

The New Me and Ministry to Others

1.14.18

Redefining the New Me

Message 13 Mark Series

Mark 3:1–6 (NIV)

3 Another time Jesus went into the synagogue, and a man with a shriveled hand was there. ² Some of them were looking for a reason to accuse Jesus, so they watched him closely to see if he would heal him on the Sabbath. ³ Jesus said to the man with the shriveled hand, “Stand up in front of everyone.”

⁴ Then Jesus asked them, “Which is lawful on the Sabbath: to do good or to do evil, to save life or to kill?” But they remained silent.

⁵ He looked around at them in anger and, deeply distressed at their stubborn hearts, said to the man, “Stretch out your hand.” He stretched it out, and his hand was completely restored. ⁶ Then the Pharisees went out and began to plot with the Herodians how they might kill Jesus.

Matthew 12:9–14 (NIV)

⁹ Going on from that place, he went into their synagogue, ¹⁰ and a man with a shriveled hand was there. Looking for a reason to bring charges against Jesus, they asked him, “Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?”

¹¹ He said to them, “If any of you has a sheep and it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will you not take hold of it and lift it out? ¹² How much more valuable is a person than a sheep! Therefore it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath.”

¹³ Then he said to the man, “Stretch out your hand.” So he stretched it out and it was completely restored, just as sound as the other. ¹⁴ But the Pharisees went out and plotted how they might kill Jesus.

1. Jesus' ministry had a lot of controversy.

A. Just like last week, Jesus is being accused on the basis of Sabbath.

1. Recap for last week:

a. Jesus' disciples were hungry while walking on the Sabbath and they plucked some grain and ate it.

b. This was considered "work" and was a violation of the Law.

2. Jesus defended his disciples by reminding the Pharisees and hyper-religious that God created Sabbath to be a blessing for us.

3. Sabbath was never meant to be worshipped but was to lead to worship.

a. And it's hard to worship when we are tired, or hungry.

b. Or, in today's instance, it's hard to worship when you are sick.

B. The question being answered in this passage today is this:

1. Is it lawful, is it God's will, for us to do good as an act of worship?

2. The Pharisees dared Jesus to heal on the Sabbath.

a. Because they considered healing "work".

b. But Jesus showed them that healing wasn't "work" but it was the purpose of the Law to begin with.

c. The Pharisees believed that you could worship God or heal others, but worship was superior to ministry.

d. Jesus showed them that healing and ministry was an act of worship.

3. When we leave today, what I want you to do is this:

a. I want you to look at those in your circle of influence,

- b. And commit to ministering to them right where they are.

2. What was the problem?

A. Jesus and the disciples were in a synagogue.

1. This was their habit.
2. They worshipped, prayed, and read the Scripture together in public every weekend.
3. This was what was expected of a good Jewish man.

B. On this particular Sabbath, a man with a withered hand came to synagogue.

1. Why do you think he was here?
 - a. It could have been his home church.
 - b. But more than likely he had come that day because he believed Jesus could heal him.
2. This man needed healing.
 - a. With only one hand, it would have been very hard for him to have earned a living.
 - b. We don't know what he did, although legend says he was a plasterer.
 - c. Either way, this man was not likely to violate the Sabbath because he couldn't work.

C. At Licking Assembly of God, we want people to be healed on Sunday.

1. But the Pharisees didn't want that to happen.
2. Because someone, long ago, classified healing the sick as work.
 - a. Think about that.

- b. Some old religious expert taught others that healing was a form of work and must be forbidden.
- c. As this teaching was passed down, it led to a day when these Pharisees refused for someone to be healed on the Sabbath.
- d. Instead of God's original intention of the Sabbath as a day of rest, worship, and restoration, the Pharisees declared that nothing good could happen on God's day.

3. Jesus knew this wasn't right.

A. Jesus is the Lord of the Sabbath.

- 1. He is the focus of the Sabbath.
- 2. He created Sabbath.
- 3. He can do whatever He wants to do on the Sabbath.
- 4. Jesus could not put up with the misuse and misinterpretation about the real meaning of Sabbath.
- 5. God did not institute the Sabbath to oppress his people but to refresh them.

B. Jesus has the lame man stand up.

- 1. If this guy wanted to be healed secretly, that was no longer an option.
- 2. Jesus put this guy right in the middle of the argument.
- 3. Can you imagine being him?
 - a. He stands up.
 - b. Maybe he tries to hide his withered hand, like Radar on the old TV show M.A.S.H.
 - c. Maybe he couldn't hide it and everyone began to stare.

C. Then Jesus asks, "Which is lawful to do on the Sabbath: to do good or to do evil, to save life or to kill."

1. The Pharisees had a loophole: It was ok to save a life on the Sabbath.

- a. But this man's life wasn't in danger.
- b. He was not going to die soon of his messed-up hand.
- c. The Pharisees saw him as an inconvenience, a nuisance, or maybe someone to pity.
- d. But He wasn't worth breaking the Sabbath for!

2. Matthew's Gospel tells us that these same guys would work on the Sabbath to save one of their livestock.

- a. But they wouldn't heal a fellow human being.
- b. **Religion had messed up their Divine priorities.**

3. Allow me to take a moment and apply this truth to our church.

- a. The purpose of our church is not to make money.
- b. The purpose of this church is not to have the greatest, biggest, or nicest building in town.
- c. Our divine priority is to be part of the redemption of Licking, MO and the surrounding area.
- d. That means we are engaged in:
 - 1. Passionate preaching and teaching.
 - 2. Compassionate outreach.
 - 3. Friendly Fellowship.
 - 4. Pentecostal Ministry.
- e. All of these require us to love the people around us.
- f. If we ever allow personalities, buildings, or personal preferences to get in the way of ministry to people, we are in the same kind of danger as the Pharisees.

4. Look at the difference in response between Jesus and the Pharisees.

A. Verse 4 says the Pharisees remained silent.

1. What we are silent about speaks louder than what we yell about.
2. The Pharisees didn't debate, argue, or repent.
3. They remained silent.
4. They didn't care about the lame man.
5. Their only concern was trapping Jesus into breaking the Sabbath.
6. The Pharisees had turned the Sabbath into something to curse people for, instead of to bless people with.

B. The silence of the Pharisees brought about Jesus' anger and distress.

1. Very rarely is Jesus said to be angry.
2. But this was one of those times.
3. Why was Jesus angry?
 - a. He was angry at the lack of love and concern.
 - b. He was angry that those who should understand the Sabbath had it so wrong.
 - c. HE was angry that these men would rather uphold tradition than to heal one of their own.
 - d. Jesus was angry that sin had corrupted a holy thing, like Sabbath observance.
 - e. "In their concern for legal detail they had forgotten the mercy and grace shown by God to man when he made provision for the Sabbath. In

the name of piety they had become insensitive both to the purposes of God and to the sufferings of men.”¹

5. Jesus then showed them how we are to respond to the needs of the people.

A. Jesus told the man to stretch out his hand.

1. In that moment, the hand becomes miraculously healed.
2. In an instant, Jesus did what the others could not or would not do.
3. And Jesus did this not only for the lame man's benefit but to redefine the purpose and meaning of Sabbath.
4. It was lawful, and it was God's will, to do good on the Sabbath.

B. The healing should have resulted in praise and worship to God.

1. I'm sure the lame man was thankful.
2. And the disciples must have been amazed yet again.
3. But the Pharisees not only rejected the miracle, they rejected Jesus.
4. The condition of their heart led them to betray Jesus.
5. The book of James says that Faith without works is dead.
6. The reaction of the Pharisees showed their religion was dead and empty.
7. And if we aren't careful, we can wind up their too.
8. How can we avoid the trap of the Pharisees?

¹ William L. Lane, [The Gospel of Mark](#), The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1974), 123–124.

6. The Spiritual Discipline of ministering to others can be a powerful way that God Redefines the New Me.

A. #1 Ministry and service to others takes the spotlight off me.

1. My generation really struggles with this.

a. We live in a selfie world that tries to draw attention to ourselves.

b. The best way to combat this, is to be involved in ministry to others.

2. Being a Christian isn't all about me.

a. My ministry has to be more than myself and my wife going to heaven.

b. Ministry and service to others reminds me that Jesus' love didn't stop with me.

c. If all you ever do is pray for yourself or serve yourself, you will miss all the people God intended for you to impact with your life.

d. When we serve, we are given a reminder that the spotlight isn't on me but on Jesus!

B. #2. Ministry and Service to others produces a God honoring empathy.

1. Empathy is a sincere concern and love for the well-being of others.

a. Jesus had empathy and compassion for others.

b. But the Pharisees didn't.

c. That is why Jesus was "deeply distressed at their stubborn hearts".

2. God's people cannot fulfill their purpose without empathy for others.

- a. One of the reasons God has blessed us here is that you all genuinely love the people in our community.
- b. You give sacrificially to single-parents, school teachers, and you allow me freedom to minister to whomever comes across my path.
- c. Let me tell you about a young family we helped the other day.
 - 1. I was at the church when a young lady came in pulling her two little kids in a plastic wagon.
 - 2. It was cold and she had just left the hotel she had been staying in without any place to go.
 - 3. She was truly homeless, and my first response was, "I can't possibly help. I don't have the time or the resources."
 - 4. Yet, the Lord me to advocate for her with Ozark Action and the Texas County Food Pantry.
 - 5. 5 hours later, her and her family had a place to live, some food, and the potential for a better future.
 - 6. I want to thank you for allowing me the freedom to minister to people like this.
 - 7. And when I got done with my day, I was overwhelmed by how good it felt to really help someone.
 - 8. But you want to know something?
 - 9. I didn't really want to help her to start off with.

Which leads us to our 3rd and last way that ministry to others helps us:

C. **#3. Ministry and Service to others reveals our real motives.**

- 1. Sometimes we help people because it's our job.

- a. Sometimes we help people because they are family.
 - b. Sometimes we help people and then gripe about it later or slander them behind their back.
 - c. None of this is ministry.
2. Ministry and love can't be forced, paid for, or delegated.
- a. Ministry must come from a heart of love for Jesus.
 - b. And when we love Jesus, His love for people should pour out of us.
 - c. The Pharisees didn't care about the withered hand.
 - 1. They didn't care if he had to beg that morning for food.
 - 2. They didn't care why that man had come that day to synagogue.
 - 3. They were only concerned with other obeying their rules and they would punish anyone who broke them.
 - d. We must be careful to forbid God from doing good through us.
3. Think of the last act of ministry you did for someone else.
- a. What was your motive?
 - b. Did you help them to make you feel good?
 - c. Did you minister because you were obligated?
 - d. Or did you do it as an act of worship and with a heart of love?

Closing:

A. We live in a hurtful world.

- 1. Hurtful actions and words are all around us.

a. The last thing this world needs is a bunch of people, supposedly saved by God's love, spouting hate and refusing love to others.

b. This is not an issue of "tolerance", acceptance, or overlooking sin.

c. Please don't confuse what I am talking about.

2. What I am talking about is changing the status quo with the love of Jesus.

a. It is possible to love someone you don't agree with

b. And it is possible to love someone while not approving of their lifestyle.

B. This morning, the Gospel is challenging you to be like Jesus and not the Pharisees.

1. To choose to do good, and not harm.

2. To be willing to be mocked, rejected, and persecuted for ministering to those that the world has written off.

C. This week, who will you bring healing to?

1. Who will you serve and who will you minister to?

2. Be bold!

3. Bring the healing power of Jesus with you to your homes, workplace, and anywhere the Holy Spirit will may lead you to.