

Theme: Legalism blinded the Pharisees to God's gracious work through Jesus, so instead of praising God, they decided Jesus must be put to death.

I. Intro - The Phantom Menace

- A. Jedi Knights seem so strong - then Darth Maul appears
- B. There is a battle but it is not resolved; a foreshadow
- C. We are in a series of 5 conflict stories early in Mark
- D. This conflict is growing in intensity, but will only culminate in Jerusalem at the end of the Gospel.

II. The Culmination of Early Controversies

- A. Mark has thematically pulled 5 controversies together
 - 1. Jesus forgives the sin of the paralytic (2:1-12)
 - 2. Jesus dines with tax collectors & 'sinners' (2:13-17)
 - 3. Jesus does not require His disciples to fast (2:18-22)
 - 4. Jesus allows His disciples to violate Sabbath traditions (2:23-28)
 - 5. Jesus heals on the Sabbath (3:1-6)
- B. These controversies all center on Jesus' identity & authority
 - 1. The Son of Man has authority to forgive sins (2:1-12)
 - 2. The Son of Man comes to call sinners (2:13-17)
 - 3. The Son of Man is the Bridegroom for the people of God and is the end of the ceremonial & sacrificial aspects of the law (2:18-22)
 - 4. The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath (2:23-28)

- 5. The Son of Man gives Sabbath healing & life (3:1-6)

C. These stories show growing disagreement & antagonism

- 1. They accuse Jesus of blasphemy in their hearts (2:1-12)
- 2. They question Jesus' disciples (2:13-17)
- 3. Others question Jesus about His disciples (2:18-22)
- 4. They question Jesus about His disciples breaking of Sabbath traditions (2:23-28)
- 5. They are looking to accuse Jesus, and plot to kill him (3:1-6)

III. Another Sabbath Controversy

- A. Jesus is back in the synagogue for Sabbath worship
Another time **he went into the synagogue**, and a man with a shriveled hand was there. ² ... **on the Sabbath**. Mark 3:1-2
 - 1. Once again we see Jesus in the synagogue for worship on the Sabbath - we should imitate our Master!
 - 2. Even though controversy has dogged Him, Jesus will join the people of God for worship.
 - 3. Even though the Pharisees will certainly be there, Jesus joins the people of God for worship!

- B. The Pharisees are looking for a reason to accuse Jesus
Another time he 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. Mark 3:1–2
1. Jesus has come to worship, they have come to accuse!
 2. This is the warped way of legalism and a religious spirit - it ceases true worship and rejoicing in God's grace, focusing its energy on finding reasons to judge others.
 3. Faithfulness to God's Word is critical, but it is a great danger that we move from this to a legalistic spirit that would rather criticize others than cherish Christ, that would rather accuse those with whom we disagree rather than adore God and His Gospel.
- C. The regulations for healing on the Sabbath
Another time he 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.** Mark 3:1–2
1. It is not surprising to find out that had rules about what healing was allowed on the Sabbath!
 2. You could only heal if something was life-threatening and could not wait until tomorrow
they may not straighten a deformed body or set a broken limb [on the Sabbath]" (m. Shab. 22:6)
 3. A shriveled hand is not life-threatening; it is a 'deformed body' and thus must NOT be healed on the Sabbath according to their rules.
 4. The stage is set - will Jesus follow their rules?

IV. The Son of Man and the Sabbath

- A. Jesus Brings the man to the front
Jesus said to the man with the shriveled hand, **"Stand up in front of everyone."** Mark 3:3
1. He could have healed without a word, or met the man after the meeting was over - many ways to avoid this confrontation!
 2. Jesus does not hide it; he highlights what is happening to provoke the confrontation!
 3. Jesus does this out of love and compassion - for the man and the Pharisees. Their laws have distorted the Sabbath, hidden God's heart of mercy behind clouds of legalism, and bind them and distort their humanity!
- B. Jesus' penetrating question
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. Mark 3:4
1. Jesus asks a question so they might see the truth and repent. He is still patient with them.
 2. Once again, Jesus goes back to the purpose of Sabbath!
 3. Is Sabbath for doing good or doing evil?
 4. Sabbath was given for man's good - not for people to create endless rules!
 5. Jesus is clear - it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath!
How much more valuable is a man than a sheep!
Therefore it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath. Matthew 12:12

6. They refuse to answer - they will not change
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.** Mark 3:4

C. Jesus' response and action

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. Mark 3:5

1. Jesus is angry with the legalistic men. They should know better, and He has patiently worked with them, but their hearts are stubborn. Furthermore, their legalism is making other people suffer - and that makes Jesus angry!
2. Jesus is distressed - their stubborn hearts are destroying them and others.
3. He does not want to see sin distort and destroy unlike it is these men.
4. Jesus tells the man to stretch forth his hand - and he is healed!
5. Even the way Jesus heals confronts the Pharisees with two options!
 - a. He did not speak healing or pronounce the man healed - so they can't really say He healed on the Sabbath
 - b. They know Jesus did heal the man - which proves He is the Lord of the Sabbath! (Note parallel with Mark 2:1-12)
 - c. Either way, they have no right to do anything other than give honor and praise to God!

D. The Pharisees' response and action

Then the Pharisees went out and began to plot with the Herodians how they might kill Jesus. Mark 3:6

1. They should have been filled with praise to God and joy for the man!
2. Instead, they are so furious they begin to plot (with those they normally do nothing with!) to kill Jesus!
3. Ironically, they are deciding on the Sabbath to kill because Jesus did good and saved and healed!
4. The die is now cast - the rest of the Gospel will unfold this inevitable conflict until they put Jesus to death - and God overrules and raises Him!

V. Applying the Word

A. Do I see the deadly disease of legalism?

1. The Pharisees' legalism put them in constant conflict with Jesus!
2. Legalism is a particular temptation for religious people - like us!
3. Legalism is a particular temptation when we are surrounded by a culture of lawlessness - we are tempted to overcompensate and stress law and not Gospel.
4. The deadly disease of legalism
 - a. Legalism blinds us to the grace of God at work around us
 - b. Legalism destroys true worship
 - c. Legalism drains away joy
5. Don't just judge the Pharisees - am I a legalist?

6. Understanding and detecting a legalistic spirit
 - a. Legalism loves rules more than relationship
 - b. Legalism loves old wineskins more than new wine
 - c. Legalism loves a graveyard more than a nursery
 - d. Legalism defines faith by “No” rather than “Yes”
 - e. Legalism believes sin is more powerful than holiness
 - f. Legalism believes law is more powerful than grace
7. Can I discern any legalism in my life right now? How can I address it before it metastasizes and becomes deadly in my relationship with God and others?

B. The Table of Grace

1. This Table offers grace to heal the Pharisee in me!
2. Jesus is still here to offer grace to each of us!
3. Legalism is a way I often try to hide from God and shield myself from a personal relationship with Him
4. But we do not need to hide from our gracious Father!
5. He is here calling us into His Presence to speak words of healing to us!
6. The Lord is calling us to come to His Table - don't shrink back; stretch out your hand and receive healing!

The Son of Man and the Sabbath (Part 2)

Mark 3:1-6
February 12, 2023
Communion
2 Peter 1:2

Teaching keywords: Sabbath and rest; legalism; mercy and mercy ministry; grace

May grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord. 2 Peter 1:2

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