Bibles???

The Word of God is the Absolute Truth and the Final Authority

Let's pray…

[Mar 3:1-6 NKJV] 1 And He entered the synagogue again, and a man was there who had a withered hand. 2 So they watched Him closely, whether He would heal him on the Sabbath, so that they might accuse Him. 3 And He said to the man who had the withered hand, "Step forward." 4 Then He said to them, "Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do evil, to save life or to kill?" But they kept silent. 5 And when He had looked around at them with anger, being grieved by the hardness of their hearts, He said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." And he stretched [it] out, and his hand was restored as whole as the other. 6 Then the Pharisees went out and immediately plotted with the Herodians against Him, how they might destroy Him.

In our study last week, we ended with the study with the Pharisees raising questions why the disciples of Jesus were plucking grain on the Sabbath.

You see, the Pharisees considered it work – it was a violation of the Sabbath.

Not only was the plucking of grain considered work, the eating of grain was also considered a violation of the Sabbath because it would involve grinding the grain between ones teeth.

I had made an illustration last week regarding the Sabbath elevators that exist in Israel in some of the hotels and in other parts of the world.

I found a few pictures to show you (show pictures)

Listen to some of the other rules that they have to adhere to regarding the Sabbath.

- One cannot travel more than half a mile. That is considered work. This would require them to live close to the synagogue.
- No money can be exchanged on the Sabbath.
- One cannot boil water or turn on light switches during the Sabbath.

There is a rabbi that has a website where people can ask questions the Sabbath.

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Can I do this or can I do that –

Someone asked the rabbi what happens if my wife goes into labor on the Sabbath and the hospital is more than .5 mile from my house?

This was his response, because the wife is in danger – the husband can drive her to the hospital but then he can't drive back home because that would be a violation of the Sabbath since it is no longer a life threatening emergency. Another option is that they can call a taxi and have the taxi take them to the hospital on the condition that they already had negotiated and prepaid the taxi fare prior to the Sabbath. Remember, they can't exchange money on the Sabbath.

This was never the intention of the Sabbath…

So here at the beginning of chapter three, we have Jesus back in the synagogue, continuing to preach His message - that the Kingdom of God was near and for them to believe in the gospel. He wanted the people to draw close to God – to have a relationship with the Almighty.

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The Pharisees were in the synagogue as well – however, they were there to make sure that the burden upon the people of their religious rules was maintained – they were only interested in maintaining the status quo.

And here we have the classic example of what religion does – it hinders the work of God.

Always remember that religion is man's attempt to reach God and Jesus is God's attempt to reach man.

So the Pharisees were in the synagogue for one purpose and that was to see if Jesus was going to violate any of the laws – especially on the Sabbath.

They wanted to find a reason to accuse Jesus of something. They came with intent and that was to show Jesus as a violator of the law.

You see, they were fully aware that Jesus was capable of healing people. They were fully aware that Jesus had demonstrated His authority to cast out unclean spirits and heal the demon possessed.

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Instead of realizing that they were in the presence of the One who would do the work of God, they were looking for a technicality to accuse Him of.

Now, in the Gospel of Matthew (12), Matthew writes that the Pharisees initiated the conversation by asking Jesus whether or not it was lawful to heal on the Sabbath – they didn't waste any time in trying to entrap Jesus.

So Jesus answers their question with another question.

Look at verse 4 again,

[Mar 3:4 NKJV] 4 Then He said to them, "Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do evil, to save life or to kill?" But they kept silent.

Now, the reason that they kept silent was because Jesus emphasized the truth about the Sabbath: there is never a wrong day to do something truly good.

Turn with me to the gospel of Matthew 12,

[Mat 12:11-12 NKJV] 11 Then He said to them, "What man is there among you who has one sheep, and if it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will not lay hold of it and lift [it] out? 12 "Of how much more value then

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is a man than a sheep? Therefore it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath."

Jesus was demonstrating that not healing the man with the withered hand would be evil – especially if He has the power to heal him.

By Jesus healing the man on the Sabbath, He was doing a good thing.

Which is opposite of the evil that was going on in the hearts of the Pharisees.

Let's look at verse 5 again.

[Mar 3:5 NKJV] 5 And when He had looked around at them with anger, being grieved by the hardness of their hearts, He said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." And he stretched [it] out, and his hand was restored as whole as the other.

The word that is used here for hardness means callous.

The hearts of the Pharisees were so callous that they couldn't see the good that Jesus was doing.

And really, that is the effect that religion has in our lives. We get so fixated on following a list of do's and don'ts that we miss the goodness of God.

This man with the withered hand, the word that is used here for withered indicates that he most likely suffered an accident that caused his hand to be like that. It was paralyzed.

Church,

The only work that Jesus Christ did that day in the synagogue was to tell the man with the withered hand to stretch out his hand.

Jesus commanded the man with the withered hand to do something impossible – to move his paralyzed hand. And as the man put his effort, God did the rest.

The man could have argued with Jesus about his hand being paralyzed, he didn't. He simply obeyed.

When God speaks, power is released, In God's commandments; we find God's enablement. If we can grasp that simple concept, the Word of God will make a bigger impact in our lives.

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Some of us here today probably have some part of our life that is withered today.

Maybe we struggle with a sin or we suffer from anxiety or we experience doubt.

God tells us to stretch it out.

Our response shouldn't be arguing with God – "But God, you don't know what I am going through"

Our response should be like the man with the withered hand and simply obey.

As we are obedient to His command, God will meet us at that point and give us the power to carry it out.

Once we quit making excuses on why we can't, and instead say, "Lord if You say it, I will do it," He will meet us there.

It is our choice, we can stand forth, we can stretch our hand and by His Word be made whole.

That is what the man did and as a result, the man's hand was restored.

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[Mar 3:6 NKJV] 6 Then the Pharisees went out and immediately plotted with the Herodians against Him, how they might destroy Him.

This entire event has the Pharisees fixated on Jesus not keeping the Sabbath – yet here we see them plotting to have Jesus killed.

This is the definition of hypocrisy – in their pursuit of accusing Jesus of violating the law, they are in the process of violating the law themselves.

Their callous hearts drove them to go to their enemy, the Herodians in an effort that they might destroy Jesus.

[Mar 3:7-12 NKJV] 7 But Jesus withdrew with His disciples to the sea. And a great multitude from Galilee followed Him, and from Judea 8 and Jerusalem and Idumea and beyond the Jordan; and those from Tyre and Sidon, a great multitude, when they heard how many things He was doing, came to Him. 9 So He told His disciples that a small boat should be kept ready for Him because of the multitude, lest they should crush Him. 10 For He healed many, so that as many as had afflictions pressed about Him to touch Him. 11 And the unclean spirits, whenever they saw Him, fell down before Him and cried out, saying,

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"You are the Son of God." 12 But He sternly warned them that they should not make Him known.

Jesus leaves the synagogue and now we see people from all over the region coming to see what Jesus was doing.

The problem that we see here is that these people were following Jesus for the wrong reasons. They were following Jesus because of what He might give to them instead of following Jesus because of who He is.

This shallow mindset is what causes many believers to walk away.

The moment the miracles stop and the trials come – it becomes too hard, so they walk away.

Jesus explains this in the parable of the sower. Turn with me to Matt 13,

[Mat 13:3-6 NKJV] 3 Then He spoke many things to them in parables, saying: "Behold, a sower went out to sow. 4 "And as he sowed, some [seed] fell by the wayside; and the birds came and devoured them. 5 "Some fell on stony places, where they did not have much earth; and they immediately sprang up because they had no depth of earth. 6

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"But when the sun was up they were scorched, and because they had no root they withered away.

Jesus then gives us the meaning of the parable in verse 20,

20 But he who received the seed on stony places, this is he who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; 21 yet he has no root in himself, but endures only for a while. For when tribulation or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he stumbles.

Notice that we see an emotional response in verse 20, he receives it with joy…

Emotional relationships with God are not ones that are deeply rooted because they are driven by the way we feel.

A deeply rooted relationship with God is one where praises are offered to God no matter the circumstances.

So Jesus continued to heal the multitude of their infirmities and we see others here that were also healed from unclean spirits and once again,

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Jesus commands the unclean spirits not to reveal Him to the people – and we spoke about this a few weeks ago. It wasn't time yet.

Now, we are going to see Jesus pick out His 12 disciples,

[Mar 3:13-19 NKJV] 13 And He went up on the mountain and called to [Him] those He Himself wanted. And they came to Him. 14 Then He appointed twelve, that they might be with Him and that He might send them out to preach, 15 and to have power to heal sicknesses and to cast out demons: 16 Simon, to whom He gave the name Peter; 17 James the [son] of Zebedee and John the brother of James, to whom He gave the name Boanerges, that is, "Sons of Thunder"; 18 Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James the [son] of Alphaeus, Thaddaeus, Simon the Cananite; 19 and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed Him. And they went into a house.

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Luke records that Jesus spent the entire night in prayer before choosing His disciples.

They were chosen so that they He might train them so that they might preach.

These were the twelve that were supposed to carry the work after Jesus died on the cross.

Did Jesus seek wisdom in picking the best speaker or the disciple that was best equipped or the most loyal? No –

All of the disciples that Jesus chose had issues. Here are the most notable ones.

- Simon or Peter – Peter suffered from foot-in-mouth syndrome. Meaning that he had the habit of speaking without thinking. We will see Jesus rebuke Peter several times throughout the gospels
- James and John – These were the brothers that were also fishermen. These were given the name “Sons of Thunder” because they were quick to bring judgment upon those that would not accept them. They were bold enough to want to bring judgment upon the multitudes yet, they had their mommy ask Jesus if He would give them a special position in His kingdom.
- Matthew – the tax collector, we covered him last week. The other eleven disciples were going to have a tax collector – whom everyone

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hated as part of their group. An outcast was chosen to preach the gospel.

- Thomas – doubting Thomas – he is the one who needed visible proof that Jesus had risen.
- Simon the Canaanite, this doesn't have anything to do with where he was from. The word Canaanite in Hebrew is actually the word zealot – so Simon was interested in getting rid of the Roman occupation. We see this title in Acts 1:13 – that of a zealot.
- And of course, Judas Iscariot who is the one who will betray Jesus. Jesus knew all along that Judas was going to betray Him. Yet, He still picked Judas. Why did Jesus pick Judas??? We can ask that same question as to why He picked us??? Grace and free will.

[Mar 3:20-21 NKJV] 20 Then the multitude came together again, so that they could not so much as eat bread. 21 But when His own people heard [about this], they went out to lay hold of Him, for they said, "He is out of His mind."

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Here we have the crowds gathering again and because Jesus is so busy preaching and teaching and healing, it doesn't appear that He is even eating.

His own people indicated that this is Jesus own family that are determined to take Him back home because they think that He has gone insane. We will see His family later on at the end of the chapter.

[Mar 3:22-27 NKJV] 22 And the scribes who came down from Jerusalem said, "He has Beelzebub," and, "By the ruler of the demons He casts out demons." 23 So He called them to [Himself] and said to them in parables: "How can Satan cast out Satan? 24 "If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. 25 "And if a house is divided against itself, that house cannot stand. 26 "And if Satan has risen up against himself, and is divided, he cannot stand, but has an end. 27 "No one can enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man. And then he will plunder his house.

The scribes needed to come up with an explanation on how Jesus is able to command the demons – so they accuse Jesus of being Beelzebub or Satan.

Jesus replies with a parable – Satan isn't dumb enough to be dividing his own kingdom. It is not Satan who is casting out the demons but Jesus, the reason that Jesus can cast out the demons is that He is stronger than Satan and his demons.

That is what we read in verse 27.

Satan is no match for the power and authority of Jesus Christ – in the same way, apart from Jesus Christ, we are no match for Satan and his demons.

[Mar 3:28-30 NKJV] 28 "Assuredly, I say to you, all sins will be forgiven the sons of men, and whatever blasphemies they may utter; 29 "but he who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is subject to eternal condemnation"-- 30 because they said, "He has an unclean spirit."

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The scribes were committing the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit because they were attributing the work of the Holy Spirit through Jesus - to Satan.

The unforgivable sin is rejecting the work of the Holy Spirit.

In this incident in Jesus' life, the scribes were committing this sin by saying that Jesus was using the power of Satan to perform His miracles.

I believe that one of the most common ways that people commit this sin today is by rejecting Jesus as their Savior.

We must remember that we are saved by believing in Jesus.

How does that work?

- We are separated from God because of our sin.
- Jesus came to pay the price for our sin.
- When we choose to believe in Jesus and accept what He did by dying on the cross for us, we are forgiven for our sins.
- One of the chief works of the Holy Spirit is to draw people to Jesus.

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- When we choose to reject what the Spirit is saying about Jesus, we are rejecting the forgiveness that God offers us through the sacrifice of Jesus dying on the cross for us.

And that cannot be forgiven.

This is the one sin that will lead to eternal damnation – to say, “I don’t need Jesus”

The blasphemy of the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven – not because it is “too big” for God to forgive, but because it is an attitude of the heart that cares nothing for God’s forgiveness.

It never has forgiveness because it never wants forgiveness God’s way.

[Mar 3:31-35 NKJV] 31 Then His brothers and His mother came, and standing outside they sent to Him, calling Him. 32 And a multitude was sitting around Him; and they said to Him, "Look, Your mother and Your brothers are outside seeking You." 33 But He answered them, saying, "Who is My mother, or My brothers?" 34 And He looked around in a circle at those who sat about Him, and said, "Here are My

mother and My brothers! 35 "For whoever does the will of God is My brother and My sister and mother."

We had seen earlier in the chapter how there were family members that came to take Jesus back because they thought He had gone insane.

The gospels reveal to us that the brothers of Jesus did not believe Him until after His resurrection.

Jesus did have younger half-brothers and sisters. Joseph and Mary did have children after Jesus -

Turn with me to the gospel of John,

[Jhn 7:1-5 NKJV] 1 After these things Jesus walked in Galilee; for He did not want to walk in Judea, because the Jews sought to kill Him. 2 Now the Jews' Feast of Tabernacles was at hand. 3 His brothers therefore said to Him, "Depart from here and go into Judea, that Your disciples also may see the works that You are doing. 4 "For no one does anything in secret while he himself seeks to be known openly. If You do these things, show Yourself to the world." 5 For even His brothers did not believe in Him.

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Paul tells us that James, the brother of Jesus believed Jesus – after the resurrection.

Jesus provides us with the conditions of a true kinship or a true relationship.

You see, a true kinship goes beyond flesh and blood.

A true kinship demands being like-minded, a true kinship demands the pursuit of the same goals.

In order to be part of the family of God, we must adhere to the words that Jesus spoke in verse 35, "For whoever does the will of God is My brother and My sister and mother."

When we receive Jesus Christ as our personal Lord and Savior, we have a new “birth” – that is why it is described as being born-again. Upon this new birth, we become God’s children.

[Jhn 1:12 NKJV] 12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name:

This chapter begins with a group that was interested in religion and ends with group that is interested in a relationship.

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We must ask ourselves this morning, what group do we belong to –

Are we part of the group that rejects the work of the Holy Spirit or are we part of the group that has already become the family of Jesus Christ and is following after Him.

The choice is ours to make.

Let's pray…

Lord Jesus, I know that I have sinned against you. I know that I am not perfect and that I cannot please you through my own efforts. I know that I deserve to be judged according to my sins. And, I know that I have nothing to offer you.

Lord Jesus, I ask you to forgive me of my sins. Please cleanse me and make me right before you. I trust in what you have done on the cross. I do not rely on myself but only on you and I receive you as Lord of my life and as savior of my soul. Lord Jesus, save me. I look to you alone.

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