



ST NINIAN'S UNITING CHURCH
AUGUST 27TH 2025
PRAYERS AND REFLECTION
BASED ON LUKE 6:6-11

⁶On another Sabbath he went into the synagogue and was teaching, and a man was there whose right hand was shriveled. ⁷The Pharisees and the teachers of the law were looking for a reason to accuse Jesus, so they watched him closely to see if he would heal on the Sabbath. ⁸But Jesus knew what they were thinking and said to the man with the shriveled hand, "Get up and stand in front of everyone." So he got up and stood there.

⁹Then Jesus said to them, "I ask you, which is lawful on the Sabbath: to do good or to do evil, to save life or to destroy it?"

¹⁰He looked around at them all, and then said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." He did so, and his hand was completely restored. ¹¹But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law were furious and began to discuss with one another what they might do to Jesus.

QUIET TIME IN PRAYER

Lord, here I am again, wanting to be consistently in your presence and open to hearing your word and receive your will for me. As I reflect on Luke's words I am reminded of your boundless love and compassion and the authority which underpins them. I ask that you help me to discern my own heart, to recognise the areas of need in my life and those around me.

Lord, just as Jesus reached out to heal the man with the withered hand on the Sabbath, may I also be bold in my actions, seeking to do good even in challenging circumstances. Teach me to prioritise mercy over ritual, and to embrace your call to love and serve others in every gesture and spoken word.

May your Spirit be my inspiration in my worship life, filling me with hope and courage to act as instruments of your healing and grace. Equip me, Lord, to be an advocate for justice and mercy in the community.

I pray with my peers for open hearts and minds as we receive your teachings today. May we all reflect your love in words and deeds, reflecting the light of Christ in all that we do.

In Jesus name, I pray, amen.

PRAYER POINTS OF THANKS

- Thank you, Lord, for those who are gifted in caring for others, sharing their time and knowledge with their community
- Thank you, Lord, for the beauty of the world as the spring flowers give their first blush, the new leaves unfurl, and the infant spring animals show their faces.
- Thank you, Lord, for the work of the healers in the hospitals, community centers, mental health facilities, and the NDIS

POINTS FOR A PRAYER OF PRAISE

- For the comfort in knowing I'm always in your presence

- For the freedom to choose giving me the choice to ‘be’ with you, or away from you
- For the ability to enjoy and celebrate life
- For the opportunity to start again when I get things wrong

POINTS OF CONFESSION

- Not even trying to listen to what the Holy Spirit is asking of me
- Not addressing the ‘sticks’ which are in my eye
- Taking advantage of your grace and acting like I don’t have to try to be better
- Deluding myself that a small transgression or a white lie is ok.

WORDS OF GRACE

In asking your forgiveness I may know cleansing, renewal and a dislike of doing things against you. Jesus says when we confess our wrongdoing with an attitude to be sorry , we are forgiven. I

Christ says you are forgiven, thanks be to God, amen

REFLECTION

In Luke 6:1-11, two worlds meet together; the powerful world of the Pharisees and the even more powerful presence of a transformative Jesus whose ministry reshapes our understanding of the Sabbath within the Christian faith. Luke starts with Jesus and His disciples walking through the grain fields on the Sabbath. As the disciples pick and eat some heads of grain, they are confronted by the Pharisees, who claim that their actions violate the Sabbath law. This situation escalates when Jesus heals a man with a withered hand, further provoking the Pharisees’ outrage.

Jesus' response to the Pharisees reveals intense truths about the nature of the Sabbath. He asserts that the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath (Mark 2:27). This statement encapsulates His radical redefinition of what the Sabbath should represent. Instead of being a legalistic set of rules that restricts human activity, the Sabbath ought to be a day that promotes mercy, compassion, and restorative actions.

The act of Jesus healing the man with the withered hand exemplifies this principle clearly. Rather than adhering to a rigid interpretation of the law that would prevent healing on the Sabbath, Jesus prioritizes the well-being and restoration of the individual. This moment serves as a powerful reminder that our worship and religious observance should never come at the expense of human dignity and need. It asks us to reflect on the *kind* of “good” we can do on the Sabbath: acts that convey love, care, and kindness.

In a modern context, this raises important questions for us as Christians. How do we observe the Sabbath? Is it a day reserved for mere rest, ritual, or mere personal enjoyment, or is it a day to engage in acts of service and kindness? Are we willing to step outside our comfort zones on this holy day to help those in need or to stand against injustice?

As we reflect on what a day of rest means for us, we are invited to recognise that our faith is activated through actions that reflect Christ’s love. The Sabbath can be a time not only for physical rest but also for rejuvenation of our spirit through service. Jesus challenges us to mirror His heart by doing good and extending grace, thereby expressing the deeper meaning of the Sabbath as a gift from God—a gift meant

to restore and uplift both ourselves and those around us. In doing so, we honor the true spirit of the Sabbath.

PRAYER OF INTERCESSION

Today I want you to think of someone who feels that their life is empty;

- Someone who is overwhelmed by a sense of their own unworthiness;
- Someone who has been made to feel useless and now finds it hard to live life to the full.

May the presence of Christ and the power of the Spirit transform their lives.

Now think of someone who is hurting;

- Someone who is facing a time of grief or loss;
- Someone who is facing the loss of employment that has been the source of security and purpose in their life;
- Someone who is needing to learn that they still matter even when they are now empty-nesters.

May the presence of Christ and the power of the Spirit give them hope.

Perhaps you could think of someone who no longer meets for worship;

- Someone for whom coming to church was something at the heart of their lives;
- Someone who has allowed the demands of home and family as well the pressures of work, the use of their leisure or the taste of financial success to take the place they once gave to God.

May the presence of Christ and the power of the Spirit turn their hearts back to the Lord.

- Think about someone who has a particular need.
- Think about the leadership of the congregation.
- Think about all the other churches in our neighbourhood.
- Think of all the things we have in common.
- Think about how we can do better for caring for the environment.
- Think about the people whose lives have been destroyed by wars and conflict.
- Think of all that you must face in the coming days of this week.
- Think of your fears and your need of knowing that you matter.

May the presence of Christ and the power of the Spirit hold you still.

In the name of Christ amen.



https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LvMSyVgf4-8&list=RDLvMSyVgf4-8&start_radio=1