

One Good Question...

A reading on Jesus' healing of the man on the Sabbath. For four readers

Reader 1: "And Jesus went on from there, and entered the synagogue. And behold, there was a man with a withered hand."

Reader 2: And "behold"—the question is put, the scene is set, the point of tension created. A man with a hand not whole, a man with the power to make whole, their lives come together on a holy day in a holy place in front of holy men . . . Holy cow! What's going to happen here!?

Reader 1: "And they asked him, 'Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?' so that they might accuse him."

Reader 3: A trick question, this. A question not to engage the truth, but to entrap, to ensnarl, to encircle, to eviscerate. And the man? the man with the hand? But a prop for their scheme; not a person *in need*, but a person *they needed* to get the person they wanted, to save the system they needed to keep their privilege intact.

Reader 2: But one good question deserves another . . .

Reader 1: "He said to them, 'What one of you, if you have one sheep and it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will not lay hold of it and lift it out? Of how much more value is a man than a sheep? So it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath.'"

Reader 4: The relative value of a sheep in a pit compared to a man wounded for life. Simple equation really. On the one hand, justice and healing for those in need; on the other, maintaining an order that serves but the few. Seems straightforward enough; a situation easily resolved . . .

Reader 3: Why do I think it may *not* be so easily resolved . . .?

Reader 1: "Then Jesus said to the man. 'Stretch out your hand.' And the man stretched it out, and it was restored."

Reader 2: Now that's something to celebrate! The ill made well. The injured made whole. A man who can now face life fully "armed" with a healthy body. Who could be troubled by that?!

Reader 4: I think *I* know who . . .

Reader 1: "But the Pharisees went out and took counsel against him, how to destroy him."

Reader 2: Those men . . . why did they do that?

Reader 3: The man made well . . . why didn't they care?

Reader 4: The man named Jesus . . . was this the beginning of the end?

Reader 1: Our world of today...justice or privilege, which one yet prevails?

One Good Question
by David Radcliff
New Community Project
718 Wilder Street Elgin, IL 60123
www.newcommunityproject.org