

Hated for Healing

Mark 3: 1-6

Our text today, once again finds Jesus in the synagogue on the Sabbath. While there He performed a great miracle. Unfortunately, this marvelous act of grace is overshadowed by the suspicion and animosity of the Pharisees. Our studies in chapter two revealed the struggles Jesus faced, being confronted by the Pharisees on several occasions. These struggles continue as we move into chapter three.

While these confrontations began early in Jesus' ministry, He would face them until He offered Himself upon the cross. The Son of God had come to earth as Redeemer and Savior of humanity, and yet He is continually forced to deal with the accusations and hindrances of those who opposed Him.

While it is never easy to face opposition, especially when you are doing what is right, there is comfort knowing Jesus endured the same difficulties. Hopefully our study today will offer insight to the struggles we face and renewed confidence in our Lord. I want to consider the [challenges](#) revealed as we think on: [Hated for Healing](#).

I. The Dilemma Jesus Faced (1-2) – As Jesus entered the synagogue, He immediately encountered a dilemma. Actually this dilemma was two-fold. He encountered:

A. A Physical Infirmary (1) – [And he entered again into the synagogue; and there was a man there which had a withered hand](#). Among those within the synagogue that day was a man who had a withered hand. According to the Greek text, this man's hand had been injured or become paralyzed, and he was unable to use it. No doubt this was of great concern for the man. Surely it hindered his ability to work and provide for himself and his family. Some traditions teach the man was a stone mason, one who used his hands for his livelihood. Clearly he stood in need of a touch from the Lord.

B. Much Spiritual Hypocrisy (2) – [And they watched him, whether he would heal him on the sabbath day; that they might accuse him](#). The Pharisees were already aware of the presence of the man with the withered hand. As soon as Jesus entered the synagogue, they fixed their eyes on Him, watching every move He made, wanting to see if Jesus would perhaps heal this man on the Sabbath. Their watchful eye was not out of concern or sympathy for the man, but seeking another occasion to accuse Jesus of breaking the Law by disregarding the Sabbath. The supposed "keepers of the spiritual gate" for men were not concerned with the needs of humanity, but

seeking to discredit the Son of God. Their hearts were not focused on worship that day, but intense scrutiny to accuse Jesus. (We must guard our hearts as we seek to worship and serve the Lord. If we aren't careful, we can allow hypocrisy and personal agendas to hinder our pursuit of Christ and labor for Him.)

II. The Determination Jesus Revealed (3-5) – Being well aware of the Pharisees and the hardness of their hearts, Jesus remained committed to fulfilling the Father's plan. He refused to allow the opposition of some hinder His ministry. Notice:

A. His Compassion (3) – *And he saith unto the man which had the withered hand, Stand forth.* Keep in mind, the Pharisees are watching Jesus' every move. They are waiting with bated breath to see what He will do with the man. No doubt they believed Jesus would not ignore the man and his great need, and they were right. Upon seeing the man, Jesus commanded him to step forth in front of the crowd. Without saying anything else, the man immediately knew Jesus had recognized his need, and it appeared He was going to provide something for him.

- Some may not have thought much of the need this man had, but I assure you it was very important to him. I am glad Jesus is aware of every need we have, no matter how big or small they may appear. He is interested in the seemingly insignificant burdens, and He has the ability to provide for us, regardless of the need.

B. His Discretion (4-5a) – *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.* ^[5a] *And when he had looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts.* Before saying anything else to the man with the withered hand, or addressing his need, Jesus dealt with the Pharisees. Not only did He immediately recognize the need of the man, Jesus was also aware of the hard hearts of the Pharisees. He confronted their hypocrisy and lack of concern for the man. Once again He was forced to address the same accusations He previously faced regarding the disciples picking grain on the Sabbath. Jesus knew it was the Sabbath, and He also knew that God had not forbidden Him of doing good or healing on the Sabbath. As was usually the case, the Pharisees refused to respond.

- Such attitudes and accusations created a righteous anger in the heart of Jesus, and grieved Him. Our Lord was troubled at the ridiculous attitude and self-righteousness of the Pharisees. We must realize that our Lord knows our hearts and our motives. Nothing is hidden from Him. I don't want to be guilty of intentionally grieving the heart of Jesus due to a hard heart or self-righteous attitude!

C. His Provision (5b) – ...he saith unto the man, **Stretch forth thine hand.** And he stretched it out: and his hand was restored whole as the other. Knowing the Pharisees opposed His every move, Jesus refused to be deterred. He determined to heal the man, even if the Pharisees opposed Him doing such an act on the Sabbath day. Jesus refused to allow men to intimidate or hinder His obedience to the Father. He refused to make the man suffer another day simply to please the attitude of the self-righteous. The man stood in need of healing, and Jesus provided.

- I am glad our Lord didn't listen to the voices of others when I stood in need of healing. I didn't have a withered hand, but I had a heart that was sinful and destitute. Some who were self-righteous wouldn't have looked my way, or even cared, but Jesus did. He spoke to my troubled heart and granted salvation as I came to Him by faith! The Gospel remains unpopular today, but Jesus continues to save, regardless of the attitude or opinions of men.

III. The Disdain Jesus Endured (6) – **And the Pharisees went forth, and straightway took counsel with the Herodians against him, how they might destroy him.** Here we discover the rebellious attitude of the Pharisees. When confronted with Truth, they chose to reject Truth and embrace the flesh. Notice:

A. Their Haste – The Pharisees wasted no time in forming a plan to oppose Jesus. They left the synagogue that day on a mission. They were determined to do everything they could to prevent Jesus' ministry from expanding. They stood against everything Jesus did or said.

- This same type of resentment and opposition remains today. The church is opposed by Satan and those who are deceived by him. If the Lord is at work in the life of an individual, or a local body of believers, it won't be long until the enemy mounts an attack to hinder their efforts.

B. Their Hypocrisy – The Pharisees immediately took counsel with the Herodians. This reveals the utter hypocrisy they possessed. Pharisees were regarded as those who knew the Word and lived in an effort to please God. The Herodians were not a spiritual group; they were political. The Herodians were loyal to King Herod, and sympathetic to the Romans. Some of the Herodians were also Sadducees. Not many days prior, the Pharisees had condemned Jesus for sharing a meal with publicans who were sympathetic to the Roman cause, and now they are conspiring with the Herodians. They agreed to work with, and support a group who had fundamental doctrinal differences, in an effort to destroy Jesus.

- Such hypocrisy remains prevalent today. Groups and factions with fundamental differences, who can agree on nothing else, will come together in an effort to hinder the church and silence the promotion of the Gospel. Sin has a way of creating strange alliances.

C. Their Hatred (6) – *And the Pharisees went forth, and straightway took counsel with the Herodians against him, how they might destroy him.* These men were not content with minimizing the ministry of Jesus or hindering His message – they were committed to destroying Jesus. They didn't just want Jesus barred from the synagogue, they wanted Him dead. This hatred would remain until the Sanhedrin had their scandalous mock trial, consenting to the death of Jesus, and delivering Him to Pilate to be crucified.

- I am saddened and amazed at such hatred. Clearly these men did not recognize Jesus as the Christ. They had no idea who they were dealing with. Mere mortals were conspiring in an effort to kill the Sovereign of the Ages. And yet again, their hatred further proves their hypocrisy. Men who were supposed to teach and promote the ways of God, conspired to kill an innocent man. They proved they would stop at nothing to advance and protect their cause. These were not servants of God; these were sinful men hidden in self-proclaimed righteousness.
- This hatred remains for Christ and His church. The world doesn't mind religion. They will tolerate religion in almost any form. They don't mind references to God or a higher power. They will tolerate such doctrine, even if they refuse to believe. However, the world draws the line with Christ. They are enraged when Christ is mentioned or proclaimed. Even in America, religion is fine as long as no one mentions Jesus Christ the Lord. This hatred will continue to increase as we get close to the return of Christ. We have nothing to fear in the Lord. Even if they take our lives, we will then enter the presence of our Lord. We must continue to proclaim the Gospel from a heart of love, even when opposed and hindered.

Conclusion: I have read this passage many times, and I always focused primarily on the healing of the withered hand. While that was a tremendous miracle, it is horribly overshadowed by the hatred of the Pharisees. Jesus was well aware of their hatred, and yet He remained steadfast in performing the work He came to accomplish. We must develop the same commitment. We cannot allow the hindrances of life to prevent our faithfulness to the work we have received.

If you are struggling with the resistance of others, seek Jesus for courage and strength. He will provide for every need we face, if we come to Him by faith. If you are unsaved, I urge you to respond to the call of salvation. Jesus is the only way of forgiveness, reconciliation, and salvation. Come to Him as He leads!