

Reach Out & Be Restored

Text: Mark 3:1-6

Introduction:

1. Parallel passages of Scripture are Matt. 12:10-14 & Luke 6:6-11
2. This chapter continues to unfold the growing animosity of the Pharisees towards Christ's Lordship.
3. This section follows naturally on from the previous account and deals with a further confrontation between Christ and the religious hierarchy over the Sabbath Day. Truth will again collide with man made tradition. God's plan of salvation by grace will collide with man's system of salvation by works.
4. The Lord will heal a man with a paralyzed hand on the Sabbath day, providing another wonderful picture of salvation and the Gospel.
5. Let's examine this miracle in 5 segments.

Look firstly at...

I. The Condition for the Lord (Vs. 1)

A. The Place (Vs 1a)

1. "the synagogue" = possibly at Capernaum but not specifically stated
2. Christ took the truth and challenged the religious establishment on its home ground
3. Luke notes that Christ was teaching (Lk. 6:6)

B. The Problem (Vs. 1b)

1. "a man there" = appears he was a regular attendee at the synagogue. He knew religion but religion had done nothing to cure him of his debilitating condition.
2. "a withered hand" = 'withered' means to "be dry or made dry". Same word is used in the next chapter to describe the effect of the sun on the plant that springs up on stony ground (Mark 4:5-6) – "withered away". This man's hand was dead and shriveled up on account of some crippling disease. Luke points out that it was his "right hand" (Luke 6:6). This would have made his condition all the more difficult as the right hand is usually the most important out of the two.
3. Challenge: What a picture of man's lost condition. We are "dead in trespasses and sins" (Eph. 2:1) and are "without strength" (Rom. 5:6). The disease called sin leaves us dry, dead and deformed.

Christ the Servant – Mark Series

Look secondly at...

II. The Contest with the Lord (Vs. 2)

A. Their Sinister Motivation (Vs. 2)

1. 'watched' = means to observe minutely. Word was used of those who would keep a careful eye on criminals (Key). "They played the spy on Jesus." (RWP)
2. "that they might accuse" = the motive behind their close scrutiny of Christ. They were actually hoping He would violate their laws so they would have a reason to attack Him! Luke's account expresses it this way, "that they might find an accusation against him." (Lk. 6:7)
3. Note: Religion and religious leaders are often one of the biggest obstructions that stand between the sinner and the Saviour.

B. Their Subtle Question (Matt. 12:10)

1. "And they asked him, saying, *Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath days? that they might accuse him.*" (Matt. 12:10)
2. Often people's questions reveal what is smoldering beneath the surface in the heart. Though their question might have seemed innocent on the surface, there was actually an evil motive behind it.

C. Their Sinful Collusion (Vs. 6)

1. Luke adds that they were "filled with madness" as they went out (Luke 6:11) The Pharisees responded to the miracle with deeper unbelief, fury and hostility. This refutes the idea that all people need to cure them from their unbelief is to see a miracle (See Luke 16:29-31).
2. The parties involved (6a)
 - a. "the Pharisees" = religious party
 - b. "the Herodians" = political party. The Herodians were Jews who were prepared to give their loyalties to Herod and Rome over their own people. At this point in time, they were supporters of Herod Antipas, the one who beheaded John the Baptist. "They were prepared to offer homage to Roman power in return for political and religious favors." (Phillips)
 - c. Note: Usually these two groups were bitter enemies but now they are united in common hatred of Jesus Christ. The various faces of the world can quickly lay aside their differences and unite when it comes to opposition to the Person of Christ. The cross highlights this. Pilate and Herod, who were usually enemies, were made friends (Luke 23:12). Political and religious forces were united in their endeavor to crucify Christ.
3. The purposed revealed (6b)
 - a. "they might destroy him" = they wanted to kill Christ

Christ the Servant – Mark Series

- b. Note: What utter hypocrisy for regarding Christ's act of healing as a terrible crime while having no qualms about plotting murder on the Sabbath!

Look thirdly at...

III. The Call of the Lord (Vs. 3)

A. The Lord's Seeking – "and he saith"

1. The initiative for healing and restoring this man was from the Lord. Christ reached out to him before he ever reached out to Christ.
2. This is a beautiful picture of salvation. Christ, the Good Shepherd, goes seeking for the lost sheep (Luke 15:1-7). We, in our natural, depraved state do not seek after God.
 - a. Psalm 10:4 *"The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God: God is not in all his thoughts."*
 - b. Rom. 3:11 *"There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God."*
 - c. We often talk about "finding Christ" but in reality, Jesus Christ comes and finds us! In the words of the hymn we often sing, "Before I loved Him, He loved me. Before I found Him, He found me. Before I sought Him, He sought for me. Yes, Jesus cares for me."

B. The Lord's Sympathy – "unto the man"

1. We can't but see the unfathomable love and compassion of the Saviour towards this man. What a glorious truth that Christ loves depraved, dead, deformed sinners!
2. 1 John 4:10 *"Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins."*
3. Titus 3:4-5 *"But after that the kindness and love of God..."*
4. Rom. 5:7-8 *"For scarcely for a righteous man will one die..."*
5. If you are ever in doubt about God's love, look at the cross, and see Christ beaten for you, broken for you and bleeding for you. See Him die for you and be buried for you. See Him rise for you!

C. The Lameman's Submission – "Stand forth"

1. "stand forth" = stand, rise up! *"Rise up, and stand forth in the midst"* (Luke 6:8)
2. Christ called this man forward in the midst of a hostile crowd. Luke records the man's obedience – "And he arose and stood forth." (Lk. 6:8)
3. For the man to respond it would have taken courage and humility. It would mean an acknowledgement of his need. If he did not respond to Christ's call on account of fear or pride, he would never have been healed!

Christ the Servant – Mark Series

4. Challenge: Hell will be filled with “the fearful” (Rev. 21:8); those who hesitated, procrastinated and ultimately rejected the offer of salvation on account of their being held back by fears. When the invitation to be saved goes out, many hold back because...
 - a. They are afraid of what people will think
 - b. They are afraid of what people will say
 - c. They are afraid of the cost (e.g. family and friends)
 - d. They are afraid for their reputation (pride)
5. Illustration: Paul challenged a man by the name of king Agrippa in Acts 26 concerning salvation. Agrippa’s response is tragic and haunting – *“Then Agrippa said unto Paul, **Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian.**”* (Acts 26:28) (See Hymn # 322)

Look fourthly at...

IV. The Confrontation from the Lord (Vs. 4-5a)

A. The Lord’s Illustration (Matt. 12:11-12)

1. Christ confronts the opposition of the Pharisees head on, exposing the foolishness and corruptness of their logic.
2. *“And he said unto them, What man shall there be among you, that shall have one sheep, and if it fall into a pit on the sabbath day, will he not lay hold on it, and lift it out? How much then is a man better than a sheep? Wherefore it is lawful to do well on the sabbath days.”* (Matt. 12:11-12)
3. Christ pointed out their gross inconsistency, hypocrisy and cruelty. They would care for one of their livestock on the Sabbath but cruelly obstruct a fellow human being from being healed!

B. The Lord’s Question (Vs. 4)

1. They had asked Christ, “Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath days?” (Matt. 12:10). Christ, after demolishing their logic with a real-life illustration, now asks a counter question.
2. This question was a check mate for the Pharisees. If they conceded that it was lawful to do good and save life, they would justify Christ’s actions. If they argued that doing evil and killing was for the Sabbath, they would be immediately in conflict with the Old Testament law.

C. The Lord’s Indignation (Vs. 5a)

1. Mark’s Gospel particularly notes the actions of Christ’s eyes and the revelation of His human emotions.
2. Christ responded with:
 - a. Anger – “with anger”. This was no sinful display of ungodly rage but the pure, righteous anger of Almighty God. Trench comments, “There is a wrath of God (Matt. 3:7) who would not love good, unless He hated evil, the two being so inseparable,

Christ the Servant – Mark Series

that either He must do both or neither.” Gould says, “Anger against wrong as wrong, is a sign of moral health.”

- b. Anguish – “being grieved”. Christ’s heart was filled with sorry and deep grief at the “hardness of their hearts”. Their hearts were calloused against the man in need and against the truth. Their hardness of heart would eventually have eternal consequences (Matt. 23:14).
- c. “The presence of grief and anger in the same heart at the same time is no contradiction. Indeed, with Him who was at once perfect love and perfect holiness, grief for the sinner must ever go hand in hand with anger against sin.” (Butler)

Look fifthly at...

V. The Cure of the Lord (Vs. 5b)

A. The Command for the Cure – “stretch forth thine hand”

1. This command demanded faith on the part of the man as this was impossible for Him to do!
2. Note the two commands Christ gave this man:
 - a. “Stand forth” = speaks of repentance; coming to Christ in humility, acknowledging our deformed state that requires His healing.
 - b. “Stretch forth” = speaks of faith; reaching out to Christ, believing with all our hearts that He will save us!

B. The Compliance for the Cure – “And he stretched it out”

1. This is the “obedience of faith” (Rom. 16:26).
2. He responded in faith to Christ’s instruction.

C. The Completeness of the Cure – “and his hand was restored whole as the other.”

- a. The transformation was instantaneous – We too can be saved in a moment if we will come to Christ in saving faith.
- b. The transformation was complete – When God saves a soul, He does a full and complete work. This was no half-baked cure. The man was made whole.
- c. Ecc. 3:14 *“I know that, **whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever: nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it: and God doeth it, that men should fear before him.**”*

Conclusion:

1. Challenge to lost: Will you come to Christ for salvation today? “Stand forth...stretch forth”
2. Challenge to saved: Do we have the heart of Christ towards the lost or the heart of the Pharisees?