

# New Year Sermon 2011

Living Water Route Assembly

Title – Stretching our withered hands!

Scripture – Matthew 12:9-13

Happy New Year to you all!

The message which I am sharing with you today comes from Matthew 12:9-13

The man at the centre of this month's thought has not been given a name. Both Matthew and Mark refer to him, but no name is given. What we do know is that he had a withered hand. A hand that was of no use. It was shriveled up and incapable of anything useful.

Then both Matthew and Mark tell us that a remarkable thing happened. This man met the Man of God. Let Matthew (Ch 12) explain what happened...

10 And, behold, there was a man which had his hand withered.

13 Then saith He (Jesus) to the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched it forth; and it was restored whole, like as the other.

- I. Introduction: Whatever has “withered up” in your life, God came to make it “whole”!
- II. Jesus heals the man with the “withered hand!” Things can be “withered,” not only physically, but also spiritually.
  - c. Physically: The man with the “withered” hand, was in a bad condition. “Withered” means that it had “shriveled up!” His hand looked like it was dried up, smaller, useless, this meant he was not able to work. It was attached to him, but was no good to him, and was a burden, it only served to weigh him down, slow him down, sapping his energy, dragging a heavy useless weight around.
  - d. Spiritually: Not only our hands, but our lives are “withered” without God! Despite the fact that God created us in His image, to be like Him. Since Adam’s sin in the garden, sin separated man from God. God declared that the “day you sin you shall die!”
    - i. Since man is born in sin, “cut off” from the source of life, he is in a “shriveled up” condition. He is “shriveled up” in his soul, spirit, mind and body. Ultimately if man does not get “reconnected” to God through, being born again by God’s spirit he will die! Destined to spend “eternity in hell! You must receive the “Holy Spirit!”  
Man in all of his wisdom and the blessings of God still denies the reality of

God, We need to be “born again” and live a holy, sanctified life in this present world by the power of the Holy Ghost!

II. WITHERED HAND LESSON: Before He healed the man, he used this as an opportunity to teach them a greater lesson, “Jesus came to give life, do good, even on the Sabbath day. God is not limited by time, or the day of the week!”

a. The spectators were not only cruel to the patient, whom they should have been doing everything they could to help him. But they were cruel to the Physician who came to help him!

We all know there is more to this story, in that the miracle was performed on the Sabbath in front of the Pharisees. But this is what we want to concentrate on...

*that on Jesus' command, this man stretched what was not possible to stretch!*

I don't know how many times I have read this passage but I am only now seeing a great truth that lies within. Although the miracle was all of Jesus, the man had to stretch a little!

If you do not know Jesus as your personal Saviour, is Jesus waiting for you to stretch a little? As a new year is upon us, what a great time to get yourself right with God.

It doesn't matter what shape your life is in, Jesus paid the price for your sins and mine on a cross at Calvary. He can heal you from all your sins, but you have to do your part. Acknowledge your sins before God, ask Him to forgive you and He will do it.

Or Christian, do you or I need to stretch our service to God a little more in the coming year?

Or have we allowed something to come in which has left a part of our life withered? Jesus can take a dried up, withered and non functioning life and re-make it as it should be. As we start a new year, let us examine ourselves and see if we need to stretch ourselves a little more for His ultimate glory.

We may have character defects, lost our jobs, car, house, drug addicts, bad habits, laziness. We “pretend” that everything is fine. When everyone around the man knew his hand was withered; everyone know you have a situation, a problem. We get dressed, come to church and pretend that everything is okay. We refuse to come to the altar, repent and ask God to forgive us, Save me, Fill me with your Holy Ghost, Use me, make

me a soul winner !

a. "Straighten out my withered hand!" We are too embarrassed.

b. However, your withered hand is obvious to everyone around you, but you pretending, dressing it up, faking it, loud talking, changing the subject, refusing to answer the phone, the email, the letter. You're in "self denial" doesn't alter the fact, "your hand is withered, you need to OBEY Jesus, "Straighten our your hand!"

Lord straighten out my withered hand!

(Jh 11:34) Mary and Martha, and Lazarus, you're too late he's stinking! But Jesus is never too late and things are never to stinky! Notice Jesus says, "show me where you laid him"

Because until you get the courage to show Jesus your mess he can't fix it!"

I declare to you that Jesus can straighten out your "withered life!"

. Problem: life is a mess, family, mind, spirit, attitude, emotion, habit, pain, hurt, unforgiveness, rejection, loneliness, depression, suicide. "Turn it over to the Lord!"

Stop struggling, "covering up" pretending like everything is okay!

You will never be healed until you OBEY the voice of God! "Stretch forth your withered hand!" Stretch out your withered hand in Prayer, Working for the Lord, Giving, (Time and Talent), Witnessing! You will never be healed, Try, Stretch forth!" You will be healed by the power of God!"

That's why we come to church! Be real with the Lord! Cast your (problems), care upon Him! Come unto me all you that are weary and heavy laden..."

Jesus is here you can "stretch out your withered hand!" Right now!

That which is withered, Jesus already knows! Stop trying to hide it, everyone knows!

That withered hand, “can receive strength, grow, move muscles, arm, hand and fingers!”  
Challenge you! “Stretch out that withered hand, condition, life!” If you are not saved,  
baptized in Jesus name! Be filled with the Holy Ghost! “Stretch out that withered hand!”  
Jesus came that you don’t have to live with that “withered hand,” life, soul, spirit,  
situation!

You are precious to Lord, he died that you don’t have to wither up and die! Don’t you  
want to live? Be restored and made whole? Stop pretending!

### **Applications**

#### **Take a few minutes and close our eyes. We come to Jesus with a humble heart**

1. Find my withered hand - Look critically at ourseleves, our lives. And honestly  
examine yourself.

Have I done my best to look after my family?

To be nice and helpful to my wife around the house, to help look after the children

As a wife, have I done my best to love my husband? Instead of nagging him  
everyday, have I tried to encouraged him?

If there is any part of my life is withered, Lord, please revive it so that I can become  
whole , strong and useful again. Please heal my withered hand so that it can do work  
for you and help to bring more people to Christ.

2. New Year Resolutions – help me to stretch myself a little. I may be scared and I maybe weak. God I am willing to be used by you.

Help me to stretch myself to reach other people, to serve you better in church and community. Willing to take a risk and the first person to start the conversation with newcomers and other brothers and sisters in church.

3. Put my family and my life in you hand from now on

Congregation takes a few minutes and write down their new year resolutions.

Pass these papers to Rebecca

Song to bless and get to know one another.

4. Extra info

The Man With The Withered Hand. (Mark 3:1)

The term “withered” is (exeramnenen – Mark 3:1) in the original the word designates a condition of recent origins. The passive verb seems to indicate that the man was born with this handicap, but that it was later caused by some accident or injury. [The Complete Biblical Library. Mark. p. 69]

According to extra-biblical sources (The Gospel of Hebrews) the man states that he is a stone mason, and he asks Jesus to heal him that he could resume working, which lend credibility that this man hand could have been the result of an injury.

Luke is the only writer to point out it was the man’s right hand. In the Jewish mind, the right hand was a symbol of power and strength. It was used for greetings and to bestow blessing. The right hand was the “clean hand” meaning a good Jew always ate with his right hand. The left hand was used for bodily functions. With apologies to all you who may be left handed, the left hand was considered the “unclean hand.” Since this man’s right hand was withered, he was handicapped physically and psychologically.

