

# WHY ARE YOU HERE?

*Luke 6:6-11*

**Ezekiel, Oghenekaro**

*“And it came about on another Sabbath, that He entered the synagogue and was teaching; and there was a man there whose right hand was withered. And the scribes and the Pharisees were watching Him closely, to see if He healed on the Sabbath, in order that they might find reason to accuse Him . . .” (Luke 6:6- 11).*

There was a certain speaker who began his seminar by holding up a \$20.00 bill. “Who would like this \$20.00 bill?” he asked. Hands went up throughout the audience. He went on to say, “I am going to give this \$20.00 to one of you, but first let me do this.” He proceeded to crumble up the bill. He then asked, “Who still wants it?” The same hands went up in the air. Then he said, “What if I do this?” He dropped the \$20.00 bill on the ground and started to grind it into the floor with his shoe. He picked it up, all crumpled and dirty. “Now who still wants it?” Again, the same hands went up.

Then he smiled and said, “You have all learned a valuable lesson. No matter what I do to the money, you still wanted it because it did not decrease in value. It was still worth \$20.00. Many times, in our lives, we are dropped, crushed, and ground into the dirt by the decisions we make and the circumstances that come our way. We feel as though we are worthless. But no matter what has happened or what will happen, you will never lose your value in God’s eyes. Dirty or clean, crumpled or finely creased, you are priceless to Him.”

There are many of us here who feels differently about ourselves not as we really are.

- **Do you know that some persons feel like they are wealthy?** I am not necessarily talking about the fact that they are rich with material things. Yes, some do feel wealthy because they are wealthy. But there are some who feel wealthy because they have good health; a good job; a happy home; they are not really in need of anything. They have all they need to satisfy their life and they are happy just the way things are in their lives.
- **Some People Feel Like They Are Weary.** They are weary because something has not gone their way. Some feel weary because they have been on an emotional roller-coaster. Some have been beaten emotionally because of some criticism they have heard. There are those who are so weary because of lack of rest. Some have found themselves restless because of some decision that they have to make. This leads to being very weary.
- **Some Persons Feel Like They Are Worthless.** Some have come to this Worship service thinking that their life is not worth much. You have come into this place, surrounded by many Christians, thinking that there is no hope for you and your situation. Some thinks that they have reached a point in their life to where God has no use for them anymore. You think that your life is beyond repair. You think that God has turned His back on you and left you all to yourself to make it on your own.

Remember, the value of the \$20 did not change because of what it went through, it was still \$20. So do not let your life become meaningless because of circumstances. You are still the person God created wonderfully and fearfully.

Our text today, records the activities of our Lord on a certain Sabbath (**cf. Matthew 12; Mark 3**). The Lord had entered the synagogue to teach. There He discovered a man with a withered hand. Because of this he was marked in Jewish society as “*imperfect*.” In that assembly were scribes and Pharisees. These religious leaders were anxious to find grounds upon which they could publicly humiliate Christ. They were aware of the impaired man’s presence. Some suggest that they had planted the man so they could accuse Christ of violating the Sabbath. Whether the man was deliberately brought or just happened to be present, he served the evil desires of these religious leaders.

Christ knew their evil plot. The atmosphere became electrifying when Jesus asked the man with the withered hand to stand. The crowd knew conflict was unavoidable, but it was with ease that our Lord disarmed the dastardly plot. Jesus exerted no extra effort that would violate the Sabbath’s traditions.

The man with the withered hand was not guilty of Sabbath-breaking either. The scribes and the Pharisees were exposed as being callous and insensitive. Notice especially the phrase “*And the scribes and the Pharisees were watching Him closely*” (6:7). Here was a group intent on observing every word, action, and movement of Christ. Their attention was rapt, yet they failed to see Him! They are well described by Jeremiah: “*O foolish and senseless people, who have eyes, but see not, who have ears, but hear not*” (**Jeremiah 5:21**). Although these looked closely, they could not see! How tragic!

This flaw of the scribes and the Pharisees is shared by many today. These are much like those described as *walking “in the futility of their mind, being darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart” (Ephesians 4:17, 18)*. They look closely at Jesus, but they cannot see Him!

One man has said, “*Compassion and kindness of heart were as much dried up in them as this man’s hand was in him.*” A close look at this assembly brings the following characters into focus:

### **1. A COMPASSIONATE SAVIOUR**

You cannot miss the tenderness and sympathy of our Lord. Even those who hated Him had to concede His compassion. In fact, they were counting on His compassion to provide a *means of accusation*. *This great compassion was the subject of Isaiah’s prophetic word, “Like a shepherd He will tend His flock, in His arm He will gather the lambs, and carry them in His bosom; He will gently lead the nursing ewes” (Isaiah 40:11)*. Matthew’s Gospel account records that Christ’s compassion was the fulfilment of inspired prophecy (**cf. Matthew 8:16, 17; 9:30; 20:34; etc.**).

Those in the Sabbath assembly saw the great compassion of Christ, yet they did not see. Our Lord’s compassion was revealed in His response to the critical Pharisees. **Mark 3:5** records that Christ was grieved at their hardness of heart. The word “*grieved*” refers to a deep pain felt by our Lord. Christ knew of their hard hearts, obstinate attitudes, and

unreasonable positions. And He was hurt by such! Any man would have withheld compassion from such a group, but not our Lord! As the scribes and the Pharisees sat in the synagogue, they looked closely at One whose every word and deed was controlled by compassion. Yet they failed to see Him. How tragic!

## 2. A MAN BURDENED WITH TRAGEDY

Various suggestions are given to explain this man's handicap. Who knows what really caused the withered hand? The only point we need to notice is that here was someone utterly helpless and powerless to aid himself. Those critical judges in the assembly saw the man with cold-hearted eyes. There was no compassion from them or sympathy for his predicament. Even when he was healed, they were not glad. They were impervious to obvious needs. They looked closely but did not see! Such behaviour is addressed in **James 2:1-13**.

God's compassion has compelled His children to be compassionate. All who fail to show sympathy will face God's harsh judgment. Those in the assembly saw a man with a withered hand, but they saw nothing at all! Christ had tried to open their eyes to this fault several times. In **Matthew 25:44, 45**, He presented a parable on the judgment. Those who heard the doomed "depart" were those who failed to show compassion in daily life. In the parable, the doomed are incredulous.

The story about this man may come too close to home. He forces each of us to inventory our compassion. Acts of kindness which would be eagerly performed for Christ are not even considered for "even the least" in our daily contacts. Honesty demands that we answer the question that the man asked: "How compassionate am I to the tragedies suffered by others around me?" Caught up in themselves, the Pharisees could not rejoice over the great blessing found by this one who had been burdened with tragedy so long in life. No wonder our Lord was grieved.

## 3. A GROUP OF SELF-RIGHTEOUS "RELIGIOUS" PEOPLE

The scribes and the Pharisees looked closely at Jesus but never looked at themselves! They claimed to have had the absolute interpretation of God's will, but they failed to follow it (**Matthew 23:3, 4**). They sat looking at One who was perfect in graciousness, goodness, and power, but they could not see their own failings! They and others like them are well described by Paul: "For if anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself" (**Galatians 6:3**). The Laodicean brethren fell into this deception (**Revelation 3:17, 18**). Like the Pharisees in **Luke 6**, the Laodiceans were smug in self-righteousness. They looked closely at other's faults but were ignorant of their own failings - (cf. **Proverbs 12:15; 26:12; Isaiah 5:21**).

First, notice how easy it is to fall prey to the error of the scribes and the Pharisees! We can come with fixed minds and determined thoughts and never consider the Lord's will for our lives! A most frightening thought is that Christ could come and stand in our worship assemblies and look around with grief because some harbour hardened hearts.

Second, think of the tragedy of spiritual blindness! Those in **Luke 6** were guilty of "hardness of heart" (cf. **Mark 3:5**). This phrase refers to their stubborn resistance to

God's purposes, an arrogant pride. They considered themselves intellectual, yet they were ignorant (**Proverbs 26:12**). The folly that comes to those with hardened hearts is illustrated with the three consequences which come to the Pharisees: *blindness to Christ's deity, blindness to other's problems, and blindness to one's true condition.*

Third, focus upon the blessings available to all who care enough to look closely and discover Christ. As happened with the man's withered hand, all who obey Christ will be made whole! Those possessing the attitude of this man will not hesitate to obey Christ's commands. There will be an immediate willingness to confess Christ as God's Son, to repent and live as God's Word commands, to be immersed for the forgiveness of sins, and to walk by faith in daily life. Just as the man with the withered hand trusted in Christ to heal him, so the penitent sinner trusts Christ to wash away his sin (**Romans 10:13; Acts 22:16**).

Fourth, focus upon the consequences of looking closely at Jesus. If we fail to look honestly, we will join those who oppose God's will. The scribes and the Pharisees left the assembly determined to join forces with anyone as long as they could destroy Christ. And they did! All who fail to see Him as the Lord of all will stand in opposition to Him and in league with all who oppose His kingdom. Not only will they join in opposition, but they will be filled with "rage" (**6:11; Mark 3:6**). Those who never look closely at Christ in a sincere and searching manner will never find the wonderful peace of Christ (**John 14:27**). They choose to train themselves to hear ritualistic doctrine that never presents the whole message of New Testament Christianity. In contrast, those who look closely at Jesus and find in Him the divine answer for sin will rejoice in His salvation (**Acts 8:39**). What choices have you made regarding Christ? Why are you here today?

## Conclusion

In **Luke 6:6-11**, we see that the love of Christ sought to open the blinded eyes of the Pharisees in the synagogue. The cure for spiritual blindness is a devout love for Christ! Such a love moves us to obedience and zealous service in His cause. When you assemble for worship, what do you see? Let us look closely at Jesus and follow His directions. Everyone needs compassion and deserve compassion.