

Mark 3:1-19

“The Courage, Compassion, and Call Of Christ”

When we last left off we were surveying what we might call a “Sabbath situation.” and I suppose I would do well to bring a bit of clarification regarding the Sabbath and our position regarding it as the body of Christ today because as you read through the gospels this dilemma comes up quite a bit whereby Christ is challenged concerning His actions and what He or His disciples may be doing on the Sabbath day. and Because of that the question may arise, “What about the Sabbath day? How should we act on it, what exactly is allowed with regard to it, what place does the Sabbath hold in the life of the NT believer? I mean where does the idea of the Sabbath come from and what’s the deal with it?”

The bible teaches us in the Genesis account that in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth, the 1st day He created light and divided the light from the darkness, He called the light “Day,” and He called the darkness, “Night.” On day 2 God created the firmament, (made the skies,) day 3 He gathered the waters into one place and caused dry land to appear which He called “Earth,” and the waters He called “Seas.” He also made the grass of the fields, fruit trees, herbs that yield seed according to their own kind, day 3 was complete. On Day 4 He created the stars of the heavens various planets, the Sun and the moon. On the 5th day God created all the sea creatures, and every living thing that moves in the waters, the birds of the air told them to be fruitful and multiply on the earth. Day 6 He created all the animals, every living thing that moves on the earth and brought the whole thing to a crescendo with the creation of man. Then on the 7th day (Saturday) God ended His work, rested from all His work, blessed the 7th day and sanctified it.

Really that’s the last you hear of it until the deliverance of the children of Israel from the nation of Egypt when after crossing the Red Sea God calls Moses up Mt Sinai and gives him the 10 commandments and the 4th on the list is, “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.” “For in 6 days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them, and rested on the 7th day.” and So they were to do no work on the Sabbath, their animals weren’t to work, their sons or daughters, servants or strangers with in their gates. They were to rest, reflect on the Lord, remember His work toward them and for them. and Then as God gave them what we call the law of Moses He expounded on the terms to the nation of Israel, their were Sabbath days, and Sabbath yrs, they applied to people to property, you could farm 6 yrs, the 7th yr the land was to rest. You could have a servant 6 yrs, the 7th you were to set him free.

But there are a couple of things you need to know as a NT believer regarding the regulations and the reality of the Sabbath day. #1 We realize that the rituals of the law were but a foreshadowing of the substance found in Christ. The sacrifices pointed to Him, He was the fulfillment of that which they foreshadowed, the feast days pointed to Him, they foreshadowed that which He fulfilled, in the volume of the book, it all points *to*, revolves *around*, and speaks *of* Christ. The Sabbath is no exception to that, and of all the 10 commandments the only one that’s not repeated in the NT is, “Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.” The Sabbath was a day that God covenanted with the children of Israel, because it pointed to the finished work of

Christ and the rest we receive in Him. In Christ it's not about our working to be made right with God, it's about resting in *His* righteousness accredited to our account. In Christ we don't rest one day a week, we rest perpetually in His finished work. Remember Jesus said, *"Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls."* Matt 11:28-29

The Sabbath pointed to something much deeper than a day with out physical activity, it spoke of the eternal rest we receive in Christ, not working for righteousness, but receiving His. That's the good news, we say it often, it's not about what we do, but what He's done, it's finished, now we can rest in Jesus. and So for you or me, as NT believers don't let anybody hang a legal trip on you about the Sabbath, what you need to be doing to be made right with God. You've done what you need to do to be made right with God, you've received Christ, you can't improve on that or add to that to make yourself "more right" before Him now. As a matter of fact anything you do to try and make yourself right with God only takes away from what Christ has done and insults the Spirit of grace. Paul said in *Col 2:16-17*, *"So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths, which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ."* So that's what the Sabbath means to you, where it came from, and what the deal is with it.

But by the time Christ was on the scene the religious leaders had taken and twisted the intent behind the Sabbath such to the extent that it had become an impossible burden and in no way a blessing. But Jesus rocked their world, not because He skated on the edge with regard to the law, He didn't. But because He was radically confrontational regarding the traditions that man had added *to*, wrapped *around* and put forth as being equal *with* the law. and The traditions of man have this way of choking the life right out of the word and the ways of God, they're suffocating and oppressive to people who just want to flow with what God wants to do. They do just the opposite of setting men free, they shackle and enslave people. and That's what was happening both in our last gathering and as we enter the word today regarding this Sabbath situation. and Jesus will continue to impose, and impress upon them that legitimate human need always supersedes ritual observance. Any rendering of the Sabbath that would make for the detriment of an individual was a gross misunderstanding and application of the heart of God toward mankind in blessing the Sabbath. The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. God's not looking to *bind* us, but to *bless* us, has thoughts of peace and not of evil toward us, desires to give us a future and a hope. and That's His promise to you and me in Christ.

But hopefully that sorta sets the stage for us here today, Jesus once again confronted by crisis based upon a "Sabbath situation," notice.

Vs1-6

Interesting isn't it? Amazing how much you can tell about a person by the way the act and react to Jesus, and God's word. They might have a "holy façade" a "pretense of piety" but the proof is in the pudding. You show me your faith with out your works; I'll show you my faith *by* my works. The way one reacts, the way one responds to Christ, speaks volumes.

Jesus is really challenging these people here (more specifically the religious leaders). We noted in our last gathering that Jesus is all about *change*, that you cannot have a personal

encounter with Christ and something in you not change, He takes us from death to life, from lost to found, from condemnation to salvation, from sin to sanctification; He changes us. We also noted that Christ is about *choice*, He sends out the call, He takes the initiative, He invites, encourages and even commands all men everywhere to repent, but that choice is up to each one of us individually. You can repent and accept Christ, or you can continue on in your sin and reject Christ, it's God's heart to save you, it's up to you however to respond to His invitation. So Jesus is about change, He's about choice, as I observe this portion of scripture I see that Jesus is also about *challenge*.

He's all the time wanting to challenge us, wanting to stretch us, take us and make of us, mold us more into His image, less into ours.

We have the tendency to be pretty rigid in our perspective, don't like to flex much from our position, but Jesus wants to challenge you, strip rigid unbiblical biases away from me, and challenge us in those areas.

Now both Matt and Luke record this event as well, Luke tells us that it's a different Sabbath than what happened in the wheat fields in Ch 2, and being doctor he notes for us that it's the man's *right* hand that's withered. and This whole scene is one of entrapment really, the religious leaders knowing that Jesus was a church going kind of a guy, went into the Synagogue on the Sabbath waiting *on* Him and watching *for* Him to see what He would do.

Vs 2 tells us that they watched Him closely, "They" being the Pharisees that we note in Vs 6. But I think it's important that we draw attention to *why* it is exactly that they *are* watching Him. Because the word translated "watch" for us here doesn't at all carry any kind of positive connotation. It paints a picture of one *lurking*, and looking for the opportunity to entrap another, it's a word that's marked by unremitting attention. It was eyes on Jesus in an insidious, ominous and sinister kind of way. You see the idea of watching Jesus, paying attention to Jesus, staying focused *on* Jesus isn't a bad thing, as a matter of fact it's a really good, highly encouraged, much needed thing. But our motive in being fixated upon Him is critical, they weren't there to learn *from* Him, they weren't there out of love *for* Him, they weren't there that they might become more intimately acquainted *with* Him, and be instructed *by* Him but rather that they might find something of which to *accuse* Him. They were there as fault finders, pure and simple.

and It seems to me that anywhere the Lord's at work, moving, ministering, challenging and changing people's lives there are always going to be those in the midst who stand by waiting and watching with a critical spirit. They aren't there to learn, they're not there to bless or be apart of what God's doing in your ministry or through your life, they're waiting on you to mess up. To do something, *anything* that they deem as inappropriate or unacceptable so that they can just pounce on you and begin to accuse you. They're Pharisees in nature; they want to see what they consider to be inconsistency in you so that they feel justified in their opinion of you.

Do you remember the story Jesus told about the man who went out and hired laborers for his field, and he went to the market to get those laborers 1st thing in the morning, at noon, in the afternoon, and then again just before dark when the working day was done? and When he began to pay them at the end of the day he started with those he hired last, and he paid them a day's wage. So those who he hired 1st thought they'd really get a fat check because he paid a day's

wage to those who had only been working for an hour. But when he came to them he gave them a day's wage as well. and They began to murmur and complain, and the owner of the field said, "Hey, I haven't done you any wrong, didn't you agree to work for this amount?" and He said, *"Is it not lawful for me to do what I wish with my own things? Or is your eye evil because I am good?"* Matt 20:15 and My point is that there are people who want to pick you apart, point out what they believe to be unfair or inconsistent in your good deed, or good work, but what they're revealing is their own evil eye, their own critical spirit. (worship song story?)

Here's Jesus surrounded by critics, and He could've acquiesced to their traditions, not ruffled any feathers, but Jesus wasn't going to be a man pleaser, He was going to be a God pleaser. Wasn't going to be held back by fault finding Pharisees who lived by the letter of the law, never understanding the heart of God, the compassion of God, the saving grace of God toward human hurt and need, look at Vs 3.

Vs3

You've got to love the boldness of the Lord, He didn't say, "Here's my card, call me later when the contention dies down, I'll help you out."

He didn't say, "Why don't you meet me out back in an hour or so, there's no need to draw unnecessary attention to this." He pulls this guy right out into the open, intentionally challenging the religious, traditional position. and This is a good meter of discernment for us, if you're doing what's right, it can be done right out in the open for everyone to see. Jesus didn't have anything to hide, if you feel like you're having to hide what you're doing, or keep it on the "down low" you might want to reconsider what it is you're doing. Weigh it in the biblical balance and make sure it balances out. Because Jesus didn't operate in the shadows, He was doing the *right thing* and didn't have *anything* to hide, be careful when you start having to cover your trail, Jesus operated in the open.

Vs4

They were learning it didn't pay to try and argue with the Lord, something we'd do well to learn as well. But His question is both powerful and provoking, and in Matthew's gospel we read that before He said this He said, *"What man is there among you who has one sheep, and if it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will not lay hold of it and lift it out? Of how much more value then is a man than a sheep?"* Matt 12:11-12 and He points out their inconsistency of showing more kindness to an animal than one whom God has created in His own image! Because remember the scene, it's one of entrapment, they knew something about Jesus. They knew that He couldn't be face to face serious human need and look the other way, when Jesus walked the earth, part of His messianic ministry was in healing the afflicted. When Jesus came across human need He was moved with compassion and provoked to meet that need. They seemed to understand what we often times doubt, that Jesus actually wants to meet our needs. Remember back in Vs 2 why they watched Him closely? To see if He would heal this man, because healing was a violation of their Sabbath tradition, you could take necessary measures to save a life, but not promote healing. Someone is bleeding to death you could place a tourniquet around the wound but don't apply any ointment. Because the ointment promoted healing, and they considered that work, against the law. So basically you could put a band aid on a wound but no Neosporin. and Jesus is showing them the ludicrous inconsistencies in their own philosophy.

They'd help an animal on the Sabbath, but not a man, and His point is that is there ever a day when it's better to neglect a need than to meet it? Is it ever a wrong time to do the right thing? Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good, or evil, save life or destroy it? That's a rhetorical question; if they answered it honestly they'd incriminate themselves, so they just say nothing. What they should've done was answered it, humbled themselves and repented. But instead they *refused* to answer and in that they *rejected* Jesus. Jesus always brings us to that point, a decision will be made, for Him or against Him, there's no neutral ground, they chose to stand against Him.

Vs5

Few things here briefly, this is one a few times that the gospels record Jesus as being "angry." One thing we want to be sure and note about the Lord's anger is that it's not perverted by a sin nature such as ours. He exercises perfect righteous anger, and note what caused His anger, it wasn't what He believed to be an injustice against Himself (that's what often triggers us) it was the hardness of these men's hearts. The fact that they refused to repent of their sin offended Him. and When we read that He "looked around" at them this is a reference to a deep penetrating gaze, they felt the weight of His stare. Can I just say that it is offensive to the Lord when we won't repent of our sin, but choose to stand our ground and purpose to harden our hearts against Him. But more than angering Him, notice it "grieved" Him.

Now the word "anger" is in the aorist tense, meaning it happened swiftly in a moment, the word "grieved" however is in the present tense meaning that it was an ongoing insatiable kind of grief that refused to go away. His anger over their sinful position was consumed by an unrelenting grief over their unrepentant position. Jesus is grieved at the hardening of the human heart against Him. Why? Because He's not willing that any should perish, Jesus didn't come to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. He would that we would turn from our wicked ways and live. But so often man stands in opposition to Him, and it's grievous.

But note the man with the withered hand, he had a choice to make to. Because what Jesus asked of him could've been the equivalence of a cruel joke. How does a man with a paralyzed/withered hand stretch it out? That's like saying to a blind man, "Hey come here and look at this!" Or to a deaf person, "Did you hear that?" You're asking something impossible of me Jesus... If he was to stretch out his hand, that move would have to be predicated on what? Faith. But don't miss it, though the resources weren't in himself he obeyed the word of the Lord in faith and immediately he was made whole. He could've not trusted, not obeyed, and left there in the same way he walked in. But in purposing to obey the word of God he was changed, and he was empowered to do so. When the Lord *commands* you, He will *equip* you, it's yours and mine to purpose *obedience* to His word. The resource may not be in you, but where God commands you, He will enable you, if you will but obey Him by faith. Perhaps you're always exaggerating, and it's a real problem. The bible says, "Therefore put away lying, and let every man speak the truth to his neighbor." Don't make excuses for it, just do it, obey the word and God will empower you to do it. You struggle with alcohol, pornography, some kind of drug addiction, Romans 6, Reckon yourself therefore dead unto sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus. Go home and obey it, dump it out, throw it away, somehow, somehow get rid of it and God will empower you to be free from it. Husbands love your wives, wives submit to your husbands,

children obey your parents, the Lord has given us commands in His word, and there are all kinds of excuses we make, reasons why we can't do what God's asked us to do, therefore nothing changes. There's no purpose of our heart to really obey, so things stay the same. But if you and I will obey the word of God, then believe me when I tell you that God will enable and empower us to do it, and there will be a healing, a restoration that takes place. This guy was changed because he believed the word of the Lord and acted on it in faith. Notice however

Vs6

Now consider the question in Vs 4 and tell me Jesus wasn't probing their hearts. Jesus was about doing good that day, saving a man, making him whole. They were about doing evil, plotting Jesus' murder, looking for justification to destroy Him. You see what I mean by the fact that a man's character is revealed based upon his reaction to Jesus? The bible tells us that Satan came to steal, to kill, and to destroy, Jesus came that we might have life, and that we might have it more abundantly. They're potting His destruction on the Sabbath, blinded by their own critical spirit and pride. You would think people would rejoice, they were incensed, and potted with the Herodians against Him, how they might destroy them.

The Herodians were basically Jews who didn't mind Roman occupation and supported the political reign of Herod Antipas (who was about as wicked as they came) who was placed over that particular providence by Rome.

My point is that these 2 parties couldn't have been more polarized against one another but were willing to overlook their differences in order to come together on a mutual passion and that was to destroy Jesus. So if this were a movie or musical score, the music would be turning more ominous at this point because now it's not a matter of "if" they'll do it, it's only a matter of "how" and when.

Vs7-8

If you look on a map in the back of your bible you'll find that this means people were traveling from every direction sometimes up to and over 100 miles by foot to come and see Jesus some commentators suspect #'s at this point even in to the 10's of thousands. He's officially famous. However generally they were coming not because they believed He was the Son of God but because they heard He was a miracle worker and they wanted in on the action. and Though you can't blame them for wanting to be healed or somehow made whole, the point remains most people really weren't seeing Him, or coming to know Him for who He really is.

Vs9-12

You see the picture, thousands of people around Him, each pressing in on Him, wanting to touch Him, they've traveled over 100 miles by foot they're not about to miss their opportunity to receive something from Him. It's almost a mob mentality and there's risk of the people literally crushing Him. Yet He was reaching out to them in mercy, healing any and all who could get to Him, press in toward Him. and Again that was apart of His messianic ministry, *"Bless the Lord, O my soul; And all that is within me, bless His holy name! Bless the Lord, O my soul, And forget not all His benefits: Who forgives all your iniquities, Who heals all your diseases, Who redeems your life from destruction, Who crowns you with lovingkindness and tender mercies," Ps 103:1-4* What's happenin in the midst of them should be tipping them off as to who it is who is right there before them. and Lest they should crush Him he has the disciples

ready a boat there by the sea so that He can get in it and create some distance between Him and the multitude so He can minister in an orderly way.

Vs13-19

The appointing of the apostles, those hand picked of the Lord to be sent out to do His work. Luke tells us that before He did this He spent all night on that Mt in prayer, and it's encouraging to me that after all night in prayer He picked what we'd consider to be the most unlikely, unstable, uncertain candidates to be on His team. Spontaneous, impulsive Peter, evidently somewhat attitudinal James and John (Sons of Thunder), Matthew, a former Roman sympathizer (tax collector) and Simon the Zealot (Cananite, bad translation) he was a Jewish zealot who wanted to overthrow Rome, I imagine it was interesting when he and Matt 1st met. But Jesus isn't looking for elitist, doesn't need someone with a masters in theology, or who's incredibly successful according to the world's ideology. The only ability He's looking for is "avail-ability" He'll take you and train you personally for the plan that He has for you. and That's what I want you to see here, there's a reason Jesus has called you to Himself, it's because He has a plan for you, a purpose for which He wants to appoint you. and Again having appointed them, He empowered them to do the work.

He called those He Himself wanted...(Sovereign election), they came to Him (that's freewill) which is it? Let me know when you get it figured out, both are at work throughout the scriptures. If you want to find out if He's chosen you, then I suggest you come to Him, then you'll discover He chose you for Himself...

People want to know, "Why did He choose Judas? He knew He'd betray Him..." and That's true, I don't know the details of why God does everything He does, but ultimately those things serve His plan perfectly.

I suppose a better question for me to ponder and let probe my heart would be, "Why did God choose me?" I know He has a plan for me personally, He has a plan for you specifically, the question is will we submit ourselves to it willingly, do we trust God with our lives emphatically, will we walk according to His word obediently. Do we demonstrate true "availability?" Jesus has a plan for each and every one of you, He's calling to you, the question is will you come to Him?

Prayer Points:

Jesus we thank You for Your goodness, that You came to do good, to save life, not to condemn the world but that the world through You might be saved. and We thank You for the rest that provide for our souls. We don't have to worry about, or wrestle with what we need to do to be righteous before God, we can simply rest in your righteousness given to us by faith. Help us to obey Your word, trusting You to empower us to live it out, and may we walk willingly, submissively, and joyfully in Your plan, for *our* lives, for Your glory. Lord have Your way.

I want to take a moment here to simply give you the opportunity that if Jesus is calling out to you. Dealing with you, desiring to make Himself real *to* you and you're ready to respond to Him, to come to Him, to repent of Your sin, soften your heart and receive Him, then do it today. You can be forgiven of your sin, and leave here changed, a new creation, cleansed by the blood of Christ right here and right now. Just open your heart, believe on Jesus Christ and invite Him into your life, into your heart, He'll forgive you of your sin and make you brand new.