

TRINITY

BIBLE CHURCH DALLAS

The Sermon

Dr. Steven J. Lawson

Luke 6:6-11

"The Clash Continues"

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TRANSCRIPT

Okay, here we are. It's time to study the word of God, and I trust you're ready. I want you to take your Bible and turn with me to the gospel of Luke. I see here on the front pew everyone's already opened to the gospel of Luke; I like that. Pens are out, paper ready. And we're going to be looking today, Luke 6:6-11, and the title of the message is "The Clash Continues. The Clash Continues." I want to begin by reading the passage.

"On another Sabbath He entered the synagogue and was teaching; and there was a man there whose right hand was withered. The scribes and the Pharisees were watching Him closely to see if He healed on the Sabbath, so that they might find reason to accuse Him. But He knew what they were thinking, and He said to the man with the withered hand, 'Get up and come forward!' And he got up and came forward. And Jesus said to them, 'I ask you, is it lawful to do good or to do harm on the Sabbath, to save a life or to destroy it?' After looking around at them all, He said to him," – to the man with the withered hand – 'Stretch out your hand!' And he did so; and his hand was restored. But they themselves were filled with rage, and discussed together what they might do to Jesus."

This is the reading of God's word. I love the Bible, and I love the Lord Jesus Christ, and I love that we have access to these accounts. And I love

that it's like we're a fly on the wall and able to see, to hear, to observe what took place in that incredible life that He lived. Let us pray.

[Prayer] Father in heaven, every time we open our Bible, it's something new, and yet it's something old. Here again is the magnificence of the life of the Son of God, the Son of Man, the Lord Jesus Christ. Everything He did was perfect because He was perfect. And so, help us to grasp what is taking place here, to understand this episode out of His life. And I pray that You would help us to walk in a manner as He walked and to live as He lived. And so, bring these verses home to our hearts, to our lives. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. [End]

In these verses, we see yet another clash between Jesus and the scribes and the Pharisees. And here is yet another collision, head-on collision, between light and darkness, between truth and error, between true religion and false religion. We see here yet another confrontation between the grace of God and the grind of legalism. These two systems of religion, grace and legalism, cannot coexist. They are polar opposites. They have nothing in common. They are antithetical and opposed to each other. There can be no peaceful settlement between grace and legalism.

The teaching of Jesus upheld the message of the grace of God. Jesus taught that salvation was a free gift that can only be received by faith with an empty hand. Jesus taught that salvation is not a reward for the righteous, but a gift for the guilty. But the scribes and Pharisees taught the very opposite. They espoused that salvation; it must be earned through strict law-keeping and rules-keeping. They taught that you must work your way to heaven. And when these two religious systems are in the same room at the same time, there will be a strong clash, a violent reaction, one to the other. And that is what we see in this passage.

As Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 6:14, "What partnership have righteousness and unrighteousness?" The answer to that is zero. "Or what fellowship has light with darkness?" None? "Or what harmony has Christ with Belial?" The answer is none. "What agreement has the temple of God with idols?" The

answer is none. There is no agreement. There is no fellowship. There is no peace treaty. These two really are at war with each other. And that is what we see in this passage. I'm eager to walk through it with you.

The first thing I want you to see is the setting – that's in verse 6 – the setting. Luke begins by setting the scene for us. And verse 6 begins, "He entered the synagogue." He is Jesus, of course. And to remind you what a synagogue is, a synagogue is a local house of worship away from Jerusalem. There are many scattered throughout Israel where the people of God who cannot travel to the temple in Jerusalem can meet. It's almost like a local church where they would gather for worship, for the reading of Scripture, for the exposition of the Scripture. And there had to be at least ten male adults to form a synagogue, and they would meet on the Sabbath.

And we see here, Jesus entered the synagogue. Just picture in your mind Jesus entering a small country church. And Jesus knew what to expect. As He entered the synagogue, He knew the scribes and the Pharisees would be there. As you recall last week in the previous verses, He's cutting through a grain field, and the scribes and the Pharisees are there. If they were in the grain field in the middle of nowhere, you know they're going to be in the synagogue on a Sabbath, and they're going to be waiting for Him so that they can entrap Him.

And so, we read, "and He was teaching." Of course, He was teaching. That's what Jesus did, His earthly ministry. You need to understand, He was a preacher. He was a teacher. He was an evangelist. He was an expositor. And in a synagogue, a traveling rabbi – rabbi means teacher, a traveling teacher – would be allowed to address the local group. And if it was a particularly small synagogue, then this would be a very special occasion to have a renowned teacher like Jesus be able to address your synagogue.

And no doubt, as Jesus is in the synagogue and teaching, the word is out, and they have packed out a synagogue – that's not a stretch of the imagination – and Jesus is teaching. Of course, He is teaching. What is He

teaching? He's teaching the word of God. He's teaching the Old Testament. He's teaching the Law and the Prophets. He's giving the true and proper interpretation of the word of God. He's teaching the gospel of the kingdom of heaven. He's teaching the way of salvation. He is teaching the glory of God.

And what He is saying is very different than what they're used to hearing because in this day a rabbi would just quote another rabbi who was quoting another rabbi, and it's just very horizontal, very little vertical. And when they did handle the word of God, they would mishandle the word of God. And the scribes and the Pharisees were the worst at it. And so, Jesus here, He's unpacking the truth in a way like this little synagogue has never heard before, in a sense. Whoever would have been teaching there, it was almost like amateur hour, someone just ill-prepared, ill-equipped to stand up and abuse the Old Testament.

And just to remind you, the nation of Israel is in apostasy at this moment. The believers in Israel are few and far between. It's an unconverted nation with few exceptions. There's a remnant, but it's only a remnant. You know what a remnant is. It's like if you have a bolt of cloth, it's just a little piece cut out of the corner, a little remnant.

And so here is Jesus in this synagogue teaching the word, and no doubt, it's packed. "And there was a man there" - at the end of verse 6 - "whose right hand was withered." That it was withered means that it was shrunk because of disease. It has atrophied. He was not born this way. Sometime in his life in the past, this disease, whatever that disease would be that was rampant in ancient times with little medical care like we have today, his right hand just began to wither and to shrink.

And of all things, it was his right hand. I mean, most people were right-handed, and so this gives him a severe handicap. It would be very hard for him to work. It would be very hard for him to get dressed. It would be very hard for him to feed himself. And yet he did not let this disability keep him from coming to the house of the Lord. And he is here like everyone else is

here. Everyone knows that Jesus is a healer. Maybe he had some thought that something might happen, but the text does not tell us this.

And so, this setting seems so innocent. It occurs in a synagogue. It occurs on a Sabbath. It occurs in a public worship service. It occurs as the word is being taught. It occurs in this scene which will now become a battlefield with intense conflict between heaven and hell.

The most intense conflicts I've ever experienced in my life have taken place in church. I played on a college football team, and we had fights, everything. Nothing to compare to a good church fight. I was in a fraternity in college. I mean, we had egos on steroids. Nothing to compare to a good church fight. Sense of turf, a sense of control, deep feelings, tense, escalating.

That's what we see here. It seems innocent enough in verse 6, but there's a gathering storm on the horizon that's about to blow in. And in verse 7, we see the scrutiny. As we might expect, the religious leaders of Israel are there.

So, verse 7, "The scribes and the Pharisees were watching Him closely." Of course, they were there. And of course, they were watching Him closely. They had been dogging His trail. The scribes, just to remind you, are the professional scholars. They're lawyers, literally, but they are scholars of the law of God. They are experts in interpreting the Law and the Prophets. This is what they do for a living. They would be, like we would say today, seminary professors.

"And the Pharisees," and really, they match up together very well because the scribes took the word of God very seriously. And the Pharisees, they were arch-conservatives. Nothing wrong with being an arch-conservative. But they were so far to the right of being an arch-conservative, they're almost coming back around the other side to the left.

The Pharisees, that was a sect within Israel, an arm of the religious life of the nation. The word "Pharisee" literally means a separatist. They don't mingle with anyone outside their little bubble. They don't connect with anybody else. They put up a firewall around themselves. They don't want to be contaminated by people like you and me. They just are isolationists, and they're strict observers of the law.

But they go beyond the law. Not only do they misunderstand and misinterpret the law, but they have now added their own laws to God's law, and they're more fixated on their laws, their rules, and their regulations than even the law of God themselves. And they are hypercritical experts on what's wrong with your life. They are oblivious to their own life. And Jesus will say, "You need to take the log out of your own eye before you start addressing everyone else." No, that's the Pharisees.

So, it says, "They were watching Him closely." The verb means they were actually observing Him narrowly, almost like you're looking through a keyhole and all you can see is through this tiny little keyhole. You can't see anything else in the room. It's like a racehorse with blinders on is literally what this word means: "They were watching Him closely." They had a narrow myopic vision focus on Jesus. They couldn't see anyone else that was in the room that day.

And what they're looking for is some infraction that He would commit on the Sabbath. And the Sabbath was the golden calf. I mean, the Sabbath for the Pharisees was like Mass for a Catholic. I mean, it's at the very epicenter of the whole false bankrupt system protecting the Sabbath with their own rules and regulations.

So, "They're watching Him closely" - and Luke tells us why - "to see if He healed on the Sabbath." So this obviously implies that Jesus has been healing wherever He goes. We've seen that already in Luke's gospel. And so

there is this anticipation, reasonably so, by the Pharisees and the scribes that Jesus as He shows up, He will probably continue His healing ministry.

And it continues and says, "so that they might find reason to accuse Him." They're just looking for dirt. They're gravediggers. They want to find reason to accuse Him. They're searching and sifting by observation through His life that they might accuse Him, that they might bring charges against Him. And if they could, probably bring Him back to Jerusalem and have Him stand trial before the Sanhedrin.

And so to be clear, ministering to a sick person on the Sabbath was by no means a violation of the Old Testament. The rabbis, though, added their own man-made rules to what the Bible taught concerning the Sabbath, and so they were determined that they were going to try to catch Jesus breaking one of their rules. And what's interesting is there were two exception clauses in their rules that you could heal on the Sabbath or try to help make well someone on the Sabbath. One is it had to be a life-threatening situation, like you're on death's doorstep. "Okay, you can step in at that point if the person literally is hanging by a thread and about to die." The other is if the woman is pregnant and it is now time to deliver, you can step in and help her in her delivery.

And so this whole thing is such a perfect setup with this man with a withering hand. He's obviously not pregnant, or at least he's not woke. I just distracted myself with that. And he obviously, this man with the withered right hand, he's obviously not at death's doorstep. So, as Jesus will step in to heal him, he's not breaking one of their rules. Man's not about to die, he's not pregnant, so this is the setting, and this is the scrutiny. And now, third, the strategy.

Beginning in verse 8, "Jesus knew what they were thinking." Of course, Jesus knew what they were thinking. And the text does not tell us whether Jesus knew because he is God and divinely omniscient or whether the Holy Spirit who has anointed Him at His baptism has given Him some kind of prophetic insight. We're not really told, but what we do know is that Jesus

could read their minds like an open book, that there were no secrets, but that He knew the depths of the heart. "Man looks on the outward appearance, but God looks upon the heart," 1 Samuel 16:7.

So, Jesus knew what they were thinking. He knew the inner wheels that were turning in their mind, and He was perfectly aware of their evil thoughts and desires. And so, "Jesus said to the man with the withered hand, 'Get up and come forward!'"

Jesus is intentionally provoking the scribes and the Pharisees. He could have passed on this. He could have just continued His teaching ministry and then gone down the road. But no, Jesus now purposefully calls out this man to get up and come forward and stand in front of everyone in this synagogue. Jesus could have even taken him to a back room. And we've got a back room, the elder's prayer room. I mean, He could have just taken him out of public view and just one-on-one, almost like a physician with a patient in a waiting room, and no one else would have ever seen this.

No, Jesus purposefully does this in the spotlight before the watching eyes of everyone that is there. In fact, He has him get up, stand up, walk forward. And by the way, it's the only time in the Bible anyone has ever told to walk forward in a meeting, okay? To get out of your pew and walk forward, you just need to understand, is a 19th century invention by a heretic named Charles Finney. So, this is the only time anyone's ever said to get up and come forward. And so, what Jesus is about to do, He's intentionally doing it under the nose of the scribes and the Pharisees. This is an in-your-face moment.

So, the scribes and the Pharisees do not have to spy on Jesus anymore. They don't need to hide in the corner. They don't need to track Him out into a grain field and pull back the stalks and try to peer into what He's doing. No, this is now front page, out in the open, what's about to happen, and this speaks to, number one, how bold and courageous Jesus is, because who He is provoking will ultimately bring about His crucifixion.

And it also speaks to how wise Jesus is and how strategic Jesus is. He knows the buttons to push. He knows the levers to pull. He knows how to escalate the situation. He's not trying to defuse it, He's trying to infuse it with high-octane gas. You know, there are hills worth dying on, and Jesus will eventually die on one of those. But this is a hill to die on, metaphorically speaking.

And so, we read in the middle of verse 8, "And he got up and came forward." He's been called out by Jesus out of the crowd there that day to come forward. And so in obedience to the Lord's command and call, he came.

Verse 9, "And Jesus said to them," – please note the "them." The individual walks forward, and before Jesus even addresses the man with the withered hand, He turns to them and addresses them, and He said – 'I ask you,' – and He's putting them on the spot. Again, Jesus is provoking the issue – 'I ask you, is it lawful' – meaning is it permitted by the law – 'to do good' – the word "good" here means excellent, noble, beneficial – 'Is it lawful to do good or to do harm' – "harm" here means evil – 'on the Sabbath?'"

So, Jesus puts the ball into their court, and it is a stunning stroke of brilliance, as always by Jesus, because if they say, "It is lawful to do good on the Sabbath," then Jesus has a green light special. He's authorized even by them to go ahead and heal this man if they say, "No, you can do good on the Sabbath." But if they say, "It's not lawful to do good on the Sabbath," it will expose their own evil hearts in front of everybody else.

And so they now are on the horns of a dilemma. And Jesus has, really, put them into checkmate. And Mark's gospel – you understand Matthew, Mark, and Luke are what we call the three synoptic gospels, that there is so much overlap between Matthew, Mark, and Luke. John is unique in how he presents what he presents.

So as we're going through, Luke occasionally will appeal to Mark and Matthew to see what they recorded. And I love what actually Mark records at this point after Jesus poses the question to them. Mark 3:4 says, "But they kept silent." Probably the smartest thing they could do is just stop talking. You know, when you're in a hole, stop digging.

And then Jesus says at the end of verse 9, "to save a life or to destroy it?" "To save a life" here means to rescue from harm, and to destroy it means to inflict great damage. "So you tell Me, what am I allowed to do on the Sabbath?"

And as Matthew records this, Matthew records these words from the mouth of Jesus, Matthew 12:11, "What man is there among you who has a sheep, if it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will he not take hold of it and lift it out?" Verse 12, "How much more valuable than is a man than a sheep! So then, it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath." It's a brilliant analogy, an argument there from the lesser to the greater. I mean, if you can help pull a sheep out of a hole and a man is so much more important, made in the image of God, then you can surely help a man on the Sabbath.

But they remain silent. And I have found that most people in a religious setting who have extraordinary courage outside of a meeting, that once they get in a meeting, they so often become cowards. Mr. Big Talk goes silent. And so they go silent.

Now verse 10, "After looking around at them all." So there's quite a contingency of scribes and Pharisees here, and Jesus looks around at them all. There's an entourage of them. And I've got to tell you what Mark adds here at this point because it really puts some spice to this. It puts some salt on the stake. Mark adds, "Jesus looked around at them with anger." And the word for "anger" here is *orgé*, *orgé*, heated passion. Jesus has righteous indignation as He looks at these scribes and Pharisees, and rightly so. And

Mark adds, "grieved at their hardness." I mean, it burned a hole within His soul at their hardness of heart.

So, "After looking around at them, He" - Jesus - "said to him," - the man with the withered hand - "Stretch out your hand!" So this man is standing in front of the entire synagogue, and He says, "Just stretch out your hand." And it says, "and he did so." This is a very dramatic moment. This is a high-stakes moment. And we read, "and his hand was restored." The word "restored" here means return to its former condition. He was fully restored, just like that, in a moment. After all, Jesus was the one who said, "Let there be light," and there was light. "Let there be the land and the sea and the mountains," and they were formed. Of course, He can restore one hand back to its original condition.

This is an extraordinary miracle that Jesus does in front of the scribes and the Pharisees to make His point that "I am the Lord of the Sabbath, and I do what I want to do on the Sabbath. I created the Sabbath for man, not man for the Sabbath." The Sabbath is the servant of man, the Sabbath is not the dictator of man. And Jesus could have hypothetically chosen to play by their rules, but He's not going to compromise. And there comes a time and a place in our Christian lives, and only the wisdom of Solomon can tell you when you drop anchor and you hold your ground. But there comes a time and a place where your strict allegiance to the word of God and to the grace of God will provoke a family issue, will provoke a friendship or a relationship. But when those times come, as it has with Jesus here, you must be true to the word of God.

So, this leads us finally to verse 11, the simmering. So, how did these religious leaders of Israel respond? How did they take this? Verse 11 tells us, "But they themselves," - and the "themselves" indicates this is not how everybody else responded, this is how they themselves responded - "they were filled with rage."

The word "rage" literally means without understanding. The main root word is understanding, and it has a prefix "a" which carries the idea of "not,"

kind of like the difference between a museum is where you go to think, amusement park is where you go not to think. And so this word "rage" means, really, a mindless fury, blind fury. They are so enraged they have lost any capacity to think soundly and rationally and logically whatsoever, and it is because all of their presuppositions are bankrupt. It refers to this rage. It's irrational hatred. It's a violent rage. In other words, they lost it mentally and emotionally.

And it says, "They were filled with rage." "Filled with" is the same verb that's used to describe being filled with the Spirit. And when you're filled with the Spirit, you're under the control of the Holy Spirit of God. You're under the dominance of the Holy Spirit of God. You are under the government of the Holy Spirit of God, and the Holy Spirit controls your thinking and controls what you say and how you act. You are filled with the Spirit.

It's the very same verb here, but they are filled with rage. They are totally under the government and guidance of their flesh, their carnality, which has unplugged their minds, and they are completely unable to rationally think anymore. Sometimes people become that way in discussing certain doctrinal issues, and they've just unplugged their mind and it's like weak point, yell here.

And so verse 11 concludes, "They were filled with rage, and discussed together," means they dialogued among themselves, "and together" is actually two Greek words put together and it just means face to face with one another. I mean, they huddled up and they formed a tight circle and they're now dialoguing among themselves what they might do to Jesus. "What harm can we inflict upon Him?" And they will stop at nothing. In fact, they will so push the envelope on this that they will be the ones behind the scenes orchestrating the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus Christ. They will be the ones who will be inciting the crowd to say, "Crucify Him! Crucify Him!" Oh, it will build, it will escalate, it will grow.

But here now the fire is just beginning to burn and to escalate. And they are so – I wish I had another word – but they are so irrational that Mark actually adds here in Mark 3:6, "The Pharisees went out and immediately began conspiring with the Herodians as to how they might destroy Him." The Herodians, for heaven's sake, that is the secular political party that is in league with Rome and with Caesar. These are the strangest of bedfellows. And it is so amazing that when people are hell-bent on something, if they can just lock arms with someone else, "Even if we don't agree on anything, we agree on this one thing. We're going to destroy Jesus." So you have these totally diametrically opposed groups, the Pharisees and the Herodians conspiring to put Jesus to death.

Please observe how bold, how courageous Jesus is. He's not cowering. He's not retreating. He has no reverse gear. He doesn't play defense, He plays offense with the truth, and He confronts the false religious establishment of the day. In a sense at this point, the effort is to drain the swamp. And He will take the fight to the Pharisees knowing that He is the Lamb of God slain from before the foundation of the world, knowing how this will all end. But nevertheless, He presses forward. Please see how stunningly wise and brilliant the Lord Jesus is to know how to even pose this question and how to put the Pharisees between a rock and a hard place.

As I close, there's one last thing I want you to see. Here are the scribes and the Pharisees. They are in the house of God. They're in a worship service. They are listening to the word of God being taught. They are listening to the Son of God, the Son of Man teach the word of God, and yet, they remain unconverted without a saving knowledge of the grace of God. They are tares among the wheat.

And I wonder if that could describe you today. You're in the house of God right now. You're in the worship service right now. We're here on the Lord's Day. You have heard the word of God taught. Just as it was with them, it is so very possible here today that there are those who are yet unconverted and have not yet come all the way to Christ. And if that is true of you, even as I say this, if there is some on the inside sense of, "I wonder if he's talking

about me, I wonder if He's talking to me," it is very possible that this could be your spiritual condition.

Just because you're in church does not mean you're in Christ. Just because you're a member of the church does not mean your name is written in the Lamb's Book of Life. And so if that is true of you, then today is a wonderful day because you've heard the truth. And perhaps the word of God and the Spirit of God is finding you out today. You want to be found, you don't want to keep hiding any longer. You want to be arrested by the Lord and brought to the Lord by the Holy Spirit. And so if that is what God would be doing in your life today, then I would plead with you and urge you to surrender your life to Christ, deny yourself, take up a cross and become a follower of Christ.

Don't fight it any longer. Don't try to play the charades. Don't play any longer. Just come to Christ. He is a friend of sinners. He's come to seek and to save that which is lost. You can be lost in here today. Don't go another moment without being found by Christ. So believe in the Lord Jesus Christ with all of your heart and believe that He is Lord, that He's Savior, that He's been raised from the dead, and you shall be saved. This could be the greatest day in your life. If that's where you are without Christ, you may come to Christ today. The gates of paradise are swung wide open. Come to Christ.

[Prayer] Father, thank You for this passage. Thank You for allowing us to dig wonderfully into this text and, as it were, find ourselves there with Christ in this scene. Lord, may we learn to hate legalism. May we learn to cherish the grace that You alone can give in Christ. So, bless us now in Jesus' name. Amen.