

STUDIES IN MARK--LESSON FIVE

The Healing of A Withered Hand

Mark 3:1-6; Matthew 12:9-12; Luke 6:6-11

INTRODUCTION -

I. LESSON LINKS AND CONTEXT.

- A. This miracle of healing occurred on a sabbath day, after a journey (Matt. 12:9), perhaps returning to Galilee from the Passover, although we are not sure of the time or the place. Jesus may have merely made a short trip into Galilee and then returned to Capernaum.
- B. It was in a synagogue, likely in Capernaum (Mark 2 & 3).
- C. This is not the Lord's first healing on the sabbath (Mark 1:21-28; Luke 4:31-37). And in the discourse immediately preceding this, he delivers his fullest and weightiest treatment of the issue (Mark 2:23-27; Matthew 12:1-8). This miracle may not have occurred immediately after the one just related (John 5:1-18). It is not essential to know the exact time order.

II. NATURE AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE LESSON.

- A. The Lord's disciples had offended the Pharisees by plucking and eating grain as they walked through the grainfields on the sabbath. They either did not hear or would not receive the Lord's reply to their criticism on that occasion. They were now watching "that they might accuse him" (3:2).
- B. This lesson is a study in religious inconsistency: its causes, nature, effects and importance.
- C. It is also a study of Christ and the law of Moses.
 1. He answered his critics.
 2. He respected the law and then abolished it by fulfilling it.
 3. He was the Lord of the sabbath.
- D. It is a lesson on the importance of mercy in meeting human need. "The claims of mercy are paramount. The end is not to be sacrificed to the means"--John J. McClaren, quoted by Lockyer, All the Miracles, p. 176.

DISCUSSION -

I. A MAN WITH A WITHERED HAND MEETS JESUS

(Mark 3:1,2).

- A. A man in need: "And he entered again into the synagogue; and there

healed.

- a. With the command went power for healing: Fine cooperation with the Healer.
- b. Christ has power to heal our sins and restore us to God's favor (2 Cor. 5:17-21).
4. Christ blesses the obedient even yet (Romans 1:16; James 1:21).
 - a. In baptism (Acts 2:37-41; Romans 6:3-5; Galatians 3:26,27).
 - b. In worship (John 4:24; Acts 2:42).
 - c. In bountiful, cheerful giving (Acts 20:35; 2 Cor. 9:6-11).
 - d. In devout efforts to live for Christ (Romans 5:10; 2 Corinthians 5:15; Titus 2:11-14).

III. THE MADNESS OF THE CRITICS (Mark 3:6; cf. Luke 6:11).

- A. Filled with madness: "But they were filled with madness (foolishness), and communed one with another what they might do with Jesus" (Luke 6:11). Defeated and self-embarrassed, they were filled with fury.
- B. "And the Pharisees went out, and straightway with Herodians took counsel against him, how they might destroy him" (Mark 3:6).
 1. They had been publicly exposed to shame in their effort to expose and destroy Jesus.
 2. This is an example of malicious enemies of the truth forgetting their own differences to band together to oppose Jesus. What really moved them was envious hatred--concern for the law was a pretext.
 3. This is the first mention by Matthew, Mark and Luke of the counsel to do away with Jesus by violence.

CONCLUSION -

- I. Those who do good may still expect opposition from enemies of the truth (John 15:19; 1 Peter 3:13,14).
- II. For our withered powers to be restored, we must cooperate with the Healer.
- III. When we have the opportunity to do good and do it not, we sin (James 4:17).
- IV. Many today are suffering from "withered hands" spiritually. What at is our real attitude toward them, and toward the followers of Christ who help them?

- Charles Crouch

was a man there who had his hand withered" (1).

1. Luke 6:6 says it was his right hand, a most important part of his body.
 2. It was not just paralyzed, but "withered;" shriveled up or wasted away, a hindrance, not a help, in its abnormal state.
- B. The watchers: "And they watched him, whether he would heal him on the sabbath day; that they might accuse him" (2).
1. Knowing his readiness to relieve the distressed, and his lack of strict observance of their traditions which they had added to God's law, they, "the scribes and Pharisees" (Luke 6:7), determined to see what he would do on that day.
 2. Their motive was to find grounds whereby they could "accuse him" to the officers or judges of the synagogue.
- C. Their question: "And they asked him, saying, 'is it lawful to heal on the sabbath day'" (Matt. 12:10)?
1. Luke says, "But he knew their thoughts." They may have watched a while, then, Jesus having taken no action, they asked the question.
 2. They apparently did not care about the lame man. They were more concerned with establishing and defending a point of law (tradition) than in showing mercy to an afflicted man (Matthew 23:23).

II. THE HEALER AT WORK - (Mark 3:3-5).

- A. His command: "And he saith unto the man that had the withered hand, Stand forth" (3).
1. "Rise up and stand forth in the midst" (Luke 6:8). By this he gained attention.
 2. What Jesus did was done openly so there was no chance to accuse him of fraud (cf. John 18:20; Acts 10:37,38; 26:26).
- B. His question: "And he saith unto them, Is it lawful on the sabbath to do good, or to do harm? to save a life or to kill" (4a)?
1. God's law, which was for man's good, did not forbid healing on the sabbath.
 2. According to Matthew 12:11, he first posed the example of a sheep falling into a pit on the sabbath, concluding that the owner would draw it out, and concluded that a man is of "more value than a sheep."
 3. His question then exposed the inconsistent reasoning on which the rules of the Pharisees concerning the sabbath was based: Wholly a matter of doing or not doing. (See McGarvey, Commentary on Matthew & Mark, p. 278).
 4. Jesus raised the principle of doing good, and he clearly showed that

failure to do good, when human suffering is involved and when opportunity and ability afford, is sinful (cf. James 4:17).

C. "But they held their peace" (4b).

1. They who would lead an animal out to water on the sabbath (Luke 13:10-16) could make no reply without condemning themselves.
 2. While pretending to uphold the law (of the sabbath), they were actually guilty of breaking the two greatest commands (Matt. 22:36-40).
 3. "Afraid to say that Jesus was wrong and stubbornly unwilling to admit that he was right"- McGarvey. 4. They had raised the issue, but now they were significantly silent.
- D. The Lord's anger and grief: "And when he had looked round about on them with anger, being grieved at the hardening of their heart..." (5a).
1. Anger on the part of men, is a dangerous passion, apt to become sinful. Yet there is such a thing as loving righteousness and hating iniquity, without sin (Hebrews 1:9; Eph. 4:26; Romans 12:9).
 2. Righteous anger rises out of love of God, truth and man (2 Thes. 2:10). Moses departed from Pharaoh in *hot anger*, to appear before his face no more (Exodus 11:8; 10:29). Yet he appeared with Jesus in glory (Matt. 17:1-5).

3. "The indignant Christ" showed righteous indignation at sacrilege (John 2:14-16); at injustice (Luke 20:47); at self-righteousness (Luke 18:9-14); at sham, hypocrisy and empty formalism (Matt. 12:1-8; 22:3-14; 23:13-33); at unbelief (Luke 10:13-15; John 8:42-47); at lack of love (Matt. 7:1-5; 6:7-13; John 8:3-11)--Monthly, 7-71.

4. Jesus did not lose his temper, but sanely controlled himself and his temper.

5. The Lord was "grieved" at "the hardening of their heart."

- a. Do such hearts, out of which the last drop of mercy has been drained by false ideas or selfishness, grieve you?
 - b. Or, are you grieved more by lost material values such as a sheep in a pit?
- E. The withered hand healed: "He saith unto the man, Stretch forth thy hand. And he stretched it forth; and his hand was restored" (5b).
1. Jesus healed him openly, in the presence of his critics.
 2. The withered hand is typical of sin's enfeebling power.
 - a. It separates man from God (Isa. 59:1,2).
 - b. It defiles, enslaves, paralyzes, scars and damns, thus making many useless to family and to the church.
 3. The man, by obedient faith in the Lord's command, was instantly