



On a certain Sabbath Jesus went into the synagogue and taught, and there was a man there whose right hand was withered. The scribes and the Pharisees watched him closely to see if he would cure on the Sabbath so that they might discover a reason to accuse him. But he realized their intentions and said to the man with the withered hand, "Come up and stand before us." And he rose and stood there. Then Jesus said to them, "I ask you, is it lawful to do good on the Sabbath rather than to do evil, to save life rather than to destroy it?" Looking around at them all, he then said to him, "Stretch out your hand." He did so and his hand was restored. But they became enraged and discussed together what they might do to Jesus.

Introductory Prayer: God the Father, thank you for the gift of creation, including my own life. God the Son, thank you for redeeming me at the price of your own Body and Blood. God the Holy Spirit, thank you for being the sweet guest of my soul, enlightening my mind, strengthening my spirit, and kindling the fire of your love in my heart with your love.

Petition: Lord, make me a magnanimous, great-hearted person, one who always desires the good of others.

1. Teaching and Doing: When Jesus speaks, he convinces those of good will who are present. The people commented that Jesus spoke convincingly, not like the Pharisees. That's because Jesus preached only what he was willing to put into practice himself. He practices what he preaches. This is my Teacher and Master, who speaks of compassion and shows it. This is he who lowers himself to washing his followers' feet at the Last Supper because he wants me to do the same.

2. Doing Good, Regardless of What Others Think: Jesus is omniscient, knowing even what others are thinking. He often chides the Pharisees, because he sees their nitpicking and pettiness. They are guides of the people, yet they stand aloof from their needs and constrain the people to follow many rules that they themselves do not fulfill. Jesus sees a person in need whom he can help. Although he sees around him many critics scrutinizing his words and actions, nothing will keep him from doing this good deed. When I feel the weight of others' eyes upon me, can I still practice charity regardless of what they think?

3. Saving Life: There is a culture of death and a culture of life in this Gospel. The judgments of the Pharisees make them critical of Jesus to the point that they become enraged. Eventually, they will plot to kill Jesus. They couldn't care less about the plight of the man Jesus heals. Jesus speaks the words of life in the synagogue. He enriches life through healing. I must learn from Jesus how to be a beacon of light and life amid the divisive culture of egoism and death that surrounds me.

Conversation with Christ: Lord, you can read my heart, as you read the hearts of the Pharisees. I also have a tendency to be critical and not always constructive. Make my heart be more like yours, desiring good, and being generous despite the criticisms that might come my way.

Resolution: I will strive to perceive the needs of another person today, someone in particular. Then, I will seek to do what I can to help that person, if possible in a way that does not draw attention to myself.