



Scripture nugget – Undeterred, Truthful and Courageous in Christ

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 (Luke 6:6-11).

Why did Jesus have to heal on the Sabbath? Couldn't He have waited and heal the man on the next day? God has His own perfect timing for everything including the important process of healing. Jesus knew the scribes and Pharisees were not solicitous of God's laws regarding the Sabbath but their main purpose was to find fault with Him in order to put Him to death. Jesus threw light on their hidden motive by drawing their intention to the fact that they did not care whether the man with the withered hand receive new life for his hand but were only focused on their evil intention of trying to destroy Jesus. This was a moment of great grace as evil intention was exposed and an opportunity given for repentance. How would we respond in such a situation? Would we be like the scribes and Pharisees ignore the opportunity for repentance, harden the heart further and become enraged? These were the people Christ described as looking but not seeing, hearing but not listening. They do not want to open their eyes or ears as they do not wish to perceive the truth and be converted. Being hard-hearted, they did not wish to live in the truth.

Stretching out our hands to God. Before God heals us, He wants us to surrender our ailments to Him. Do we fully understand the truth that God can heal any aspect of our lives: physical, emotional, mental, social, spiritual? Christ came so that we may have life abundantly. We need to invite the healing power of God into every aspect of our sinful lives. God will not delay our healing for any trivial reason. If we allow it, every minute of our suffering can be used by God for His higher purpose. When Jesus came in the flesh, and saves the world through His Passion, He imparts to human sufferings that are united to His Passion and borne patiently for God's sake new meaning: precious and redemptive. Thus, with our patient sufferings we can participate in Christ's Passion, gaining merits and graces for our souls and that of others, helping in the salvation of souls for God's Kingdom.

Conversation with Jesus: Precious Lord, when You walked on earth, You encountered much hostility and danger when You demonstrated to us God's constant and unfailing love and mercy. You continued courageous and undeterred in the face of adversity doing what truth and love demand: righteousness even in the face of persecution. You overcome all temptations on my behalf so that I too can walk in the footsteps of my Divine Master: courageous, truthful and undeterred. Rid me of all hard-heartedness and pride, and fill me with Your courage and love so that when I am corrected in good faith I can embrace the opportunity for true repentance. I unite all my sufferings to Your Passion. Mary, Protectress of the Faith, pray for me. Thank You, Jesus. Praise You, Jesus.