



Mark 3

An OCF Bible Study

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Why were the Pharisees watching Jesus closely (v. 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 His claims and trying to figure out if He’s the real deal, most of them looked for an opportunity to discredit Him. Furthermore, instead of simply leaving Jesus alone and dismissing Him as a lunatic, they took steps to kill Him.

How did the Pharisees respond to Jesus’ question, *Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do harm, to save life or to kill?* (v. 4)? Silence. They were stumped. They had no answer. Jesus’ question changed the perspective of Sabbath observance from that which was legal to that which was morally correct.

What distressed Jesus the most about these Pharisees (v. 5)? This is one of the few places where Jesus is described as having anger, and He is angry at the hardness of their hearts. Their misplaced concern was with the messenger. They had virtually no interest in the message.

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: *For you will not delight in sacrifice, or I would give it; you will not be pleased with a burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise (Psalm 51:16-17).* This was an Old Testament truism. They should have understood that, above all, God was after their hearts.

The Herodians 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 have a common enemy—Jesus.

Why did the crowds come to Jesus near the Sea of Galilee from distant places (v. 7)? 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 graciously bestowed on them with no thought of getting something in return.¹ **What does that reveal about His nature?** He is gracious and generous.

To what main purpose did Jesus call his apostles (v. 13)? 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 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 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.

Among the apostles, we know something about Peter, James, John, and Judas. But of the other eight, we pretty much only know their names. **What can we draw from that? What’s the message there?** The accomplishments

of the other eight are known only by God and the people whose lives they touched. They wrote no books of the Bible. They ministered in anonymity and obscurity. Only God was glorified by their lives. Like the inscription on the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier —“Known only to God”—their fame is reserved for heaven where their names are written on the twelve foundations of God’s heavenly city (Revelation 21:14).

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 Him. If his own family thought this about Him, it helps to understand the skepticism of others. We might have expected that Jesus’ family would have special privileges before Him but apparently they did not (v. 31-35).

Who is Beelzebub (v. 22)? Satan

What did this official delegation of the teachers of the law 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 being allied with Satan.

How did Jesus reply to the charge against Him (vv. 23-27)? With parables (Matthew 12:29; Luke 11:21-22). That is, He used comparisons. 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.² There would be a civil war going on. If Jesus was possessed by Satan, He should be on Satan’s side, allied with the other demons. They should 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 makes no sense. They are grasping at straws looking for ways to discredit Jesus.

Jesus ends this confrontation with an interesting statement. All sin is forgivable except one. **What is the unforgivable sin?** Blaspheming against the Holy Spirit. **What is meant by blaspheming against the Holy Spirit?** 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 God, convict and convince us of the truth and love of God. The unforgivable sin is to say “no” to the invitation of the Holy Spirit to walk with Jesus.

By simply looking at the context, it becomes apparent that blasphemy of the Holy Spirit equates 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.³

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 heart that cares nothing for God’s forgiveness that is available through Jesus.

Who is an example of someone who blasphemed the Holy Spirit?? Judas Iscariot. He walked with Jesus for three years and yet 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 making the point that natural family relationships are not as important as the spiritual relationships that come from being a member of Jesus’ spiritual family. This would have shocked the hearers because of the emphasis they placed on natural family relationships. 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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¹ Dr. Thomas L. Constable, *Notes on Mark, 2014 Edition* (published by Sonic Light, www.soniclight.com), pp. 54

² Ibid, pp. 60

³ Ibid, pp. 61A