

No Pain, No Gain

Bible focus – Mark 3:3-6

Age: 11-16

Key learning:

- Understand what it would be like to live with disability in Bible times
- Consider why God has given us the sense of touch
- Consider the cost of helping others

Opening activity

Ask the group to share an awkward moment. Get ready to first share one of your own/give examples with the group. E.g. when getting a lift home once, you accidentally got into the wrong car! When passing someone in a corridor, you both keep going the same way to let each other through. At Christmas, your friend calls with a present for you – you don't have one for them.

Now read Mark 3:3-6

"And he said to the man with the withered hand, "Come here." And he said to them, "Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do harm, to save life or to kill?" But they were silent. And he looked around at them with anger, grieved at their hardness of heart, and said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." He stretched it out, and his hand was restored. The Pharisees went out and immediately held counsel with the Herodians against him, how to destroy him."

Discussion Starter Questions with Guideline Answers

Q: What awkward situation did Jesus find himself in?

He wanted to heal the man, but he was going to get in trouble with the religious leaders if he did.

Q: Why was this awkward in Jewish culture?

It was the Sabbath. The rules prevented Jewish people from working on the Sabbath. They took this law very seriously – on a number of occasions the city of Jerusalem was captured on the Sabbath because the Jewish military refused to defend it.

Q: What day of the week was the Sabbath?

It was a Saturday. This is why the body of Jesus was laid to rest on the Friday evening until the Sunday morning, when the woman visited it in order to anoint it for burial.

Q: What did it cost Jesus to heal this man?

In performing this miracle of healing on this particular day, Jesus made some angry enemies in high places. Ultimately, actions of compassion like this cost Jesus his life. For each of us, there is a cost to helping others.

Q: Can you think of some ways that it might cost us to help others?

It might have a financial cost, a time cost, an expenditure of energy, it might also mean that we miss out on doing things that we want to do. Sometimes if we help someone who others don't like we might find that we are not popular.

Q: Have you ever sat on your legs and got pins and needles in your feet? What was it like?

Either you can't feel anything at all, or there is an intense sensation of pain and tingling.

Sense of touch

It is likely that the man with the disfigured hand would have felt both a numb sensation and pins and needles in his hand on a daily basis. However this would be the very least of his worries. What problems might you face living in bible times with a disfigured hand?

- Considered a punishment from God
- No modern medicine or operations available
- Trouble doing daily jobs

We are not told how this man's hand became disfigured. It might have been in an accident, it might have been like that from birth, or it might have been as the result of a disease like leprosy. If it was through leprosy, he would have had one extra problem to face – he would not have been able to feel anything. We have already seen in the story of Aboubacar how this can be a big problem. Why do you think God gives us the sense of touch?

- we can detect danger
- we can enjoy the texture and feel of things
- we can easily do daily tasks

Dilemmas

Jesus was put in an awkward position by the religious leaders, and the man with the disfigured hand led a difficult life, facing many issues as a result of his disability. It is not always easy to do the best thing in life when we are faced with tough choices and difficult circumstances. We're going to finish the session by thinking through some dilemma's that we might face.

- Give out copies of the Dilemmas worksheet and split the group into pairs/small groups.

Feedback and wrap-up

Go over each dilemma, asking different groups their opinion on what they would have done, and what Jesus would have done.

To wrap the lesson up, have a time of prayer. You could lead the prayers yourself, have a time of silent prayer, or ask different people to pray. Use these 3 points to guide your prayers:

- pray for people who live with disabilities because of leprosy
- thank God for the gift of feeling, and for all the other good gifts He gives to us
- pray for opportunity in the coming week to help others who are in need