

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

Mark: Jesus, The Perfect Servant Of God

Part II: The Perfect Service Of Jesus, The Perfect Servant Of God, Mark 1:1-10:52

J. Christ's Work To Do Good When Doing Nothing Is An Evil

(Mark 3:1-6)

I. Introduction

- A. We learned in our first lesson in this series that Mark's Gospel presents the perfect service of God's Perfect Servant, Jesus, with Mark's focus of having rebounded unto upright Christian service from personal failure.
- B. At times, such failure involves doing nothing productive due to negative circumstances when doing nothing is an evil, but Mark 3:1-6 reports on Jesus' work to do good in such times, a great lesson for us (as follows):

II. Christ's Work To Do Good When Doing Nothing Is An Evil, Mark 3:1-6.

- A. John Mark's decision to abandon the mission field in Acts 13:13 came under some negative reason(s), but his return to his mother's Jerusalem home (Acts 13:13b with 12:12) left him doing no such outreach work to where lost men in the Roman Province of Asia were less helped or disciplined in his absence.
- B. Writing of God's Perfect Servant, Jesus, in his rebound to productive Christian service (Col. 4:10 with 2 Tim. 4:11), Mark wrote how Jesus did good instead of doing nothing when doing nothing was an evil, Mark 3:1-5:
 - 1. Entering again into the synagogue at Capernaum (Mark 3:1a; 2:1), Jesus was confronted by the presence of a man with a withered hand, a man who obviously had been planted there by Jesus' foes, Mark 3:1b.
 - 2. This was an effort by Christ's religious enemies to entrap Him on the Sabbath by one of their traditions:
 - a. Though the Law did not forbid one to heal on the Sabbath Day, "(r)abbinic tradition" forbade it "unless the person were on the verge of death," Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, fn. to Mark 3:2.
 - b. Mark 3:2 reports how Jesus' foes were watching Him to see if He would heal the man on the Sabbath in violation of their tradition since a withered hand was not a life-threatening condition, all to find cause to indict Him for the capital crime of violating the Sabbath! (Ex. 31:14-17, Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 115)
 - 3. The lack of morality in this tradition is evident: nothing in the Mosaic Law distinguished the moral uprightness of healing a man with a life-threatening condition versus the moral depravity of healing a man with a less than life-threatening condition: either deed would be a good deed! What makes this restriction even more appalling is that Rabbinic tradition let a man work hard to pull a sheep out of a ditch on the Sabbath (Matthew 12:11) while restricting one from healing another with regular maladies!
 - 4. Since doing nothing here would itself be an evil, Jesus had the man with the withered hand stand up so the entire group present could behold his condition and Jesus' response to it of healing the man, Mark 3:3.
 - 5. Jesus then asked the people, "Is it lawful to do good on the Sabbath days, or to do evil? to save life, or to kill?" (Mark 3:4a,b) This was a startling statement, for it revealed that *not* healing the man with the withered hand when one **could** do so was **NOT** a **GOOD** deed as **implied by Rabbinic tradition, but** even an **EVIL one**, for one with the ability to heal was **withholding good** from one who **needed help!** (Ibid.) Indeed, the **purpose** of the Sabbath was to refresh man, not to leave him oppressed, Mark 2:27.
 - 6. Jesus then looked around on the group, shifting His gaze from face to face in expectation of an answer, but His enemies, realizing by His remark that they had no moral defense for their extrabiblical tradition, but yet committed to heeding it, refused to debate or admit they were wrong, and remained silent, Mark 3:4c.
 - 7. This "obstinate insensitivity," or hardness of heart, angered the Lord Jesus, Mark 3:5a; Ibid.
 - 8. Thus, Jesus told the man to do what no one in the synagogue could charge was a sin even according to their errant tradition: Jesus simply told the man to stretch forth his withered hand, and when he did so, the hand was miraculously restored like his other hand, an evident miracle by God, Mark 3:5b; Ibid.
- C. Upset at Jesus' public rebuke of the amorality of their tradition in a synagogue on the Sabbath, the Pharisees, conservatives of the day, at once went out and took counsel with their arch foes, the Herodians who supported Herod Antipas, "in an unprecedented common effort to destroy Jesus (cf. 15:31-32)," Mark 3:6; Ibid.

Lesson: *As doing nothing to heal a man with a withered hand was evil since He could heal him, and because the Sabbath was meant for the refreshment of man, Jesus violated an extrabiblical Rabbinic tradition to heal a man with a withered hand on the Sabbath, graciously doing so in a way that did not violate the tradition by His action.*

Application: *(1) May we trust in Christ as God's Perfect Servant for salvation, Mark 1:1, 15. (2) May we like Jesus do good instead of nothing when doing nothing is morally evil regardless if tradition pressures us to do nothing.*