

“The Kingdom of God & the Traditions of Men”
March 16, 2014

Mark 2:18-3:6

PROP- Jesus found some of His greatest opposition in the traditions of men—resisting His desire to bring His Kingdom to the earth. Watch as Jesus confronts this force—revealing what really matters to God.

1. **There is a big difference between the LETTER of the Law & the SPIRIT of the Law.**
 - **Jesus did not come to “abolish” the law, but to “fill it full of meaning & purpose” (paraphrase of *Matthew 5:17*)**
 - **LAW (His culture) and COMMANDMENTS (His invitation to join Him)**
 - **SHABBAT- an invitation to ENTER HIS REST; setting every 7th day aside to:**
 - **REMEMBER- (Past)- Creation & deliverance from Egypt (*His creative power & amazing faithfulness*)**
 - **OBSERVE- (Present-Future) (*What He is doing in us & where He is leading us*)**
 - **Mark 2:27- The Lord of Sabbath rest—made Sabbath to serve man’s deepest need (not for man to serve the Sabbath)**
 - **Sabbath laws important to Pharisees (*most devout sect of Jews*) & scribes (*copiers of & experts in the Law*)**
 - **Added 613 rules and regulations—not part of Mosaic Law**
 - **Harvest grain with a sickle on the Sabbath was forbidden (Deuteronomy 23); but plucking standing grain, left in the corners of the field, was allowed for travellers (Deut. 23:25)**
 - **Their scrutiny revealed their hearts:**
 - **Turning a gift into a chore...**
 - **...an invitation to rest into obligation to strive...**
 - **...opportunity to be with Him→ obsess for Him**
 - **What God had given as liberation from stressful living—they had turned into a joyless labor!**
 - **God’s purpose: “Enter the joy of your Master!”**
 - **“Repent”—a grace-filled gift, imparting the capacity to change**
 - **“New wine”—fresh intoxication from closer encounters w/ God**
 - **“New wineskins”—refreshing flexibility; capacity to adjust to increasing revelation of His heart**
 - **Moving us from being “set in our ways” to “walking in His”!**

2. There is a big difference between the SCRUTINY of man and the JUDGMENT of God.

- (3:2) “They watched Him closely”- (*The tense implies a continuous habit*)
- They were not awaiting a healing. They were watching for a Sabbath infraction. [Ironically, “healing” gives people “rest” from their afflictions (Job 34:28-29)!]
- Their interpretation of Exodus 31:14—a Sabbath violation was worthy of the death penalty. Would rather “shut God down” than “receive Him.”
- “The man with the withered hand” (background info—“The Search for the Historical Jesus” by Dr. Ron Charles, historian)
 - Herod the Great employed 217 Jewish master builders to enhance & enlarge the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem
 - Herod selected Jeshu ben See, the Jewish chief priest, to supervise the construction
 - Herod, fearing he would die before the project was finished, ordered the skilled stone workers to work 7 days a week, even on the Sabbath. Jeshu, the chief priest, gave his approval.
 - After Herod’s death, Archelaus (his successor) completed the project. He then employed the 217 Jewish craftsmen to complete the work on Herod’s Tower.
 - Enraged that his authority was overridden, Jeshu gathered the workers for a “celebration”—only to vent his rage on them. Under his orders, he had their right hands to be smashed, thus destroying their livelihood.
 - The Romans, outraged at Jeshu’s cruelty, threw him in prison.
 - Meanwhile, the Jewish leaders brought these 217 under their “judgment”, condemning them to:
 - Spend every Sabbath, all day, in their local synagogue
 - Wear sackcloth on their crushed right hands—as a warning to all who would violate Sabbath laws
 - Bow their heads, never speaking to others, nor respond when they were spoken to
 - Beg in the streets for food
- “Withered” (3:1)- *“lifeless, as the direct result of an injury”*
- (Luke 6:6- “right hand”) Symbol of power, strength, greeting, blessing, covenant making. “Left hand” was the “unclean hand” (bodily functions). Handicapped physically, emotionally & socially.
- “Stand up in front of everyone” (v. 3)—breaking shame; 30 years of bowing his head, avoiding eye contact
- (3:4)- the scrutiny of man makes people miserable; the judgments of the Lord bring life and fulfillment!

- “Anger” (3:5)- not uncontrolled rage...but focused passion
 - Opposite of “anger” is apathy, indifference
 - “Be angry and sin not” (Eph. 4:26) is a **command** with a caution
 - Anger becomes sinful when it is demeaning, unforgiving, vengeful—seeking to intimidate, control & win the argument
 - GODLY ANGER is COMPASSION & CONVICTION moving us to ACTION
- “Stretch out” (3:5)- Lit.- “Come completely out of this condition”
 - Strong message throughout Mark’s Gospel up to this point—
“What was done—can be undone!” “What came in—can leave!”

CONCLUSION

Jesus’ call to “Follow Me!” is more than walking single-file to the synagogue...it involves receiving His ministry & releasing it on earth!

IN HIS ANGER—He...

- Strongly opposes your enemy at every turn
- Strongly opposes indifference (especially religious passivity)
- Strongly opposes everything that has bowed you low & crushed your calling

HEAR HIS WORDS: “Come completely out of this condition!”