMPLETED ITS PURPOSE (THE OLD ROLE FEELS COMPLETE)**.

Just as Jesus asked the man with the withered hand to **“come forward”**, Jesus wants me:

- To acknowledge before all of you my limitation
- To bring my weakness into the open
- To declare by faith that the place that feels **DRIED UP** is where Christ will work.

Such season can actually be God preparing the **NEXT STEP**.

For the man with the withered hand, the miracle happened when he stretched it out.

So, my “withered hand” season could mean:

- God is asking me to release the old season.
- Step into a new form of calling.
- Trust him even when the future is unclear.

Stretching out the hand means **LETTING GO.**

I can safely surmise my 40-year ministry here as follows:

Early life: God works in me

Middle Life: God works through me

Later life: God works through those I raised

The first half of ministry is about **building my calling.** The second half is about **giving my calling away.**

I plan to write three books after my exit.

AutobiographyMy journey

Sermons My spiritual voice

My culinary books.....My heart of hospitality

To write three books after my exit is God asking me to **stretch my hands again** – not to build another church but to leave a **LEGACY**. My ministry will no longer only live in the Philippines. It will live in the next generation who reads my story.

Therefore, for me to **stretch out my withered hand** of a long, weary service is to **LET GO AND GIVE THIS CALLING TO THE NEXT GENERATION** and also to **LEAVE A LEGACY**.

End

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