

## Mark 3

**Why were the Pharisees watching Jesus closely (vv. 1-2)?** In order to "accuse Him." To see if He would heal the man....on the Sabbath...which would constitute working....which is prohibited on the Sabbath. Instead of honestly evaluating Jesus' claims and trying to figure out if He was the real deal, most of them looked for an opportunity to condemn Him. Instead of simply leaving Jesus alone and dismissing him as a lunatic, they took steps to kill Him. What hypocrisy and insanity! They couldn't do anything to help this man, and they resented anyone who could.

Jesus stumped them by asking *"Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do evil, to save life or to kill?"* **How did the Pharisees respond to His question (v. 4)?** Silence. They had no answer. His question elevated the issue of Sabbath observance from the level of what was legal to the level of what was morally right and the Pharisees refused to debate it. Jesus emphasized the truth about the Sabbath: there is never a *wrong* day to do something *truly good*.

**What distressed Jesus the most about these Pharisees (v. 5)?** This is one of the few places where Jesus was described as having anger, and He was angry at the hardness of their hearts. Their misplaced concern was with the messenger. They had virtually no interest in the message.....nor the man who needed healing.

Note that in healing the man, Jesus did not use any visible means that might be construed as "work" on the Sabbath.<sup>1</sup>

The Pharisees didn't understand the heart of God. They thought a relationship with God was all about performance. The more rules = the longer the checklist = the more opportunities to earn God's favor. They were religious and Jesus condemned them for it. Psalm 51:17: *"I don't want your sacrifices, your burnt offerings.....the sacrifices I want are a broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart."* This was an Old Testament truism. They should have understood that, above all, God was after their hearts.

**Who were the Herodians (v. 6)?** They were not a religious party; they were a group of Jews who were sympathetic to King Herod and they supported his Roman authority over the Israelites. The Pharisees and the Herodians previously had nothing in common. Now they found themselves united by a common enemy—Jesus.

**Why did the crowds come to Jesus near the Sea of Galilee from distant places (vv. 7-8, 10)?** They heard all He was doing (but not what He was saying). They came more because of His miraculous works than because of His message. They were eager to receive the physical benefits of His ministry which Jesus bestowed on them with no thought of getting something in return.<sup>2</sup> **What does that reveal about His nature?** He is gracious and generous.

**To what main purpose did Jesus call his apostles (vv. 13-14)?** To be *with* him. The first job of the apostles was simply to be with Jesus, to learn from being around Him, to develop a relationship with Him, enjoy Him, get to know Him. Then, in a secondary sense, He chose them that He might send them out to minister/preach and drive out demons.

Application: Christianity is all about hanging out with Jesus, getting to know him, developing a relationship with Him, enjoying Him. Christianity is all about following a man not obeying a system of rules.

**Why did Jesus give these apostles the authority to cast out demons (v. 15)?** When the apostles performed miracles, it proved that they were sent by and empowered by God. The miracles authenticated who they were as well as their message.

**Why did Jesus choose Judas when He knew he would be a traitor?** To fulfill prophecy (Psalm 41:9, Zechariah 11:12-13).

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?" **Why did Jesus choose you?** We are products of His sovereign grace.

**Why would members of Jesus' own family, those that know him best, think that Jesus was out of His mind (v. 21)?** He went from being a carpenter to a miracle worker.....from a son to a person of notoriety. He spoke in strange terms (parables), and yet people were flocking to see Him, to hear Him, and to be healed by Him. If his own family thought He was crazy, it helps to understand the skepticism of others.

**Who was Beelzebub (v. 22)? Satan The teachers of the law who constituted an official delegation....What did they accuse Jesus of (v. 22)?** They claimed that Satan possessed Jesus and gave Him power to cast out demons. They were attributing Jesus' work to Satan. They viewed Jesus as having a power alliance with Satan.

**How did Jesus reply to the charge against Him (vv. 23-26)?** With parables. He pointed out that it was illogical for Him to cast out Satan's agents if He Himself was one of Satan's agents. Satan would then be working against himself.<sup>3</sup> There would be a civil war going on. A house divided against itself cannot stand.

If Jesus was possessed by Satan, He should be on Satan's side, and allied with the other demons. They would be working together to control people, not to free them as Jesus was doing by casting out the demons that were possessing them. Their argument made no sense. They were grasping at straws looking for ways to slam Jesus.

**What is the parable of v. 27?** Satan is the strong man. His house is his domain over which he has control. His possessions are the people over whom he holds control, No one can enter his house to carry off his possessions unless he first binds the strong man (shows he is more powerful). Then he can rob the house, releasing the enslaved victims. At His temptation (1:12-13) and through His exorcisms Jesus demonstrated that He is the Stronger One, empowered by the Holy Spirit (3:29). His mission is to confront and overpower (not cooperate with) Satan and to deliver those enslaved by him.<sup>4</sup>

Jesus ends this confrontation with an interesting statement. All sin is forgivable except one. **What is the unforgivable sin (vv. 28-29)?** Blaspheming against the Holy Spirit. **What does that mean?** An attitude of defiant hostility toward God that rejects the person and work of Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit's job is to draw us to Christ, convict and convince us of the truth and love of God (John 6:44, 65) The unforgiveable sin is to say NO to the invitation of the Holy Spirit to walk with Jesus and to persistently maintain that state of willful unbelief.

By simply looking at the context it becomes apparent that blasphemy of the Holy Spirit is equated with saying that Jesus did His miracles by the power of the devil. The scribes were committing the unpardonable sin, because they attributed the power of Jesus' exorcisms to Satan rather than to the Holy Spirit.<sup>5</sup>

The blasphemy of the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven - not because it is a sin "too big" for God to forgive, but because it is an attitude of the heart that cares nothing for God's forgiveness that is available through Jesus.

**Who was an example of someone who blasphemed the Holy Spirit?** Judas Iscariot. He walked with Jesus for three years and then rejected/betrayed Him.

**What point is Jesus making in His comments about family (vv. 33-35)?** Jesus was not saying anything against family relationships. He was teaching the priority of spiritual relationships over natural/biological relationships.

Jesus' question focused on the quality of relationships with Himself. He meant: "Who are the sort of people who are My family?" Again, Jesus looked around, but this time affectionately (cf. v. 5). He identified His disciples as those closest to Him.

Those who do God's will constitute Jesus' spiritual family. This would have been a startling statement to Jesus' hearers because the Jews valued biological family relationships very highly. The truth is.....the family blood that flows through our veins is not nearly as important as the blood that was shed for us on Calvary.

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<sup>1</sup> Grassmick, J. D. (1985). *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: New Testament* (p. 115). Wheaton: Victor Books

<sup>2</sup> Dr. Thomas L. Constable, Notes on Mark, 2020 Edition, (published by <http://planobiblechapel.org/soniclight/>), p. 83

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. p. 91

<sup>4</sup> Grassmick, J. D. (1985). *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: New Testament* (p. 117). Wheaton: Victor Books

<sup>5</sup> Dr. Thomas L. Constable, Notes on Mark, 2020 Edition, (published by <http://planobiblechapel.org/soniclight/>), p. 93