

Second Baptist Church of Doylestown
Bible Study Notes
8-7-24

Mark 3

The Lord Of The Sabbath Heals On The Sabbath – Verses 1-6

¹Another time Jesus went into the synagogue, and a man with a shriveled hand was there. ²Some of them were looking for a reason to accuse Jesus, so they watched him closely to see if he would heal him on the Sabbath. ³Jesus said to the man with the shriveled hand, “Stand up in front of everyone.” ⁴Then Jesus asked them, “Which is lawful on the Sabbath: to do good or to do evil, to save life or to kill?” But they remained silent. ⁵He looked around at them in anger and, deeply distressed at their stubborn hearts, said to the man, “Stretch out your hand.” He stretched it out, and his hand was completely restored. ⁶Then the Pharisees went out and began to plot with the Herodians how they might kill Jesus.

3:2 Already many of the religious leaders had turned against Jesus and become his enemies. They were jealous of his popularity, his miracles, and the authority in his teaching and actions. They valued their status in the community and their opportunity for personal gain so much that they lost sight of their goal as religious leaders— to point people toward God. Of all people, the Pharisees should have recognized the Messiah, but they refused to acknowledge him because they were not willing to give up their treasured position and power. When Jesus exposed their attitudes, he became their enemy instead of their Messiah, and they began looking for ways to turn the people against him.

3:5 Jesus was angry about the Pharisees’ uncaring attitudes. Anger itself is not wrong. It depends on what makes us angry and what we do with our anger. Too often we express our anger in selfish and harmful ways. By contrast, Jesus expressed his anger by correcting a problem— healing the man’s hand. Use your anger to find constructive solutions rather than to tear people down.

3:6 The Pharisees were a Jewish religious group that zealously followed the Old Testament laws as well as their own religious traditions. They were highly respected in the community, but they hated Jesus because he challenged their proud attitudes and dishonorable motives. The Herodians were a Jewish political party that hoped to restore Herod the Great’s line to the throne. Jesus was a threat to them as well because he challenged their political ambitions. These two groups were normally at odds, but they joined forces against Jesus.

3:6 The Pharisees had accused Jesus of breaking their law that said medical attention could be given to no one on the Sabbath except in matters of life and death. Ironically, the Pharisees themselves were Breaking God’s Law By Plotting Murder.

Crowds Follow Jesus – Verses 7-12

⁷Jesus withdrew with his disciples to the lake, and a large crowd from Galilee followed. ⁸When they heard about all he was doing, many people came to him from Judea, Jerusalem, Idumea, and the regions across the Jordan and around Tyre and Sidon. ⁹Because of the crowd he told his disciples to have a small boat ready for him, to keep the people from crowding him. ¹⁰For he had healed many, so that those with diseases were pushing forward to

touch him. ¹¹ Whenever the impure spirits saw him, they fell down before him and cried out, “You are the Son of God.” ¹² But he gave them strict orders not to tell others about him.

3:7-11 The impure spirits knew that Jesus was the Son of God, but they had no intention of following him. Many people followed Jesus but didn't understand his true purpose for coming. Some people came for miracles, some came to hear his teaching, but they didn't understand the way of the cross. Knowing about Jesus, or even believing that he is God's Son, does not guarantee salvation. You must also follow and obey him (see James 2: 17).

3:12 Jesus warned the impure spirits not to reveal his identity because he did not want them to reinforce a popular misconception. The huge crowds were looking for a political and military leader who would free them from Rome's control, and they thought that the Messiah predicted by the Old Testament prophets would be this kind of man. Jesus wanted to teach the people about the kind of Messiah he really was— one who was far different from their expectations. Christ's kingdom is spiritual. It begins with the overthrow of sin in people's hearts, not with the overthrow of governments.

Jesus Appoints The Twelve – Verses 13-15

¹³ Jesus went up on a mountainside and called to him those he wanted, and they came to him. ¹⁴ He appointed twelve that they might be with him and that he might send them out to preach ¹⁵ and to have authority to drive out demons.

3:13 What does it mean to hear the “call” of God? First, God calls you to faith in Jesus. You will know this call by the growing desire in your heart to settle the matter of peace with God speedily. Respond to him— answer with a grateful, “Yes, Lord, I need you!” Second, God calls you to service in Jesus' name. Wherever you are (and sometimes you need to move), whatever you're doing (and sometimes you need to upgrade your skills), God has a place of service for you. Jesus calls you and he wants you. Answer this call thoughtfully, seriously, in consultation with other Christians, saying, “Yes, Lord, I love you and will follow you!”

3:14 From the hundreds of people who followed him from place to place, Jesus chose 12 to be his apostles (see footnote). Apostle means “messenger” or “authorized representative.” Why did Jesus choose 12 disciples? The number 12 corresponds to the 12 tribes of Israel (Matthew 19: 28), showing the continuity between the old religious system and the new one based on Jesus' message. Many people followed Jesus, but these 12 received the most intense training. Jesus did not choose these 12 to be his associates and companions because of their faith; their faith often faltered. He didn't choose them because of their talent and ability; no one stood out with unusual ability.

3:14 The disciples represented a wide range of backgrounds and life experiences, but apparently they had no more leadership potential than those who were not chosen. The one characteristic they all shared was their willingness to obey Jesus. After Jesus' ascension, they were filled with the Holy Spirit and empowered to carry out special roles in the growth of the early church. We should not disqualify ourselves from service to Christ because we do not have the expected credentials. Being a good disciple is simply a matter of following Jesus with a willing heart.

The Twelve Disciples Listed – Verses 16-19

¹⁶ These are the twelve he appointed: Simon (to whom he gave the name Peter), ¹⁷ James son of Zebedee and his brother John (to them he gave the name Boanerges, which means “sons of thunder”), ¹⁸ Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James son of Alphaeus, Thaddaeus, Simon the Zealot ¹⁹ and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him.

3:16 Peter; James... John: We do not know very much about these 12 men. Of Peter, James, John, and Judas we know something about. But of the other eight, we know only their names. Their fame is reserved for heaven, where their names are on the 12 foundations of God's heavenly city (Revelation 21:14).

3:17-18 There are many interesting connections with this group. There are brothers (James and John, Peter and Andrew); business associates (Peter, James, and John were all fishermen); political opponents (Matthew, the Roman-collaborating tax collector, and Simon, the Roman-hating zealot); and one who would betray Jesus (Judas Iscariot).

3:19 The choice of Judas was just as important as the choice of any of the other disciples, but many people wonder why Jesus choose Judas. It wasn't because Jesus didn't know how he would turn out. Jesus told His disciples that He chose them and knew one of them was a devil. It wasn't because He had no others to choose. He could raise up followers from stones, so He could easily have found someone else. It wasn't because He wanted a scandalous person, or a "bad boy". A man once asked a theologian, "Why did Jesus choose Judas Iscariot to be his disciple?" The teacher replied, "I don't know, but I have an even harder question: Why did Jesus choose me?"

Jesus Accused by His Family and by Teachers of the Law – Verses 20-21

20 Then Jesus entered a house, and again a crowd gathered, so that he and his disciples were not even able to eat. **21** When his family heard about this, they went to take charge of him, for they said, "He is out of his mind."

3:20 With the crowds pressing in on him, Jesus didn't even take time to eat. Because of this, his friends and family came to take charge of him (3:31-32), thinking he had gone "over the edge" as a religious fanatic. They were concerned for him, but they missed the point of his ministry. Even those who were closest to Jesus were slow to understand who he was and what he had come to do.

3:21 The family may be the most difficult place to be a witness for Jesus. To be the first or only Christian may go against the grain. Your faith may be misinterpreted as criticism. Your zeal may be misunderstood. You may be accused of being a hypocrite because other areas of your life still fall short of Christ's ideals. Uncommitted people may view your new commitment to the Bible as unreasonable bigotry. Family members require the most patience. They see you at your worst when your guard is down. Remember that Christ's family rejected and ridiculed him. Jesus knows what you face by trying to be a witness for him in your own family. Stay true to your faith. Don't respond negatively to the attacks that may come. Over time, your love for your family will have a positive effect.

Jesus Answers Those Who Attributed His Work To Satan – Verses 22-27

22 And the teachers of the law who came down from Jerusalem said, "He is possessed by Beelzebul! By the prince of demons he is driving out demons." **23** So Jesus called them over to him and began to speak to them in parables: "How can Satan drive out Satan? **24** If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. **25** If a house is divided against itself, that house cannot stand. **26** And if Satan opposes himself and is divided, he cannot stand; his end has come. **27** In fact, no one can enter a strong man's house without first tying him up. Then he can plunder the strong man's house.

3:22-27 These teachers of the law brought a nonsensical accusation against Jesus. They tried to say that Jesus was driving out demons by the power of the prince of demons— in other words, that Jesus' power came from Satan, not God. They wanted the people to believe that Jesus himself was possessed (3: 30). This would disprove his claim as the Messiah and place him instead in league with the devil. The more effective you are in your Christian life, the more extreme will be the attacks of the enemy. Even the most ridiculous accusation will convince some when it's cleverly packaged to sound sincere and concerned. Stand firm for the truth, even when clever attacks come.

3:27 Although God permits Satan to work in our world, God is still in control. Because he is God, Jesus has power over Satan and is able to drive out demons, thus ending their terrible work in people's lives. One day Satan will be bound forever (Revelation 20: 10).

Jesus Warns The Religious Leaders About The Unforgivable Sin – Verses 28-30

²⁸ Truly I tell you, people can be forgiven all their sins and every slander they utter, ²⁹ but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven; they are guilty of an eternal sin.” ³⁰ He said this because they were saying, “He has an impure spirit.”

3:28-29 Christians sometimes wonder if they have committed this sin of blaspheming the Holy Spirit. Christians need not worry because this sin is attributing to the devil the work of the Holy Spirit. It reveals a heart attitude of unbelief and unrepentance. Deliberate, ongoing rejection of the work of the Holy Spirit is blasphemy because it is rejecting God himself. The religious leaders accused Jesus of blasphemy, but ironically they were the guilty ones when they looked Jesus in the face and accused him of being possessed by Satan.

Jesus Describes His True Family Relationships – Verses 31-35

³¹ Then Jesus' mother and brothers arrived. Standing outside, they sent someone in to call him. ³² A crowd was sitting around him, and they told him, “Your mother and brothers are outside looking for you.” ³³ “Who are my mother and my brothers?” he asked. ³⁴ Then he looked at those seated in a circle around him and said, “Here are my mother and my brothers! ³⁵ Whoever does God's will is my brother and sister and mother.”

3:31-35 God's family is accepting and doesn't exclude anyone. Although Jesus cared for his mother and brothers, he also cared for all those who loved him. Jesus did not show partiality; he allowed everyone the privilege of obeying God and becoming part of his family. In our increasingly computerized, impersonal world, warm relationships among members of God's family take on major importance. The church should give the loving, personalized care that many people find nowhere else.