

Mark 3

V.1-6 Jesus demonstrates that he is Lord of the Sabbath. This is really a continuation of Mark 2:27&28.

The “they” in verses 1-6 who are “watching him closely...so that they might accuse Him” - they are the Pharisees.

Who believed it unholy, and illegal to do anything that could be considered work - including healing - on the Sabbath.

[Exo 35:1-3 NKJV] 1 Then Moses gathered all the congregation of the children of Israel together, and said to them, "These [are] the words which the LORD has commanded [you] to do: 2 "Work shall be done for six days, but the seventh day shall be a holy day for you, a Sabbath of rest to the LORD. Whoever does any work on it shall be put to death. 3 "You shall kindle no fire throughout your dwellings on the Sabbath day."

[Num 15:32-36 NKJV] 32 Now while the children of Israel were in the wilderness, they found a man gathering sticks on the Sabbath day. 33 And those who found him gathering sticks brought him to Moses and Aaron, and to all the congregation. 34 They put him under guard, because it had not been explained what should be done to him. 35 Then the LORD said to Moses, "The man must surely be put to death; all the congregation shall stone him with stones outside the camp." 36 So, as the LORD commanded

Moses, all the congregation brought him outside the camp and stoned him with stones, and he died.

Much of the Jewish tradition regarding the Sabbath day is extra-biblical tradition found in the Talmud - an exhaustive Jewish commentary on the Law, Customs, Traditions, etc.

“Early Rabbinic literature developed 39 forms of prohibited work, but its main poles are home and synagogue...” -Timmer, D. (2016). [Sabbath. Critical Issues](#). In J. D. Barry, D. Bomar, D. R. Brown, R. Klippenstein, D. Mangum, C. Sinclair Wolcott, ... W. Widder (Eds.), *The Lexham Bible Dictionary*. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

This is the cultural/societal context that Jesus is ministering in.

Jesus asks them then a question that challenges the idea of strict adherence to a code or law even with the best of intentions.

“Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do evil?”

Let us take this in two parts and expound upon the question.

First, when is it lawful to do good? What day of the week is it right and acceptable to do good? Such as healing somebody, caring for somebody in need? Answer - any day!

So, if we just amend that statement to comply with the Pharisaical view of the Sabbath we see the absurdity of their legalism.

Let us ask again - when is it lawful, acceptable, right to do good? And let us answer with the Pharisee's heart - "Any day, except the Sabbath."

That's crazy! So we take a day that God has set aside to bless His people and we make it one of the bleakest days of the week. We make it a day where those who are in need (like this man with a withered hand) expect nothing from God or His people because operations have been suspended!

Now, on the other hand - when is it acceptable to do evil? Never!

There is no day of the week that it is acceptable to do evil. And Jesus' intentionally positions these two ideas against one another because he is trying to teach the those in the synagogue, the Pharisees, his own disciples, about doing good.

Would we consider withholding good from somebody evil? Yes. Most certainly. If it is within our power - as it is within Christ's power to heal this man - then that would be evil. And there is no acceptable time for evil, and every time is acceptable to do good.

So Christ, meeting this man where he is will not withhold healing from him, as it is within his power - even on the Sabbath, because that would be evil.

What's more is the HOW Jesus does this.

You will notice that Jesus does not do anything by which he may be accused - there is no gathering, no labor to speak of, no strain or striving on His part. His creative and divine word brings forth this miracle.

He tells the man to stretch forth his hand and the man is made whole. This also reminds us that the method of Jesus' healing was not restricted and not subject to a formulaic approach.

This healing reveals the twisted nature of the human condition - as Jesus is about His Father's business, making people whole, and well, his enemies are enraged by this compassion and see it as grounds to pursue an assassination plot with Herodians.

Herodians - not a religious sect, but, as the name implies, a court or political party, supporters of the dynasty of Herod

V.7-12 Common marks of Jesus' ministry

Jesus is thronged, nearly crushed by great multitudes - he has to be intentional about getting away and getting with his disciples.

These multitudes came from all over the region from various backgrounds, family trees, ancestry, both Jewish and Gentile.

They heard how many things he was doing and they came to Him - sometimes we wonder where everybody is? Well, have they heard what our Lord is doing?

Have we told anybody? People will come who hear what's going on - for one reason or the other. We are not to be arbiters of that but just to be faithful to speak the message.

[Rom 10:14-17 NKJV] 14 How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? 15 And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, Who bring glad tidings of good things!" 16 But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, "LORD, who has believed our report?" 17 So then faith [comes] by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

Jesus is also intentional about HOW he does ministry with these people. He plans ahead to get a small boat so he could go out on the water - and he would use that as his floating pulpit to speak to the crowds. He was deliberate, intentional, thoughtful.

Further marks: He healed many, unclean spirits cried out and he silenced them

V.13-19 Disciples become Apostles

Jesus called to Him those He Himself wanted - does this offend us? That Jesus had a group of men that he desired to disciple, to grow, apart from the masses? It may. We may say - what about everybody else? I thought Jesus was open to all.

Here is where we wrestle with the idea of those who are chosen and those who come freely. And where those two intersect, overlap, converge and/or diverge has been the subject of debate for many generations.

What is certain from our text is that Jesus called specific men that he desired to himself - and he still does today.

[Jhn 6:37 NKJV] 37 "All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out.

What is also certain is that the fountain of life is open to all who are thirsty.

[Rev 22:17 NKJV] 17 And the Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let him who hears say, "Come!" And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely.

AND

[2Pe 3:9 NKJV] 9 The Lord is not slack concerning [His] promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.

It was this group of select men that Jesus called to himself that he might what? Put them on a shelf as some sort of indication of popularity - divine window dressing? No - that he might send them out to do kingdom work.

These disciples (students) become apostles (one who is sent out) - but just because they are apostles does not mean they have forfeited their discipleship. Those two roles are complementary to one another.

V.20-22 Different people respond to Jesus different ways

His "own people"

The religious "leaders" responded to Jesus

The obedient supplicant (v.5)

The crowds

The disciples

V. 23-27 Jesus, plundering the house of Satan

Jesus refers to Satan as the ruler of this world in John 14:30 & 16:11

The Apostle John says that the whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one in 1 John 5:19

Paul says that the god of this age has blinded many in 2 Corinthians 4:4; and he also calls Satan the prince of the power of the air, whose spirit works in the sons of disobedience in Eph 2:2

This is where Satan has the most influence - planet earth. It certainly is not in heaven. And while he has been defeated by the cross - he still moves among men, influencing, turning, blinding.

Jesus is the plunderer! He is the one who invaded Satan's earthly domain to plunder his goods - namely the souls of men! And he does it still by His spirit.

By showing himself opposed to Satan and his demons - Jesus showed that He is stronger! We who are his, have nothing to fear from that realm.

[1Jo 4:4 NKJV] ...He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.

V.28-30 The unforgivable sin

Is there any sin God won't forgive?

Contextually Jesus is referring to the blasphemy that the Pharisees committed as they attributed the good works of God to demonic powers.

Imagine the state of the heart that has travelled so far from the truth that they are willing to boldly make proclamations against God's goodness and holiness. This is a heart that isn't seeking forgiveness, or repentance, or reconciliation, this is a heart that is opposed to Christ.

There is hope though for those with soft hearts, ears to hear, eyes to see - "all sins will be forgiven the sons of men."

No one is beyond Christ's forgiveness should we believe in Him and seek reconciliation.

V.31-35 Jesus teaches on eternal perspective

Who is our family?

Many of us have family members, loved ones, who don't know Jesus or who have rejected Jesus for one reason or the other.

Many of us have family and loved ones who may think we are out of our minds to believe this stuff. We can only believe and speak of the things we know to be true.

AND, what we find is when we desire for that fellowship with our family - that closeness - God has provided us with a family.

AND, what we learn as we grow in our own discipleship is that we have an eternal family brought together in Jesus.

There's this old saying, "blood is thicker than water." The idea is that your family is with you know matter what...well...who's blood are we talking about? We are brought together as a family in Jesus' blood - and His blood is more powerful and meaningful than we could ever imagine. It makes family. As it has made the church, Christ's bride, and all of us together in unity under the blood of Jesus Christ.