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INTERNATIONAL

TEACHING THE WHOLE COUNSEL OF GOD

Mark - Lesson 3A

Chapter 3:1-6

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- Tonight, we have a continuation from last week’s teaching regarding the heart of the Sabbath and its true meaning.
 - We discussed last week that the goal of the Law (Mosaic Law) was to point us to the very person of Jesus Christ.
 - Jesus made it evidently clear towards the end of our teaching last week that He is “Lord of the Sabbath”
 - If you recall, the focus of the Sabbath was to enjoy God and His provisions as the Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath.
 - The religious leaders are fixated on the idea that their Rabbinical instructions and religiosity are the golden standard of God’s Law.
 - They are more concerned about being religious and righteous rather than demonstrating true compassion and care towards others in need.
 - We saw in Jesus’ reference to Hosea 6:6 in Matthew’s Gospel that “God desires mercy rather than sacrifice.”
 - Meaning that the goal was never to develop dependence on constantly sacrificing.
 - For as we read in Hebrews, the offering of the blood of bulls and animals could never satisfy the wrath of God and His righteous judgment.
 - The only thing that would satisfy God’s wrath was Jesus Christ dying, once for all, for the sins of the people (The Elect).
 - Jesus’ point in restating the authority of the Mosaic Law is the fact that the Father always had provision for the sins of His people.
 - And that provision is solely found in Christ alone, by faith alone, in grace alone, to the Glory of God alone, not by human striving and works.
 - It’s not based upon the works of religious men and their perceived goodness. It is based upon the righteous works of a Holy God in the person of Jesus Christ.
 - And tonight, Jesus’ point will be reiterated, only this time it will reveal the path in which the Son would willingly walk to His death to provide salvation for those who would believe.
 - Turn with me to Mark 3:1-6 for the reading of the word of the Lord.

Mark 3:1 He entered a synagogue again; and a man was there whose hand was withered.

Mark 3:2 And they were watching Him closely to see if He would heal him on the Sabbath, so that they might accuse Him.

Mark 3:3 He *said to the man with the withered hand, “Get up and come forward!”

Mark 3:4 And He *said to them, “Is it lawful to do good on the Sabbath or to do harm, to save a life or to kill?” But they kept silent.

Mark 3:5 After looking around at them with anger, grieved at their hardness of heart, He *said to the man, “Stretch out your hand.” And he stretched it out, and his hand was restored.

Mark 3:6 The Pharisees went out and immediately began conspiring with

the Herodians against Him, as to how they might put Him to death.

- Let's Pray
- One of my favorite shows to stream on Netflix is Criminal Minds.
 - It is a show about several FBI BAU (Behavior Analysis Unit) agents who are sent around the country to solve criminal cases of the highest degree.
 - The reason why I enjoy this show is because of the methodology that the BAU agents implement in an effort to find the perpetrator and save the victims.
 - What is most impressive, however, is the interrogation period. This is where they begin to question the suspects to get a confession.
 - It is in these scenes where you can witness the intense pressure that is applied to the perpetrator.
 - Pressure will always reveal the true intentions of the heart.
 - What is hidden, concealed, or painted as one thing, over time, will reveal the hidden truth.
 - We find Jesus tonight, applying Holy pressure to the dead religious and pious Pharisees as they seek to trap Jesus in the synagogue.
 - What they think to be a game of checkers, is simply a game of chess to Jesus.
 - And the evidence of their wickedness is found in their actions and rooted in their hearts.
 - Jesus will see their failed attempt at trapping Him as an opportunity to unveil the reality of their broken and false religion guided by a hardened, wicked, and dead heart.
 - Pick me up at Mark 3:1-2 as we see this scene unfold.

Mark 3:1 He entered again into a synagogue; and a man was there whose hand was withered.

Mark 3:2 They were watching Him to see if He would heal him on the Sabbath, so that they might accuse Him.

- Mark continues within his account by mentioning that Jesus entered a synagogue on the Sabbath. Luke's account tells us that Jesus was teaching in the synagogue.
 - And while there, "They" were watching Him to see if Jesus would heal on the Sabbath so that "they might accuse Him"
 - It becomes clear at this point of the text, especially after last week's teaching, who "They" are.
 - At this point, the Pharisees and religious leaders are gathered in the synagogue watching to see if Jesus would heal the man with the withered hand.
 - But notice their reasoning: They want to see if Jesus would attempt to heal him on the Sabbath.
 - They are waiting and watching to bring about accusations of Jesus healing on the Sabbath.

- We will look at the original language regarding this word “watching” later tonight.
- But before we move too quickly, check out what the text says at the beginning of verse 1 of Mark 3.
 - Mark states that “He entered again into a synagogue...”
- Remember that every detail that scripture contains is there for a particular reason.
 - So, to rush over the word “again” here wouldn’t be beneficial to our understanding of the text.
- The question here that we should be asking is “Where was Jesus at in the synagogue on the Sabbath before, regarding matters of healing on the Sabbath?
 - This would give us critical insight into the disposition of the religious leaders and their seemingly scrupulous demeanor.
- The original language used in verse 2 brings to light a very familiar issue that the Pharisees and religious leaders have with Jesus.
 - The wording that Mark uses in verse 2 regarding how the Pharisees are observing Jesus is that “They were watching Him”.
- The word for watching, here in the Greek, is *paratereo* (pa-ra-te-reo). It means to lie in wait for or to observe scrupulously.
 - The way in which the Pharisees were watching Jesus at this moment with a man with a withered hand before him was quite telling.
- The imagery here for lying and waiting is that of a predator carefully observing a prey to find the “moment of opportunity” to pounce and attack.
 - This is what the Pharisees were doing waiting for the perfect “Ah ha...We Gotcha” moment.
- The scene has been perfectly set in the center of the synagogue on the Sabbath while Jesus is teaching and here, in the crowd, is a man with a withered hand (dried up/paralyzed).
 - Imagine the scene, Jesus is coming into the synagogue.
 - The man with the withered hand is sitting down, next to or around by the religious leaders in the area.
 - The religious leaders are panning the synagogue knowing that Jesus frequents the synagogue on the Sabbath.
- The moment has finally arrived where the Pharisees see Jesus and they lock eyes on Him.
 - And as Jesus is teaching, He sees the man with the withered hand. Jesus sees a need!
- The Pharisees now lean in because this scene is a rather familiar scene.
 - There has been an instance before where Jesus entered a synagogue on the Sabbath and was faced with someone who was paralyzed on the Sabbath.
- If you remember, I mentioned last week about John 5.
 - That was the previous encounter where the Pharisees were up in arms about Jesus healing on the Sabbath.

- It would be in Jerusalem around one of the pilgrimage feasts that Jesus goes into the synagogue and sees a man that has been paralyzed for 38 years.
 - Typically, when Jews talk about a feast without the mention of its name, they are referring to the Feast of Passover, the most important feast on their calendar.
- It is there that Jesus will ask this man “Do you want to be healed?”
 - The man responds with uncertainty and excuses because for so long he wasn’t able to get to this “pool” where he was told he could be healed.
 - The hopelessness of being healed because of the deception of powerless religion had overtaken him for 38 years.
- So, Jesus tells Him to “Get up, take up his mat and walk”
 - It is at that moment that the man was healed.
 - However, who do you think took issue with this Sabbath healing? None other than the Pharisees.
 - Check out the Pharisees’ response in John 5:15-17.

John 5:15 The man went away, and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him well.

John 5:16 For this reason the Jews were persecuting Jesus, because He was doing these things on the Sabbath.

John 5:17 But He answered them, “My Father is working until now, and I Myself am working.”

- So we can surmise that Jesus’ return to the Galilee would be faced with issues regarding His disregard for the Pharisaical approach to the Sabbath.
 - The religious leaders had their set of rules and interpretation whereas Jesus had His own as the very “Lord of the Sabbath”.
 - Jesus is the *Kyrios*, the Owner and Lord of the Sabbath.
 - He is and holds the authority by which things are done for His good pleasure and Glory!
 - In one instance our previous teachings dealt with this growing frustration and consternation of the religious leaders regarding the Sabbath.
 - And at this point the Pharisees and Jesus have become quite familiar with one another to say the least.
 - However, their staunch differences have proven to be unrelenting at best.
 - The Pharisees want Jesus to conform to their rabbinical teaching and instructions regarding the Sabbath.
 - Whereas Jesus wants the religious leaders to recognize the authority of God’s words demonstrated through the authority of the Son.
 - And relinquish their failed attempts at righteousness, to repent, and turn to their Messiah who is right before them (Jesus Christ).
 - And thirdly to realize that He as Messiah is the Sabbath rest.

- Yet what we have witnessed time and again from the religious leaders is this unwillingness to repent and turn to truth.
 - So here is where we now see the religious leaders waiting for yet another opportunity to discredit and accuse Jesus for the sake of being right in their own eyes.
- One thing that we can witness from just these 2 verses alone is the dangers that pride causes within the lives of human beings.
 - The boastful pride of life is clearly evident within the lives of the religious leaders and yet they can not see it.
- I caution us as believers to remain humbly submitted to the Lord in all of our ways as well because pride can easily beset us all if not yielded to the Spirit.
- As I mentioned in our opening last week, we can know a lot about God intellectually yet fail at knowing Him intimately.
 - Knowing Jesus relationally and serving Him customarily are two completely different things.
 - It's like the individuals that say, "I don't go to church but I'm spiritual!"
- The Pharisees, if anything, teach us that familiarity with God intellectually, means nothing if God does not know you relationally.
 - The actions and the disposition of the religious leaders consistently show us throughout the Gospel narrative that they are spiritually bankrupt.
- So where Jesus is seeking to demonstrate the love and the mercy of God in action and deed, the Pharisees are demonstrating, externally, the rigidity and wickedness of the hearts of men.
 - Check out how Jesus responds to this scene set in the synagogue.

Mark 3:3 He *said to the man with the withered hand, "Get up and come forward!"

Mark 3:4 And He *said to them, "Is it lawful to do good or to do harm on the Sabbath, to save a life or to kill?" But they kept silent.

- Jesus gives an imperative to the man with the withered hand, like what He did with the paralyzed man at the pool in the synagogue on the Feast of Passover.
 - It is here that we see Jesus engage "the bait" that the Pharisees have before the crowd as they anxiously anticipate Jesus' response.
 - Notice Jesus' response here: He knows the hearts of these men. It is an attempt to trap Him.
 - However, the religious leaders' sense of trickery is really Jesus' opportunity to demonstrate His authority and power despite the opposition.
 - So as you can imagine, amongst everyone in the synagogue, Jesus tells the man with the withered hand to "Get up and come forward"
 - The Greek word for "Get up" is *egeiro* which means to rise, get up.
 - And the Greek word for "come forward" is *mesos* which means in the midst or in between.

- So if we were to piece together these two Greek words, it would literally read, “Rise up from amongst the midst of the people.”
 - The Greek structure of this phrase provides the reader with the understanding that this man would be the object of the demonstration.
 - But more specifically that Jesus’ power would be acting upon the object of demonstration to display His power and authority over the situation.
- In other words, what Jesus is doing, in essence, is saying “Watch Me Work!”
 - For Jesus this was not a “Cat’s got mouse” type of trapping as if you were watching Tom and Jerry, the cartoon.
 - Again, Jesus is aware of the Pharisees motives and through this demonstration, He will let them know that their misguided understanding of the Sabbath is atrocious.
- And it will be in verse 4 that we witness the start of Jesus’ demonstration.
 - Do you see how He begins the demonstration? He begins with a question.
- Jesus asks this question: “Is it lawful to do good or to do harm on the Sabbath, to save a life or to kill?”
 - Understand that what seems to be one question, in structure, is actually two questions.
- These are the two questions in place:
 - 1. Is it lawful to do good or to do harm on the Sabbath?
 - 2. Is it lawful to save a life or to kill?
- Again, this line of questioning should be familiar from our previous teachings. Jesus is using the *Kal v’ Chomer*.
 - Again, Jesus is able to read the minds of the religious leaders, so He knows what they are thinking. (Luke 6:8)
 - As they are trying to catch Jesus in an act of healing on the Sabbath to accuse Him of breaking the Sabbath which was not breaking Sabbath at all according to Mosaic Law.
- The question that comes to the forefront that may be pulsating through the religious leaders’ minds is: “By who’s authority is Jesus under to heal on the Sabbath.”
- This connects right back to the question from our previous teachings – Who’s interpretation of the Law is authoritative and binding – Man’s or God’s?
 - The religious leaders are frustrated with the fact that Jesus is not falling in line with Rabbinical Law as it pertains to healing on the Sabbath.
 - For example, according to Mishnaic Law, first aid was deemed permissible to prevent an injury from worsening, but efforts toward a cure were regarded as work and must wait the passing of the Sabbath
 - However, watch what Rabbinical Law says about a “withered hand” in the same scenario.
 - The Mishna states “A withered hand was obviously not life-threatening and did not qualify as an exception to the Sabbath rules.” Indeed, “they may not straighten a deformed body or set a broken limb [on the

Sabbath]” ([m. Shab. 22:6](#)).

- So what are the implications here from the previous question that we surmised from the Pharisees?
- Better yet, what is the aim of Jesus’ questions from verse 4?
- Jesus asking them these two separate questions is linked to one specific thing: Is the purpose of the Sabbath to do good (benefit) or to do harm (injure)?
 - To bring a bit more clarity to this question, Matthew’s gospel provides Jesus’ line of questioning with more of a pointed focus.
- It brings us to the heart of the issue. Check out Matthew 12:11-12.

Matthew 12:11 And He said to them, “What man is there among you who has a sheep, and if it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will he not take hold of it and lift it out?”

Matthew 12:12 How much more valuable then is a man than a sheep! So then, it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath.”

- Verse 12 of Matthew Chapter 12 brings us to the heart of the issue for Jesus regarding the Sabbath.
 - It deals with doing good and showing mercy to your neighbor by doing the right thing.
 - As Jesus alluded to referencing Hosea 6:6; ‘mercy’ takes precedence over ‘sacrifice’
 - If humanity was created in the image of God, how much more is God’s desire to demonstrate mercy and compassion towards His creation through means of grace.
 - As Edwards states in his commentary of the Gospel of Luke:

“A Litmus test of true versus false religion is its response to injustice.”

- ○ Jesus’ use of illustrations was purposeful because it illuminates the intent of what it means to truly know God, love God, and love your neighbor.
- We can’t just pick and choose who we want our neighbors to be or how we want to love others, but we must love others as a testament of the love shown to us.
 - James 4:17 says this:

James 4:17 So for one who knows the right thing to do and does not do it, for him it is sin.

- ○ The discussion that is raised here is what is deemed legal and most humane in the sense of what is morally correct? (What is right)
 - Micah 6:8 tells us this way:

**Micah 6:8 He has told you, mortal one, what is good;
And what does the Lord require of you
But to do justice, to love kindness,
And to walk humbly with your God?**

- ○ It is after Jesus puts the religious leaders on alert that the Pharisees responded in silence (admitting their guilt) yet without concern.
 - Check out verse 5 and let's read Jesus' response to their silence.

Mark 3:5 After looking around at them with anger, grieved at their hardness of heart, He *said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." And he stretched it out, and his hand was restored.

- Mark tells us that Jesus became angry at the Pharisees for their "hardness of heart".
 - The question here becomes, what has brought about this anger?
 - We see that the anger comes right after Jesus is "looking around" at the religious leaders.
 - The word for "looking" here in the Greek is *periblepo*. It means to see clearly or to look intently.
 - This looking is not simply gazing as with no purpose, but rather Jesus was looking for a proper response from the people.
 - It becomes clear from Jesus' emotional response, that there was no response that indicated brokenness from the Pharisees.
 - This is what draws about the anger of Christ.
 - Now, I want us to understand the source of the anger that Jesus is feeling here.
 - This word anger in the Greek is *orge* which means wrath or anger.
 - And wrath is the punitive outworking of God's righteous indignation at sin.
 - So understand that this anger was not brought about because of a "one and done" incident. No, this anger has progressed over a period of time.
 - As a matter of fact, we can chronologically track this built-up wrath from the Hebrew scriptures to this point. This is righteous indignation!
 - This issue of historical hardened hearts and complete disregard for doing right by our neighbor and honoring God is not new.
 - This is why Jesus is so angry; He continues to see the state of humanity in regards to sin and its continuing corruption of creation.
 - Although the condition of the Pharisees' lack of compassion for what is right angered Jesus, notice that at the same time, His heart grieves for them (He's saddened).
 - The calloused hearts of the Pharisees was a result of unrepentant sin and an unwillingness to relinquish their preferences.
 - Paul tells us in Ephesians 4:18 this about hardened hearts:

Ephesians 4:18 being darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart;

- How in the world could men that were so knowledgeable about God be so far away from Him?
 - This brings about an important point within the text.
 - Loving God is not an intellectual exercise, it is a participatory experiential journey.
 - It is one that God draws you to as you engage relationally with the God of heaven and earth.
 - Ultimately, our Love for God is visibly demonstrated in how we truly love our neighbors.
 - We see Christ demonstrate His Love for the Father by giving His life for us. Love always finds the need and meets it.
 - And we see Jesus doing just that here before the religious leaders and others gathered to witness a demonstration of Jesus' power and authority.
 - Check out the last half of verse 5.
 - Mark says that Jesus told the man to stretch out his hand.
 - And in complete obedience to Jesus, the man responds by stretching out his hand and the text tells us "his hand was restored".
 - You must truly appreciate the wording of Mark's gospel here because, remember, this issue of healing has to do with "working on the Sabbath".
 - Notice what the text says: Jesus heals the man's withered hand without even touching the man.
 - Jesus simply speaks and what was once dried up and frail is now made completely whole.
 - What great power and authority is this that Jesus has demonstrated before the people? It is in fact the very Power of God!
 - Not only has Jesus declared that He is Lord of the Sabbath, but by simply speaking, He exhibits the very authority as the agent of creation!
 - One can only imagine that the Pharisees' disposition moved from silent sarcasm to frustration and outrage.
 - This demonstration of Jesus in the synagogue was not just a mere demonstration of healing, but rather a demonstration of divine authority.
 - If this wasn't a white glove slap in the face moment, I don't know what is!
 - The Pharisees' calloused hearts could not see past their own self-righteousness that they missed, once again, their Messiah.
 - It would be these unresponsive hearts that would eventually lead to Israel, nationally, rejecting their Messiah which opens the doors for the Gentiles.
 - Jesus was becoming more and more of a threat to the religious leaders because of His rejection of Rabbinical Law claiming to be authoritative.
 - And what is even more interesting is just how frustrated the Pharisees

became. Check out verse 6 in the text.

Mark 3:6 The Pharisees went out and immediately began conspiring with the Herodians against Him, as to how they might destroy Him.

- Mark tells us here that the Pharisees immediately began to plot how to destroy Jesus with a political group of Jews, known as the Herodians.
 - Now at first glance, one would assume that the Pharisees were simply connecting with another group of people to succeed in the fall of Christ.
 - However, in order to get a fuller picture of what’s really happening here, we need to understand who the Herodians were.
 - The Herodians were a Jewish political party that sympathized with the rulers of the Herodian dynasty.
 - “The reign of the Herodian rulers extended from the first century bc through the first century.” ad.
 - The political associations of the Herodians is directly linked to Herod Antipas, the one in whom would be the cause of John the Baptist’s death.
 - So on one hand we have the Pharisees who are wholly committed to their pharisaical teachings and interpretation of the Law.
 - And their primary aim is to maintain their authority as “gatekeepers” and authoritarians of Judaism.
 - And on the other hand, we have the Herodians who are solely focused on their political interest and Roman oversight over the Jewish people.
 - If you aren’t scratching your head by now, something is seriously wrong.
 - These two groups have absolutely nothing in common regarding shared interest or aspirations.
 - However, the only thing that seems to be of common value to both parties is the fact that they are threatened by the very presence of Jesus and His authority and fame.
 - This issue of Jesus’ fame and notoriety as a man of authority becomes so pressing that in Mark 6 we will see Herod Antipas struggling with the idea of killing John the Baptist for fear of losing credibility.
 - Friends, what we have here is two opposing teams, teaming up for the sake of preserving their personal pursuits.
 - The Herodians and Pharisees hardly ever saw eye to eye on any matters or issues.
 - In one sense the Pharisees rebuked and scolded the tax-collectors for their getting into bed with Rome, however they are willing to compromise for the sake of their religious comforts.
 - Do you see just how blinded these men truly were?
 - It makes sense why Jesus was both angered and grieved by their lack of understanding and unwillingness to see the truth.
 - This reality is quite telling for us even today.

- A lack of surrender to Christ is indicative of the condition of one's heart.
- This is why the new birth and understanding what it means to be born again is so vitally important.
 - Because one truly experiences a new mind and heart, in the sense that your desires and affections shift from your allegiance to complete allegiance to Jesus.
- And it becomes clear from the Pharisees' response in partnering with the Herodians that their minds were made up, they had to get rid of Jesus.
 - And it is here, in Mark's gospel, that we see the first explicit reference to Jesus' death.
 - The text tells us that both groups got together on how to "destroy" Jesus.
 - It literally means to kill, demolish, or ruin.
- These political and religious leaders' rule and authority were on the line, and their pride could not handle the thought of being overhauled by the carpenter from Nazareth.
 - What began as the withered man's hopeless situation became a glimpse of hope.
 - And the hope that Christ brought through His ministry would eventually point to the eternal hope for all who would come through Jesus.
- But the only way in which this hope could be fully realized is if Jesus were to be killed.
 - As Jesus' notoriety continues to increase so will the growth of the religious leaders' animosity towards His ministry.
 - I pray you join us next week as we walk through Mark 3:7-12. Let's pray.