Luke 6:6-11
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.

Our Scripture Reflection
The man in the synagogue was desperate and his situation on the surface level seemed complex. His hand was withered, therefore, he was unable to do the strenuous work necessary to feed his family and make a living. And then there was the nagging social/religious question: "What did he or his ancestors do that provoked the wrath of God which rendered him disabled? But finally, there was the attitude of the closely watching religious authorities who in their scrupulosity considered a medical intervention a forbidden work on the Sabbath. Jesus did exactly what He always did: He showed love and compassion towards the man. That was
always Jesus’ number one priority. Although the Pharisees and scribes left the house of prayer enraged at Jesus, the once crippled man was set free.

**Food for your Journey**

Once upon a time, there were two men, Mr. Wilson and Mr. Thompson, both seriously ill in the same room of a great hospital. Both had to be kept unusually quiet and still - no reading, no radio, certainly no television and no visitors. Their only entertainment was to talk to each other. Mr. Thompson had to spend all his time flat on his back. Mr. Wilson, on the other hand, as part of his treatment, was allowed to sit up in bed for an hour each day. His bed was next to the window, and every afternoon, when he was propped up for his hour, he would pass the time by describing to Mr. Thompson what he could see outside. And Mr. Thompson began to live for those hours. Mr. Wilson would look out the window and describe ...

- a beautiful park with a lake, where there were ducks and swans and children throwing them bread and sailing model boats;
- softball games and football games and kites flying;
- flowers and trees and stretches of grass and young lovers walking hand-in-hand;
- the skyline of the city off in the distance and the cars and horse-drawn carriages making their way through the park.

One day, there was a parade, and Mr. Wilson described every float, every band and all the participants in the procession. Mr. Thompson listened intently, enjoying every minute. He could visualize everything Mr. Wilson described.

Then one afternoon, Mr. Thompson thought to himself: “Just wait a minute! Why should Wilson have all the fun? Why does he have all the pleasure? Why does he get to be by the window?” In a few days, Mr. Thompson turned sour. He was bitter, angry, resentful. He brooded and seethed. He became obsessed with wanting to be by the window! And each passing hour, he became more and more resentful of Mr. Wilson.

Then one night, quite suddenly, Mr. Wilson died. His body was taken away the next morning. As soon as it seemed decent, Mr. Thompson asked if he could be moved to the bed next to the window. So they moved him, tucked him in, made him quite comfortable and left him alone. The minute they’d gone, Mr. Thompson struggled to prop himself up on one elbow so he could look out the window. Imagine his surprise. It faced a blank brick wall!

Sometimes compassion is most powerful when it surprises. Will you try something during the next few days? In the spirit of Jesus, will you surprise somebody with your love and compassion? Jesus surprised people with his compassion, and so can we.

--James Moore,
Some Things Are Too Good Not to Be True

**A Prayer from the Heart**

Dear Jesus, Your way is not complex or burdensome at all. It is the way of simple love. Oh, how we make things so complicated with all of our thoughts and reasonings. Lord, make my heart and mind like Yours. Help me to live my life focused on what really matters. May I live and show mercy whenever and wherever it is needed. Amen