



“The Lord Our Life-Giver”
 Luke 6:6-11

Idea: Love compels the Lord to seek and heal broken people.

Intro: “Behold the Man upon a cross, my sin upon His shoulders. Ashamed I hear my mocking voice call out among the scoffers. It was my sin that held Him there until it was accomplished. His dying breath has brought me life, and I know that it is finished” (“How Deep the Father’s Love for Us”). These powerful lyrics that we just sang are the type of words we use each Sunday in our worship. We boldly and gratefully sing of God’s beautiful salvific work upon the cross. We boast in Him and Him alone, knowing that no one else can or has added anything to the salvation we enjoy in Jesus Christ.

We stand in awe of the mercy and grace offered to us by the Lord, knowing it is not deserved nor sought. Nevertheless, it is presented as a free gift for us to receive and apply. This gift is perplexing, and we wonder why the Lord would pay such a high price and offer it freely to people who have rejected His authority. Well, there are two primary reasons why the Lord has done so. God, first and foremost, worked in salvation for His own glory (2 Pet 1:3). It is about His fame and renown. Secondly, He worked in salvation out of His infinite love for sinners. Jesus said, *“For God so loved the world that He gave...”* (John 3:16). The Bible, in both the Old and New Testaments, articulates the love of God. Moses says to the people of Israel, *“Yet the Lord set his heart in love on your fathers and chose their offspring after them, you above all peoples, as you are this day”* (Deut 10:15). Luke portrays this love in the stories of Jesus’ life and ministry. In his Gospel we find the Lord going to the poor, proclaiming liberty to the captives, and healing the diseased. It was Jesus, rather than the religious elite, who laid His hands on the lepers, showed concern for the paralyzed, and cast demons out of the possessed.

As we move forward in Luke’s Gospel, we find Jesus acting in love toward a man whose right hand was crippled. He is faced with the decision of whether or not to heal this man on the Sabbath. This pericope follows Luke’s portrayal of Jesus as the fulfillment of the Sabbath. He is the rest that this weekly day of rest foreshadowed. Jesus is again presented as being greater than the Sabbath, but this is not the only thing Luke desires to convey. In these verses we will learn that love compels the Lord to seek and heal broken people.

Luke 6:6-11.

Inquiry: As we read through Luke, it seems like Jesus and the Pharisees are always squaring off. In this new encounter, Jesus is again teaching in the synagogue. Also, in the synagogue that day was a man *“whose right hand was withered.”* The word Luke uses to describe the man’s hand is ξηρός. It can be translated as dry, withered, or paralyzed. The picture Luke paints of this man’s hand is that it was dried-up and hanging uselessly at his right side.

This man's condition was severe. Not having the use of one of his hands meant he could not work efficiently. Farming, fishing, or most any other occupation would have been very difficult. This would have resulted in his family suffering from the lack of income. Therefore, as Jesus was teaching in the synagogue on this day, His eyes and heart were drawn to this crippled man. The eyes of the scribes and Pharisees were also drawn to the man's condition but for a different reason. These religious leaders were merciless and utterly lost. They knew Jesus to be compassionate. They had heard of and seen Him heal people. They also knew Him to not follow their rules for the Sabbath, so on this day they watched Him closely. It is interesting that they did not watch Jesus for the purpose of seeing a miracle and believing on Him as the Messiah. No, they watched, hoping to find a reason to accuse Him.

Knowing their thoughts (vs. 8), Jesus called the man to Himself and healed his hand. He used this situation as an opportunity to display His love and compassion, showing Himself to be the Life-giver. Jesus also used the situation to teach that everyone who encounters Him is faced with a decision to make. Let's look at these two lessons.

Four actions of the Life-Giver:

1. The Lord sees the broken.

Jesus saw the man with the withered hand. His eyes were fixed on him. He assessed the man's condition and knew the consequences of his life. Nothing was lost in Jesus' assessment, which has been true through the first five chapters of Luke. He saw the brokenness in the demoniac (4:31-37). He saw the brokenness among the sick and diseased in Capernaum (4:38-41). He saw the brokenness in Peter's life (5:1-11). Jesus saw the brokenness in the leper and the paralytic who was let down through the roof (5:12-26). And He saw the brokenness in Levi and in the lives of those sinful tax collectors.

Jesus sees broken people, and He sees every broken space in our lives. This is good news. In the synagogue that day, He did not look past the train wrecks in order to be with the people whose lives seemed to be healthy and good. In reality, everyone is a broken train wreck. The Pharisees and scribes failed to realize this truth. They judged themselves to be righteous before God, yet Jesus made it clear over and over again that they were just as broken. Their eyes needed to be opened to their condition. He said, *"Those who are well have no need of physician, but those who are sick. I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance"* (4:31-32).

Jesus saw in the synagogue this broken man with a withered right hand. Today, the gracious eyes of the Life-giver are still open toward broken people, but He does more than just see the broken.

2. The Lord exercises compassion towards the broken.

The religious elite were watching the crippled man, hoping to catch Jesus breaking the Sabbath law. Jesus, on the other hand, saw the brokenness within both the crippled man and the religious men. He acted in compassion toward both. Jesus called the crippled man to come near, and then He asked the Pharisees what was lawful to do on the Sabbath (vs. 9). He knew their thoughts, so He set up this confrontation between what they believed to be right and what was right. In essence, Jesus presented them with the question of what in the world would make doing good for someone not lawful on the Sabbath. Every man in the synagogue that day would have rescued a sheep or ox on the Sabbath and thought nothing about it because it was the right thing to do. Therefore, why would they not also rescue a man made in the image of God?

So, in compassion for the crippled man, Jesus brought him near to Himself. Today, the Lord still exercises compassion as He comes near to those who are broken and in need of healing, but He does more than just show compassion.

3. The Lord invites the broken to faith.

Jesus saw the man, and He had compassion because of his brokenness. In that compassion, Jesus invited the broken man to faith. He said, *“Come and stand here”* (vs. 8). The man was faced with a decision to make. More than likely, he had heard about Jesus. He had heard stories of the sick, the demon-possessed, and the crippled being healed by Him. He knew Jesus to be a miracle worker. The stories he had heard were incredible, but in this moment, he was faced with how his own story would be shaped. The crippled man was invited to come to near to Jesus.

Then Jesus said, *“Stretch out your hand”* (vs. 10). He was asking the man to do something impossible, but as Gabriel said to Mary, *“nothing will be impossible with God”* (1:37). His hand was shriveled up. It was lifeless. He was powerless to lift it and stretch out his fingers, yet in faith the man did just as Jesus commanded.

The Lord invited the crippled man to faith, and today, He continues to invite broken people to faith. Jesus invites us to believe on Him, which leads to a fourth action of the Life-giver.

4. The Lord restores the broken.

When the crippled man in faith stretched out his hand, Jesus restored it. The man literally had a “dry hand.” It was shriveled and atrophied, but as he extended it toward Jesus, it inflated to normalcy like a balloon. The fingers flexed and extended as he watched in utter amazement.

Jesus healed what was broken in the man’s life, and this is what the Lord continues to do in our lives today. When we come into relationship with Jesus our hearts are changed. He removes our heart of stone and gives us a heart of flesh (Ezekiel 36:26). He restores God’s design and purpose in our lives, which was lost and broken by sin. Jesus restores us to the way we were supposed to be. He reconciles and repairs our brokenness (2 Cor 5:17-21). He makes us new. As believers, we now have a spiritual sensitivity that we did not have before because Jesus indwells and empowers us.

The restoration that took place in the crippled man’s life happened because of how he responded to Lord’s invitation. As we contemplate his choice, there are three possible responses on display.

Three responses to the Life-Giver:

1) Bold Acceptance

The crippled man boldly accepted the promise and invitation of Jesus to be healed. He did so out of confidence. Surely, the man had heard of Jesus’ miracles being done in other towns and among other people. He assessed and weighed the evidence of Jesus’ ability to heal his hand and believed.

Today, when we read the pages of the Bible and hear the gospel shared, we are invited to respond with bold acceptance of the message of Jesus Christ. In this, we are not invited to exercise a blind faith but a historic faith grounded in the evidence of the Bible. In doing so, the believer places his or her faith in the life and work of Jesus upon the cross.

There is a second type of response.

2) Biased Rejection

The Pharisees and scribes in the synagogue that day watched Jesus, hoping He would perform a miracle. They, however, were not hoping to see a miracle in order for them to exercise faith. Instead, they hoped to see a miracle so they could bring an accusation. They had heard of Jesus’ miracles. It is quite

possible they even believed Jesus could perform miracles. Yet, they watched not to believe on Him, but so they could reject Him. In the social sciences, this is referred to as “confirmation bias.” This happens when a person takes whatever evidence is contrary to their position and interprets it in a way that confirms their position.

Today, there are people who have already decided to reject Jesus as Lord and Savior, so they read the pages of the Bible that declare His Lordship and interpret them in a way that confirms their bias. Rather than honestly and fairly considering the Bible’s claim about Jesus, they read their bias into the message and look for a way to accuse instead of accepting Him.

There is a third kind of response.

3) Blind Indifference

This third response is on display in the silence from the crowd present in the synagogue. Luke shares nothing from them. There was no response either good or bad. There was no act of faith, nor was there an act of rejection. We might say they were simply indifferent to what they saw and heard from Jesus. They had right in front of their eyes the Sabbath rest that was being argued over, yet they sat silently indifferent to the whole thing.

The same sort of blind indifference is exercised today in people all around the world. It happens in churches each Sunday as the Word of God is opened and proclaimed, as the Gospel is extended, and as a call for a response issued.

Conclusion: “Behold the Man upon a cross, my sin upon His shoulders...It was my sin that held Him there...His dying breath has brought me life, and I know that it is finished.” As a church we sing songs with powerful and theologically rich lyrics each Sunday. We preach and teach the Bible in a way that confronts people with the reality of sin and the promise of restoration through the gospel. We lift high the name of Jesus and call people to turn from their sin and receive new life in Christ. We do so because Jesus sees our brokenness. He is compassionate toward the broken. And He invites the broken to find forgiveness and restoration in Him. Each Sunday we are confronted with a decision to make. Will we boldly accept the Lord’s offer? Or will we reject or be indifferent to it?

Today, I hope you can see that love compels the Lord to seek and heal broken people. And I hope you will respond in faith to Him.

Good news: God loves you. He created you and desires to know you.

Bad news: You are a sinner in rebellion against your Creator.

Best news: God has done everything necessary to justly deal with your sin and bring forgiveness and restoration to your life. Today, He calls you to turn from your sin and self and turn to Him as Savior and Lord. Do you need to be forgiven?

Jesus knows everything about you. He has assessed your life and knows your sin. In the face of your sin, He has also issued a call. Will you today decide to follow Him?