

Mark 3:1 ¶ And he entered again into the synagogue; and there was a man there which had a withered hand.

Mark 3:2 And they watched him, whether he would heal him on the sabbath day; that they might accuse him.

In Mark's next snapshot, we again see Jesus in a synagogue on the Sabbath. In attendance on this day was a man with a withered or shriveled hand. "They" watched Him to see if He would heal the man on the Sabbath day and give them cause to charge Him with breaking the law. Again, this reference to the law was actually Jewish tradition—not God's law.

It is obvious from the context that "they" is a reference to the scribes and Pharisees. It is very telling that their focus is more on making accusation against Jesus than looking forward to the possibility of a man being healed from a dreadful affliction. These were men with very hard hearts.

Mark 3:3 And he saith unto the man which had the withered hand, Stand forth.

Mark 3:4 And he saith unto them, Is it lawful to do good on the sabbath days, or to do evil? to save life, or to kill? But they held their peace.

Mark 3:5 And when he had looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts, he saith unto the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched *it* out: and his hand was restored whole as the other.

Mark 3:6 And the Pharisees went forth, and straightway took counsel with the Herodians against him, how they might destroy him.

Jesus didn't waiver; He told the man with the withered hand to come forward. He then turned to address those present with pointed address to the scribes and Pharisees. He questioned (my paraphrase): "Should one do what is good or evil on the Sabbath? Should one save life or destroy it?" No one responded to His questions. In their hearts they knew that they couldn't without condemning themselves.

Jesus looked around the room in anger; He was grieved at the hardness of their hearts. The Greek for "hardness" states, "stupidity or callousness, blindness." All apply. Stupidity is the lack of good judgment. Callousness shows insensitivity and a cruel disregard for others. Blindness describes their inability to recognize their stupidity and callousness.

Jesus then told the man to stretch out his hand. When he stretched it out, it was as healthy as his other hand. In moving to stretch out his hand, the man evidenced his faith; he could never have hoped to stretch out a withered hand.

I liked the application that Chuck Smith made: "The Lord, many times, says to us things that to us are impossible. As He faces that blighted area in our life, that thing that has been destroying us and keeping us from real victory: that attitude, that temper, that weakness of our flesh, that area of our failure; and that's the thing that Jesus wants to address Himself to in our lives. Jesus didn't talk to him about his good hand and how well he was able to use the good hand. He was

interested in the hand that wasn't working. He's interested in your life those things that aren't working properly. That's the thing that He wants to address Himself to. And He says to you, 'Now be free and be delivered from that character and that part of your nature.' You say, 'Oh, but Lord, you don't know how hard I've tried and you don't know how long, and you don't know...' Hey, He's not looking for an argument or looking for an excuse....And the moment you will to obey, He will give you the capacity and the ability to obey. He will never command you to do anything but what He will give to you the power to obey that command. And He commands all of us to be victorious. He commands all of us to overcome. He commands all of us to be free. He commands all of us to be filled with His Spirit and to live that new life."

The Pharisees left and went to meet with the Herodians (Jews who aligned with King Herod) to plot how they might get rid of Jesus. These men, who were supposed to be the most spiritual of men, were not willing to even consider that Jesus could be the Messiah. They were more concerned that He was usurping their authority. Their actions revealed the truth that they were not the spiritual men they claimed to be. They were the false teachers of Jesus' day.

Mark 3:7 But Jesus withdrew himself with his disciples to the sea: and a great multitude from Galilee followed him, and from Judaea,

Mark 3:8 And from Jerusalem, and from Idumaea, and *from* beyond Jordan; and they about Tyre and Sidon, a great multitude, when they had heard what great things he did, came unto him.

Mark's next snapshot shows us Jesus going to the sea with His disciples. They were followed by a great multitude from all over—the Galilee, Judea, Jerusalem, Idumaea, beyond the Jordan and the area of Tyre and Sidon. As the news of His miracles spread, more and more people came to see Him.

Mark 3:9 And he spake to his disciples, that a small ship should wait on him because of the multitude, lest they should throng him.

Mark 3:10 For he had healed many; insomuch that they pressed upon him for to touch him, as many as had plagues.

Mark 3:11 And unclean spirits, when they saw him, fell down before him, and cried, saying, Thou art the Son of God.

Mark 3:12 And he straitly charged them that they should not make him known.

Because the crowds were so large, Jesus asked the disciples to get a small ship for His use. He had healed so many people that the multitudes pressed to get close enough to touch Him because they suffered from diseases. It was creating a dangerous situation for those who were part of the multitude.

When those with unclean spirits saw Him, they fell down before Him crying out that He was the Son of God; He immediately forbade them from identifying Him.

Mark 3:13 ¶ And he goeth up into a mountain, and calleth *unto him* whom he would: and they came unto him.

Mark 3:14 And he ordained twelve, that they should be with him, and that he

might send them forth to preach,

Mark 3:15 And to have power to heal sicknesses, and to cast out devils:

Mark 3:16 And Simon he surnamed Peter;

Mark 3:17 And James the *son* of Zebedee, and John the brother of James; and he surnamed them Boanerges, which is, The sons of thunder:

Mark 3:18 And Andrew, and Philip, and Bartholomew, and Matthew, and Thomas, and James the *son* of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus, and Simon the Canaanite,

Mark 3:19 And Judas Iscariot, which also betrayed him: and they went into an house.

In his next snapshot, Mark tells us about Jesus calling out twelve disciples of His own choosing from among all those that were following Him. He chose these twelve to be His closest companions and to prepare them to go out to preach, heal sicknesses and cast out devils when He was no longer with them. The twelve were:

- Simon, whom He gave the name of Peter (meaning “rock”), looking forward to the strong man of faith he would become.
- James and John, brothers, sons of Zebedee; He gave them the name Boanerges, The Sons of Thunder, a description of their personalities. Luke gives us an example.

Luke 9:52–54 “And sent messengers before his face: and they went, and entered into a village of the Samaritans, to make ready for him. And they did not receive him, because his face was as though he would go to Jerusalem. And when his disciples James and John saw this, they said, Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did?”

- Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother
- Philip
- Bartholomew (aka Nathanael)
- Matthew (aka Levi), the former tax collector
- Thomas (who became known as doubting Thomas)
- James the son of Alphaeus (aka James the less, distinguishing him from James the brother of John)
- Thaddaeus (aka Judas, not Iscariot, and Lebbaeus); he was probably the brother of James the less.

Luke 6:15–16 “Matthew and Thomas, James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon called Zelotes, And Judas the brother of James, and Judas Iscariot, which also was the traitor.”

- Simon the Canaanite (aka the Zealot)
- Judas Iscariot, the one who would eventually turn traitor

I think Jesus made His choices based on the guidance of the Holy Spirit. It was

necessary that a traitor be included, and the Holy Spirit identified Judas as the one who would willingly serve in that capacity.

Then we are told that they went into a house, most likely back to Peter's home.

Mark 3:20 And the multitude cometh together again, so that they could not so much as eat bread.

Mark 3:21 And when his friends heard of it, they went out to lay hold on him: for they said, He is beside himself.

Once again a great multitude gathered around and evidently in the house so that they couldn't even eat. When friends of Jesus heard what was happening, they decided to go and get Him. They thought He was not in His right mind.

That is a strange conclusion to make about someone who was able to perform so many miracles. Why would that make them conclude He was mad?

Mark 3:22 ¶ And the scribes which came down from Jerusalem said, He hath Beelzebub, and by the prince of the devils casteth he out devils.

Mark 3:23 And he called them *unto him*, and said unto them in parables, How can Satan cast out Satan?

Mark 3:24 And if a kingdom be divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand.

Mark 3:25 And if a house be divided against itself, that house cannot stand.

Mark 3:26 And if Satan rise up against himself, and be divided, he cannot stand, but hath an end.

Mark 3:27 No man can enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he will first bind the strong man; and then he will spoil his house.

Scribes from Jerusalem showed up on the scene and declared that it was through the power of Beelzebub, the prince of devils, that Jesus was able to cast out devils.

Jesus answered their accusation with a parable. He basically said (my paraphrase): "How can Satan cast our Satan? If he did that, he would be destroying his own kingdom. Divided kingdoms or houses will not endure. No one can get into a strong man's house and steal from him without first binding the strong man; then he can take what he wants."

In essence, Jesus was saying that because He was able to cast out devils, He was stronger than Satan.

Mark 3:28 Verily I say unto you, All sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and blasphemies wherewith soever they shall blaspheme:

Mark 3:29 But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation:

Mark 3:30 Because they said, He hath an unclean spirit.

Jesus continued, "All sins can be forgiven men but one. Even blasphemy can be forgiven excepting blasphemy of the Holy Spirit. The person who does that will

not be forgiven and will suffer eternal damnation." Matthew states it even more clearly than Mark.

Matthew 12:31 "Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men."

So what is blasphemy of the Holy Spirit? Verse 30 tells us that is calling the Holy Spirit an unclean spirit, a devil (cf v22), a servant of Satan. The Pharisees had accused Jesus of being possessed by an unclean spirit when He was, in fact, possessed by the Holy Spirit. The Pharisees perfectly picture one who would commit that sin—one who refuses to acknowledge Jesus as the Son of God no matter how much evidence they are given testifying to that truth.

I liked Ironside's explanation: "This is what some have designated 'the unpardonable sin.'" Actually there is no sin that is unpardonable if men repent and turn in faith to Christ. But it is possible to sin so that the conscience becomes seared as with a hot iron. Men then lose all desire to repent and are given up to strong delusion; believing a lie, they are doomed to eternal perdition. It was so with these scribes. They had refused every witness God had given to the truth as set forth in Jesus."

Mark 3:31 ¶ There came then his brethren and his mother, and, standing without, sent unto him, calling him.

Mark 3:32 And the multitude sat about him, and they said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren without seek for thee.

Mark 3:33 And he answered them, saying, Who is my mother, or my brethren?

Mark 3:34 And he looked round about on them which sat about him, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren!

Mark 3:35 For whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and my sister, and mother.

Jesus' family, including His mom, arrived on the scene and called to Him from outside. Most commentators try to connect the coming of Jesus' family to verse 21; I don't agree. I know for a fact that Mary was not of those who thought Jesus mad. She knew that God had chosen her to give birth to the Messiah; she knew who He was. She may have had concern for His safety, but she did not doubt His sanity or who He was.

The crowd sitting around Him told Him that his family was outside and wanting to see Him. He gave them an unexpected answer: "Who is my mother, or my brethren?" As He looked at those who were sitting around Him, He said, "See, My mother and brothers. Whoever does the will of God is My brother, My sister and My mother—My family."

Jesus took advantage of the opportunity to teach a beautiful truth connected to the new covenant that He was introducing. Those who look to Him in faith, those who do the will of God, will become part of His family. He wasn't rejecting His earthly family; He was looking forward to embracing His spiritual

family—a relationship far stronger and more important. I believe most of us will not truly understand this truth until we are in the presence of Jesus.