

Check Your Heart-3 1-12.docx

## **Mark 3:1-12**

The earthly ministry of the Lord Jesus was surrounded by disagreement.

Controversy swirled around everything the Lord Jesus did. It seems that everything Jesus did made the religious Jews angry.

Every word and every work was placed under the microscope of their judgmental attitude.

Their hatred of Jesus eventually resulted in His death on the cross.

Just as a reminder, they are mad because He forgave a man's sins, **2:6-7**; ate a meal with sinners, **2:16**; refused to honor their rituals, **2:18**; and because He allowed His disciples to pick and eat grain on the Sabbath, **2:24**.

Jesus refused to play ball by their rules and they despised Him for it.

The passage once again finds Jesus in the synagogue on the Sabbath.

This visit to the synagogue probably occurred on the same day that Jesus and His men passed through the wheat fields and had their confrontation with the Jews, **2:23-28**.

This passage is a continuation of the same controversy that we looked at last time.

The Pharisees have followed Jesus to the synagogue.

They are looking for some way to trap Him, discredit Him and destroy His ministry.

In fact, as we will see here, they will stop at nothing to see that happen.

As we study this text, we will see three different types of hearts on display.

As we move through these verses today, I want you to examine your own heart.

As I share the hearts revealed in this text, I want you to answer this question: **Check Your Heart?**

It may be that the Lord will allow you to see your own heart today.

If He does, and there are problems, you can come to Him and He will fix whatever may be wrong in your life.

Let's notice the hearts that are on display in these verses.

Let's see if we can encounter ourselves in these verses.

More importantly, let's see if we can encounter Jesus.

I want to preach on the subject **Check Your Heart?**

## **To Know Him and Make Him Known**

### **1) THE HARD HEART OF THE PHARISEES**

- a) v. 1-2 **Their Plan** – We are told that **“there was a man there which had a withered hand”**.
  - i) The word **“withered”** means it was **“paralyzed”**.
  - ii) Ancient Christian tradition tells us that this man was a stonemason who had injured his hand on the job in an accident.
  - iii) As the story goes, he heard that Jesus was in town and he came to seek healing from the Lord.
  - iv) Others speculate that this fellow is actually a plant.
  - v) Some people believe that this man was placed in the congregation by the Pharisees in an effort to trap Jesus.
  - vi) I feel that this view is in line with the flow of the text.
  - vii) The most likely scenario is that they found this man and said something like this, **“So, we hear you have injured your hand. Boy that sure looks painful! Well, come with us to the synagogue. That fellow Jesus will be there today. He can heal you know! If you go with us, there is a good chance that He will heal your hand. Wouldn't you like that? Come on, go with us!”**
  - viii) Either they had planted this man, or they had spotted him in the crowd.
  - ix) Either way they are **“watching”** Jesus to see what He will do.
  - x) They are still smarting from their encounter with the Lord in the wheat field.
  - xi) They want to find evidence against Him that He is a Law breaker.
  - xii) They are looking for any excuse to put an end to His ministry and His life.
- b) v. 5 **Their Problem** – Jesus knows what they are doing, so He calls for the injured man to **“stand forth”**.
  - i) Then, Jesus asks a very simple question: **“Is it lawful to do good on the Sabbath days, or to do evil? To save life or to kill?”**
  - ii) They have no answer for Jesus because any answer they might have given would have contradicted their own teachings.
  - iii) The problem with these men and with people like them today is that they could have cared less about the needs of a poor, injured man.
  - iv) All they cared about was their rules and their ways.
  - v) Jesus knows their problem.
  - vi) Mark tells us that they suffered from **“hardness of heart”**.
  - vii) These men had been confronted with truth many times and they continually rejected that truth.
  - viii) As a result, their hearts became hard.
  - ix) The word for **“hardness”** is the word **“porosis”**.
  - x) It was the name of a type of marble used in the ancient world.
  - xi) Jesus knew that their hearts were as hard and as unyielding as a piece of marble.

- xii) The word eventually came to be used of something “**covered with a callus**”.
- xiii) The continual rubbing of the skin will produce calluses.
- xiv) In the same way, continued rejection of the truth will cause the heart to become spiritually callused.
- xv) The callused heart will get to the place where it will not hear the voice of the Lord.
- xvi) The callused heart will not respond to the call of the Lord.
- c) v. 6 **Their Plot** – When Jesus healed this man, they were outraged.
  - i) They considered this healing to be work.
  - ii) In reality, all the man did was stretch out his hand.
  - iii) There was no work involved and there was no violation of the Mosaic Law.
  - iv) But, truth doesn’t matter to people like the Pharisees.
  - v) All that mattered to them was their narrow interpretation of things.
  - vi) They left that meeting and immediately sought out the Herodians.
  - vii) The Herodians were secular Jews who supported the government of Herod the king.
  - viii) They also believed, like the Sadducees, that they Jews had a duty to submit to Roman rule.
  - ix) These people were secularists who had little concern for religious matters.
  - x) They liked the changes the Romans had brought about in Israel.
  - xi) Like the Pharisees, they didn’t like Jesus because they saw Him as a threat to the peace and stability of the nation.
  - xii) The Pharisees and the Herodians were bitter enemies.
  - xiii) They were on the opposite sides of every issue.
  - xiv) But, they found common ground in their hatred of the Lord Jesus.
  - xv) So, they formed a plot to find a way to “**destroy**” Him.
  - xvi) The word “**destroy**” means “**to utterly do away with a person or thing.**”
  - xvii) They wanted Jesus dead and they set out to accomplish that end.
  - xviii) There is a bit of irony in this story, as well as a lot of hypocrisy.
  - xix) These men are upset because Jesus dared to heal a man on the Sabbath, but they have no problem plotting murder on that day.
  - xx) That is evidence of the hardness of their hearts.
  - xxi) The callus around their hearts had caused them to become calloused toward God and men. That is a danger place to be!
- d) **Note:** Before we leave this matter of a hard heart behind, some very serious thoughts need to be considered.
  - i) If you have never been saved, there is a danger that your heart might become hardened against the Gospel,
  - ii) **2 Tim. 4:1-3—“ I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom: preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires,**
  - iii) Every time you say “**No!**” to God your heart becomes more callused.
  - iv) After a while, the Gospel message will cease to speak to your heart.
  - v) If the Lord is calling you to come to Jesus, come while you can still hear His voice.
  - vi) Come while your heart is tender.

- vii) Come while you still can,
- viii) **Isa. 55:6—**” Seek the LORD while He may be found; Call upon Him while He is near.
- ix) **2 Cor. 6:2—**” for He says, “AT THE ACCEPTABLE TIME I LISTENED TO YOU, AND ON THE DAY OF SALVATION I HELPED YOU.” Behold, now is “THE ACCEPTABLE TIME,” behold, now is “THE DAY OF SALVATION”—
- x) We teach our children to say “No!” to drugs, alcohol, premarital sex, and other sinful activities.
- xi) That is a good practice.
- xii) The more you say “No!” to something, the easier it is to keep on saying “No!” to it.
- xiii) But, when we begin to say no to God, we are headed for trouble!
- xiv) Saying “No!” to evil things breeds resistance to evil.
- xv) Saying “No!” to spiritual things breeds resistance to spiritual things.
- xvi) It becomes easier and easier to ignore the voice of the Lord as He calls you to come to Him.
- xvii) If you are saved your heart can become hard too.
- xviii) You can get to the place where you refuse to listen to the voice of the Spirit.
- xix) This is called “**grieving the Holy Spirit**”, **Eph. 4:30**.
- xx) When you refuse to listen to the Lord, you will lose your sensitivity to Him and to His ways.
- xxi) We ought to strive to maintain a tender heart toward the Lord.
- xxii) The way to do that is to live close and clean.
- xxiii) When He speaks, either in His Word or in His still, small voice, you do exactly what He says to do, without hesitation or delay.
- xxiv) When we refuse to listen and to obey, we cause our hearts to become callused.
- xxv) A callus is really just scar tissue.
- xxvi) Scar tissue is insensitive to feeling.
- xxvii) When a heart becomes callused, it loses its sensitivity to the Lord.
- xxviii) We who are saved must never reach the place where we lose our compassion for those who need the Lord.
- xxix) It is so easy to become like the Pharisees in our thinking.
- xxx) Far too many Christians get to the place where they are just happy to be saved.
- xxxi) They seem to forget that there was a time when they too needed the Lord.
- xxxii) They forget that there are multitudes around us who need a Savior.
- xxxiii) As believers, we need a constant reality check.
- xxxiv) We must keep our own salvation experience fresh in our hearts so that we do not develop a callused heart.

## 2) THE HOLY HEART OF THE SAVIOR

- a) The holy heart of the Savior stands out in striking contrast to the hard hearts of the Pharisees.
- b) Let’s see His heart in action.
- c) v. 3 **His Command** – Jesus knows what they are up to.
  - i) He knows that this whole thing is designed as a trap to ensnare Him.
  - ii) But, Jesus also knows that this man needs healing, and Jesus is determined to do the right thing regardless of the personal cost.
  - iii) So, He tells the man to “**Stand forth.**”

- iv) Jesus calls him to come and stand before the whole crowd.
  - v) What He is about to do will not be done in a corner.
  - vi) Jesus wanted everyone present to see the power of God at work.
  - vii) By the way, that is His intention in your life and mine!
  - viii) Whether He calls you to come to Him for salvation, or if you are walking with Him day by day, He wants to use your life to display the glory of God.
  - ix) When the Lord saves a soul, He does so for His Own glory.
  - x) He expects that saved person to “**stand forth**” and give testimony to the work of God in their hearts,
  - xi) **Rom. 10:9-10—“ that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation.**
  - xii) If you are saved, the Lord is determined to use your life for His glory.
  - xiii) You are a walking advertisement to the power of God to change lives and make lost people into new creatures for the glory of God,
  - xiv) **Eph. 2:10—“ For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.**
  - xv) **Phil. 1:27—“ Only conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or remain absent, I will hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel;**
  - xvi) He wants you to “**stand forth**” and show a lost world what He can do through Jesus
- d) v. 4 **His Confrontation** –
- i) Jesus confronts the obvious hypocrisy of the Pharisees by asking them two simple, straightforward questions: Is it lawful to good or evil on the Sabbath?
  - ii) It is lawful to save a life or to take a life?
  - iii) **ILL--William Barclay gives us some insight into the mindset of the Jews regarding medical treatment on the Sabbath--“Medical attention could be given only if a life was in danger. To take some examples—a woman in childbirth might be helped on the Sabbath; an infection of the throat might be treated; if a wall fell on anyone, enough might be cleared away to see whether he was dead or alive; if he was alive he might be helped, if he was dead the body must be left until the next day. A fracture could not be attended to. Cold water might not be poured on a sprained hand or foot. A cut finger might be bandaged with a plain bandage but not with ointment. That is to say, at the most an injury could be kept from getting worse; it must not be made better.”**
  - iv) The man Jesus is facing would have been no worse off to have waited until the next day for healing.
  - v) But, for the Lord, this was an opportunity to address the hypocrisy of their belief system.
  - vi) I also happen to believe that calling the man to the front of the crowd and asking these questions was all an effort to awaken sympathy in the hearts of the Pharisees.
  - vii) Jesus was using this moment to try and touch their hearts. His efforts failed!
- e) v. 5 **His Consternation** –

- i) When they refused to answer His questions, Jesus became angry.
  - ii) The word “**angry**” comes from a word that was used to describe “**sap rising in a tree**”.
  - iii) It is the idea of anger that builds and builds until there is a release of emotion.
  - iv) The longer Jesus sat in that service with the hard-hearted Pharisees, the angrier He became.
  - v) This is only explicit reference to His anger in the Gospels.
  - vi) There is nothing wrong with anger as long as you are angry over the right things, in the right amount, and in the right way.
  - vii) Some righteous anger against sin and evil would serve the church well in these politically correct, anything goes days.
  - viii) What was it that made Jesus so angry?
  - ix) First, He is angry because their hearts are hard.
  - x) They have continually refused to acknowledge the power and presence of God and He is offended.
  - xi) Second, He is angry because they have more concern for their manmade rules than they do for a man who needs help.
  - xii) We are also told that He was “**grieved**”.
  - xiii) This word means “**to feel pain or sorrow**”.
  - xiv) Their attitude toward their fellow man broke the Savior’s heart and it made Him angry.
  - xv) I would venture to say that it still grieves our Lord and makes Him angry when people refuse to hear the truth and do what is right.
  - xvi) Look at your own life right now.
  - xvii) Does the Lord have reason to be grieved with you?
  - xviii) Are you turning a deaf ear to the truth?
  - xix) Do you refuse to hear His voice?
  - xx) Have you allowed your heart to become callused toward the needs of others?
  - xxi) Does it bother you that people are headed to Hell?
  - xxii) Do you care that your fellowship with the Lord is not what it ought to be?
  - xxiii) Does it bother you to know that your own heart is growing harder by the day?
  - xxiv) He wants to help you, but He can’t until you hear His voice and heed what He tells you.
- f) v. 5 **His Compassion** –
- i) In spite of their attempt to trap Him, Jesus told the man to stretch out his hand.
  - ii) When he did, it was healed!
  - iii) In spite of His anger at their hypocrisy, Jesus still had compassion on the man with the withered hand.
  - iv) Jesus didn’t come to this world to get caught up in religious debates over the keeping of manmade rules.
  - v) Jesus came to this world to extend compassion to those who needed help.
  - vi) This poor man could not solve His problem, but Jesus could.
  - vii) And, He did!
  - viii) I was in the same shape one day.
  - ix) I didn’t have a withered hand, but I had a withered soul.
  - x) I was dead toward God and spiritually paralyzed.

- xi) Jesus moved in compassion and brought life to my soul.
- xii) Thank God that He loved me when I was unlovable and that He was willing to save me by His grace, in spite of what I was.
- xiii) Don't let a few religious hypocrites keep you from coming to Jesus.
- xiv) He loves you in spite of what a few foolish people do or say.
- xv) If you will come to Him, He will forgive your sins, save your soul and prepare you a home in Heaven.
- xvi) And, that is what you really want!

### 3) THE HOPEFUL HEART OF THE NEEDY

- a) We have seen the hard heart of the Pharisees and we have seen the holy heart of the Savior, in the remaining verses of our text, we see the hopeful hearts of the multitudes.
- b) Jesus has just been officially rejected by the religious leaders.
- c) However, there is a great multitude of people that see in Jesus the answer to their prayers and the fulfillment of all their hopes and dream, v. 7-9.
- d) Let's look at their hearts before we close today.
- e) v. 10 **What They Saw In Jesus** –
  - i) The people saw what He had done for others and believed, by faith, that He could do the same for them.
  - ii) When the Pharisees looked at Jesus they saw a rebel.
  - iii) They saw a Man Who was trying to overthrow their position and take away their power.
  - iv) When the common man looked at Jesus, he saw a Healer, a Savior and the Messiah.
  - v) The average man saw all the promises and plans of God fulfilled in Jesus.
- f) v. 10 **What They Sought From Jesus** –
  - i) These great multitudes “**pressed upon Him**” because they wanted to experience His healing power.
  - ii) They wanted His power to be unleashed in their lives.
  - iii) These people were looking for life-change and they saw the potential for that in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ.
- g) v. 8, 11 **What They Said About Jesus** –
  - i) While the religious leaders were plotting to kill Jesus, the common man was spreading the word about Him.
  - ii) Everywhere, across the nation of Israel, the people were talking about the Man from Galilee.
  - iii) Even the evil spirits were talking about Jesus.
  - iv) Jesus rebuked the demons for two reasons.
  - v) First, Jesus refused to allow the devil to determine the movement and timing of His ministry.
  - vi) Second, He did not want to be identified with evil spirits.
  - vii) Here is the point, uneducated, common people and even demons had more sense than the religious leaders of the day.
  - viii) They saw Jesus as a threat, the average person saw Jesus as One Who offered them hope.
- h) **Note: What do you need in your life today?**
  - i) Do you need salvation?
  - ii) Do you need forgiveness?

- iii) Do you need a fresh start?
- iv) Do you need cleansing from sin?
- v) Do you need help in some area of your life?
- vi) What do you need?
- i) **What do you see when you look at Jesus?**
  - i) Do you see a poor fellow Who got Himself crucified on a cross?
  - ii) Do you see a Man with strange ideas Who went around preaching love and going good?
  - iii) Or, do you see the Savior?
  - iv) Do you see a Man Who died for your sins and Who calls you to come to Him for the help you need?
  - v) Do you see in Jesus the hope and help of your soul?
  - vi) If you can see and acknowledge that you have needs in your life today, you are in a position to receive help.
  - vii) If you can see that Jesus is ready and able to help you, you are just a prayer away from the very help you need.
  - viii) The Pharisees could not see their own needs so they received no help.
  - ix) They could not understand that Jesus was the Messiah and that He could have changed their lives, if only they would have come to Him.
  - x) They had less sense than the demons,
  - xi) James 2:19—" You believe that God is one. You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder.**
  - xii) What about you?
  - xiii) Is your heart needy?
  - xiv) Are you ready to come to Jesus and get the help you need?
  - xv) Then tarry no longer!
  - xvi) Come to Him and allow Him the opportunity to change your life forever!

**Conc:**

A.W. Tozer used to tell the story of the governor of a mid-western state who disguised himself and went into prison for a day to learn of the conditions.

While speaking with a likable young convict, he felt a strong desire to pardon him.

**"What would you do",** he asked casually, **"if the governor were to offer you a pardon?"**

The convict said, **"The first thing I'd do is cut the throat of the judge who sent me here."**

The governor was saddened as he broke off the conversation and left. That convict stayed in his cell.

What was his problem?



He had been convicted, but he had allowed his heart to become hard.

He could not be helped because of a hard heart.

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What is the Lord telling you today?

Is He calling you to come to Jesus Christ to be saved?

If so, then come and do not harden your heart.

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Is He calling you to repent of some sin and to turn back to Jesus?

If so, then you come and do not harden your heart.

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Is He calling you to be more like Jesus in your compassion toward the lost and needy?

If so, then you come and do not harden your heart.

Regardless of what He is calling you to do, you come and do it.

Hardening your heart against the call of God is a serious matter.

You will reach a place where you no longer can hear Him calling, **2 Tim. 4:1-3**.

You will reach a place where He will abandon you to your decision, Ill. Pharaoh, **Rom. 9:17-18**.

You will reach a place where the Lord will allow you to go your own way.

Is He calling?

Heed His voice and do whatever it is that He is calling you to do.

Do it today.

Do it right now!