**The Enemies of Jesus**

**by Pastor Fee Soliven**

**Mark 3:1-12**

**Wednesday Evening**

**September 12, 2018**

**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.**

Saints, as was his regular custom (noted by the word again), Jesus went into the synagogue on the Sabbath (see 3:2). As Jesus entered, he noticed a man with a deformed hand. Luke adds that it was the man’s right hand (Luke 6:6).

**Luke 6:6**

“Now it happened on another Sabbath, also, that He entered the synagogue and taught. And a man was there whose right hand was withered.”

**Philippians 3:17-20**

17 Brethren, join in following my example, and note those who so walk, as you have us for a pattern. 18 For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: 19 whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame--who set their mind on earthly things.

**Romans 5:10-11**

10 For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. 11 And not only that, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.

Saints, Jesus’ main enemies were the Pharisees. They were spying on Jesus with the intention of finding some fault in his actions so that they could condemn him. Jesus’ reputation for healing preceded him, but would he dare heal on the Sabbath with the Pharisees watching?

God’s law prohibited work on the seventh day of the week; thus, the religious leaders allowed no healing to be done on the Sabbath unless the person’s life was in danger.

**Exodus 31:14**

14 You shall keep the Sabbath, therefore, for it is holy to you. Everyone who profanes it shall surely be put to death; for whoever does any work on it, that person shall be cut off from among his peoples.

Healing, they argued, was practicing medicine, and a person could not practice his or her profession on the Sabbath.

**3 And He said to the man who had the withered hand, "Step forward."**

Saints, Jesus didn’t avoid a confrontation with his adversaries; he needed to make the important point that he would not be bound by the Pharisees’ burdensome laws and that, as God, he would perform an act of kindness and healing, even on the Sabbath.

So Jesus commanded the man with the deformed hand to come to the center of the crowd so everyone could see him and his deformity. The Pharisees would not miss anything of what Jesus was about to do.

**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.**

Saints, to Jesus it didn’t matter that this man’s life was not threatened by the condition of his hand; it didn’t matter that he could have waited until the next day to perform this healing legally.

If Jesus had waited until another day, he would have been submitting to the Pharisees’ authority, showing that their petty rules were equal to God’s law. God is a God of people, not of rules.So Jesus asked a rhetorical question:

“Is it legal to do good deeds on the Sabbath, or is it a day for doing harm?”

But the Pharisees wouldn’t answer him, for to answer would have left them without an accusation to pin on Jesus. Their own laws allowed people to do good and to save life on the Sabbath—the farmer who could rescue his only sheep from a pit on the Sabbath knew that.

**Matthew 12:10-14**

10 And behold, there was a man who had a withered hand. And they asked Him, saying, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?"--that they might accuse Him. 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 is a man than a sheep? Therefore it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath." 13 Then He said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." And he stretched it out, and it was restored as whole as the other. 14 Then the Pharisees went out and plotted against Him, how they might destroy Him.

Saints, how absurd, then, to refuse to allow a person to do good to another person on the Sabbath.

**Exodus 31:14**

“You shall keep the Sabbath, therefore, for it is holy to you. Everyone who profanes it shall surely be put to death; for whoever does any work on it, that person shall be cut off from among his people.”

**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.**

Saints, the religious leaders, the guardians of the Jewish faith, the keepers of the law, the teachers of the people—these men with their hard hearts were so spiritually and morally blind and hardened that they could not see who Jesus really was, and they could not even acknowledge a man’s need and rejoice in his healing. No wonder Jesus was angry and disturbed.

**2 Corinthians 4:3-4**

3 But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, 4 whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them.

But the Pharisees’ stubbornness didn’t matter. Jesus planned to make his point and to heal this man. So Jesus told the man to reach out his hand. In response to Jesus’ command and with all eyes focused on him, the man stretched his hand out in front of him. The moment he did so, it became normal again. Jesus gave this man his life back. He could work again, and he no longer had to face the embarrassment of his deformity.

**6 Then the Pharisees went out and immediately plotted with the Herodians against Him, how they might destroy Him.**

Saints, no particular action of Jesus is recorded; he told the man to move and with that movement, healing arrived. Jesus did nothing that could be called “work,” but the Pharisees would not be swayed from their purpose.

Jesus had embarrassed them. In their fury, the only option they saw was to kill him. Ironically, the Pharisees had accused Jesus of breaking their law about healing on the Sabbath, yet they themselves were discussing plans for killing Jesus. Their hatred, combined with their zeal for the law, drove them to plot murder—an act that was clearly against the law.

1. You shall have no other gods before Me.
2. You shall make no idols.
3. You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain.
4. Keep the Sabbath day holy.
5. Honor your father and your mother.
6. **You shall not murder.**
7. You shall not commit adultery.
8. You shall not steal.
9. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

10. You shall not covet.

Saints, in an unlikely alliance, the Pharisees plotted with the supporters of Herod (or Herodians), a Jewish political party that hoped to restore Herod the Great’s line to the throne.

Their support of Rome’s leadership over Palestine brought them into direct conflict with the Jewish religious leaders. These two groups had little in common—until Jesus posed a threat to them both. Jesus threatened the Pharisees’ authority over the people;

Jesus threatened the Herodians’ political ambitions because his talk of a “kingdom” caused them to think that this popular and powerful man was planning to set himself up as a ruler. This would jeopardize their authority derived from Herod’s power.

To get rid of Jesus, the Pharisees needed the support of people with some influence with the secular leaders. Thus the Pharisees and Herodians, normally enemies, joined forces to discuss how to get rid of Jesus.

**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.**

Saints, up to this point, Jesus had been aggressively confronting the Pharisees’ hypocrisy. Then he decided to withdraw from the synagogue before a major confrontation developed, because it was not time for him to die. Jesus had many lessons still to teach his disciples and the people. So, he went out to the lake (that is, to the Sea of Galilee), followed by a huge crowd.

The actual twelve disciples had not yet been called, but those closest to Jesus were marked as following him. They had separated themselves from the religious establishment and were sharing in the glow of Jesus’ popularity.

While Jesus was drawing fire from the religious leaders, he was gaining great popularity among the people—they came literally from all directions. News of Jesus had spread far beyond Galilee.

People came from Judea (the southernmost region of Israel), Jerusalem (the key city of Israel, in Judea), Idumea (the region south of Judea), east of the Jordan River (which probably refers to Perea and Decapolis), and Tyre and Sidon (pagan cities to the far north on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea).

The people came for various reasons with various motives. Some were simply curious, some sought healing, some wanted evidence to use against him, and others truly wanted to know if Jesus was the Messiah. Most of them could only dimly guess at the real meaning of what was happening among them.

**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.**

Saints, only Mark recorded this detail, suggesting that this was an eyewitness report from one of the disciples whom Jesus asked (possibly Peter). This boat was about the size of a rowboat. As Jesus walked along the shoreline with the crowds following, the little boat was rowed along close to the shore so it would always be ready in case the people crowded Jesus right into the water.

Jesus’ reputation for healing had spread everywhere, and many sick people came from great distances just to touch Jesus and be healed. Picture people in the throng crowding around and shoving each other out of the way, reaching out at Jesus. They were so desperate to be healed that such rudeness made no difference.

**John 21:24-25**

24 This is the disciple who testifies of these things, and wrote these things; and we know that his testimony is true. 25 And there are also many other things that Jesus did, which if they were written one by one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that would be written. Amen.

**11 And the unclean spirits, whenever they saw Him, fell down before Him and cried out, saying, "You are the Son of God." 12 But He sternly warned them that they should not make Him known.**

Saints, Mark described a second encounter between Jesus and evil spirits. The demons recognized who Jesus was, and whenever a possessed person saw Jesus, he or she would fall down in front of him, not in worship, but shrieking to everyone,

**“You are the Son of God!”**

The demons recognized Jesus and feared him (see James 2:19).

**James 2:19**

“You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe--and tremble”

Saints, they knew his power, and they were aware that he had the authority to cast them out of their lodgings (inside a person) and even to send them away permanently. Jesus didn’t want or need the demons to endorse him. His true identity would be revealed at the right time, at his resurrection.

Thus, he spoke sternly to the demons and warned them not to say who he was. Ironically, the demons recognized who Jesus was; the people didn’t. Jesus warned the evil (unclean) spirits not to reveal his identity because he did not want them to reinforce a popular misconception.

The huge crowds were looking for a political and military leader who would free them from Rome’s control, and they thought that the Messiah predicted by the Old Testament prophets would be this kind of man. Jesus wanted to teach the people about the kind of Messiah he really was, because he was far different from what they expected.

Christ’s Kingdom is spiritual. It begins, not with the overthrow of governments, but with the overthrow of sin in people’s hearts.

**Let’s Pray**

**Benediction**

**"May The LORD bless you and keep you, May The LORD make His face shine upon you, May The LORD be gracious to you, May The LORD lift up His countenance upon you, and give you His (Shalom) peace.” In Jesus Name!**