

Title: True Rest (Part 2)

Description: In this Sunday morning message from Mark 3:1-6, Pastor Anthony Kim of Calvary Road Baptist Church continues the True Rest series begun in Part 1, the September 27 morning sermon on Mark 2:23-28, as Jesus enters the synagogue on another Sabbath and finds a man with a withered hand, placed there as bait by religious leaders hoping to accuse Him. The sermon shows how hardened hearts turned God's day of mercy into a trap, how Jesus answered with a searching question about doing good or evil, saving life or killing, and how His word restored the man's hand whole as the other. Along the way it warns against the sin of omission and Pharisaical indifference, calls the church to open hearts and spiritual discernment, and points to the cross, where Christ stretched out His hands so that withered, sinful lives could be made whole.

Transcript:

So, we've been looking throughout Mark's gospel account, and we've been witnessing a series of escalating confrontations with a group of individuals, the Pharisees and the scribes and the Lord Jesus confronting them specifically. And across the second chapter of Mark, these religious leaders repeatedly challenged Jesus on several areas. And I want to just highlight briefly where we've been and where we're going. We started out with the healing of the paralytic man his authority to forgive sin meaning the Lord Jesus Christ and proving that he is the son of man according to Daniel chapter 7 that he indeed has power to forgive his sins and that was verse 8 to 12. Then we went on and saw that he shared a meal with tax collectors and sinners. And he explained his core mission there to the Pharisees who were at a distance saying, "Why are you associating with them?" And this is what he says. The Lord Jesus Christ says this, "They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." At verse 17. And then we saw him being questioned with his followers for not following the Pharisees' strict fasting routines of not only were Mosaic law just once, they added twice. Twice. And he uses the analogy of a wedding that he is the bridegroom and you are not to be fasting but celebrating and that we saw in verses 18 to 22. And then last Sunday evening he was accused along with his disciples of breaking the rules of the Pharisees of plucking grain on the Sabbath. We saw that in verses 23 to 28. And he reminded them, "Have you not read of King David who ate out of necessity and ate of the showbread which is again allocated just for the

priests but was allowed this provision to eat the bread because mercy was given by God." And then the continuous conflicts can continue now rather reaching a dramatic climax. And we see this in verse 28 where the Lord Jesus declared his authority over the merciless rules that the Pharisees have created. Remember over 1,500 rules over the past 400 years. And he says these words in verse 28, "The Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath." So now we continue with the tension that still is brewing amongst the Pharisees and scribes and we're going to hit where their heart is ultimately.

So if you will go ahead in your Bibles, turn with me to Mark 3 and they're going to be in verses 1-6 this morning. The Lord Jesus faces yet another Sabbath conflict with the Pharisees. And that's why I titled this sermon True Rest, part two. We're going to see here in the text, Jesus walks into their synagogue, the Pharisees and the scribes, and this is where the very center of scripture reading was done and teachings were held. But on this particular Sabbath day, the religious atmosphere was poisoned with cold indifference. A man with a withered, helpless hand sits in the crowd in the synagogue, surrounded by the religious leaders who do not see him as a soul to be loved and given mercy, but as a pawn to be used. And the Pharisees were obsessed with their so-called rules that they were utterly blind to the redeemer standing there in their synagogue, the Lord Jesus Christ who was in the midst of them. And the tension of this text rather strikes us directly at our own church this morning. Consider these thoughts. Have we allowed our routines become mundane? Meaning reading of scripture and really allowing God's word to search your heart because he will convict you with his word and he will show you where you are wrong. And so we need to examine ourselves as this text is given. Have you made things routine to make it mundane, not respond to God's word? Have you allowed your own heart to be hardened just like the Pharisees and the scribes where a hardened heart leads to hurting people, not helping people. I want you to consider these things as we now go into the text. Please stand out of respect for God's word as we read from Mark 3, verses 1-6.

And he, the Lord Jesus, entered again into the synagogue; and there was a man there which had a withered hand. And they, the Pharisees and scribes, watched him with a withered hand, whether he, Jesus, would heal him on the Sabbath day; that they might accuse him. And he said unto the man which had the withered hand, "Stand forth." And he said unto them, "Is it lawful to do good on the Sabbath days, or to do evil? To save life, or to kill?" But they held their peace. And when he had looked round about on them with anger,

being grieved for the hardness of their hearts, he saith unto the man, "Stretch forth thine hand." And he stretched it out, and his hand was restored whole as the other. And the Pharisees went forth, and straightway took counsel with the Herodians against him, how they might destroy him. This is God's word. You may be seated.

We're going to start with the first two verses this morning. We see that Jesus enters again the synagogue. Again, we see that repeated here. So, he's gone here several times. It's not his first time going into their synagogue. Again, this is the local headquarters of the Pharisees and scribes. And let me just share, if you don't recall, what a scribe is. A scribe was those that interpreted the Mosaic law. They were to consider the legal scholars of the time of Jesus. And while the Pharisees, they would then practice the law. But dangerously, as we have seen, added their own oral traditions, their own rules to their daily life. And they then defined this as their righteous living. That to the danger of it, muddling God's word. And so the Lord Jesus Christ rebukes both of these groups because of their abuse of power, self-interest, and pride. All due to a hardened heart.

And then Luke's gospel accounts that Jesus was invited to teach that day. And we see this in Luke 6:6 because you would have to be invited into the synagogue. You couldn't just step in and just teach. You would have to be invited. So Luke brings that to account. But this was not a casual invitation by no means. By entering a synagogue, Jesus was then entering the territory of the Pharisees and the Sadducees. And it was carefully this instance a sting operation. It was one where the Pharisees and the scribes wanted to catch Jesus.

And so sitting in that synagogue was a man with a withered right hand. Luke's gospel points out is his right hand which was his dominant hand. And just to understand contextually in Jewish culture, losing the function of your dominant hand meant you were living in extreme poverty. That's probably why he was always trying to visit the synagogue. And also manual labor was difficult, right? They didn't live in a digital economy where you can type. He had to use both hands. So he was probably out of the workforce. And worse yet, culture at the time assumed that physical disability was a direct punishment from God for sin. And we can see this reflected by one of the disciples of Jesus asking in John 9:2 these words, says, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man, or his parents, that he would be born blind?" And so these Pharisees going back to the text were supposed to be spiritual shepherds to this man that had a withered right hand and for the soul of man to honor God. That

was the intention of the Pharisees. That was their, as it were, calling on their lives. But instead of doing all that, caring about the soul, caring about the physical needs, instead they were ministering to his agony, putting more heavy burdens on him possibly and creating more agony, thus adding upon his suffering, his initial suffering. And then worse yet using him as live bait to catch Jesus in a trap. That's a hardened heart.

And so the Pharisees knew Jesus had a heart of mercy and grace. We saw in the paralytic being healed and being forgiven of sin as a good shepherd ought to be as he is the great shepherd. And so we saw that back in the previous text. And so Satan instinctively sensed what Jesus would do again here. And so he would use then the Pharisees and the scribes and use a two-prong trap. Here it is. If Jesus healed the man, they would then prosecute him for breaking their Sabbath laws, their own Sabbath laws. But if he refused to heal, they would brand him as a heartless soul whose claim as Lord of the Sabbath was not true. That's the two-prong trap. And so what this shows us is they had total indifference towards the man's spiritual as well as physical need. And so the total hatred toward Jesus of mercy and grace is then revealed in their approach.

Think of it if I were to use a modern illustration. God in his grace is offering invitation to every single one that is spiritually lost. That is spiritually lost. And so he as it were opens up a banquet for all to come in. And we know the text, "Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled." I shared that text in a previous sermon. So the intent is to invite people in to be filled. And so think and imagine a security posted in front of this house. And this security post stands in the front entrance turning away people based on here it is their outward appearance. How they dressed, how they look, because they didn't want to associate with anyone that did not look like them, did not talk like them, did not have a hard-heartedness as them. And so if they didn't measure up to those qualifications, they would then turn them away. And so the application then is for us as that the Pharisees acted as then self-appointed security guards of God's holy Sabbath. And they used then their man-made rules, their own manual who prevented people from coming in to God's house for the reason that God makes the provision, the grace, the opportunity for people to come in. And that's why Jesus is so hard and rebuking them because he's literally or rather these Pharisees and scribes are disallowing what God is wanting to provide to mankind which is God's mercy and grace.

So we must then examine our own hearts because we have the same potential heart of a Pharisee. The heart is still wicked. It's still deceived by sin. And so it is easy to slip into a Pharisaical mindset where we care not about other people but care instead prioritizing our preferences, our schedules, our traditions, our comfort, but remain completely indifferent in the spiritual and physical needs of those that have a withered life. And let me just accentuate what that word withered is. It's a metaphor for spiritual decay, death. And so a withered hand is lifeless just like you can be lifeless spiritually because you're dead in trespasses and sins as it says in God's word. So sitting in the midst of God's house, this is his house, the church building that we are in. Are we denying people like this illustration? Do we have that hard-heartedness?

Here's the pastoral side of things. You see when you are in a place of where God has called you to meaning we are to open our doors not physically but the idea is our heart should be opened to receiving people God wants people to hear God's word and we don't want to be people that are blocking people from hearing God's word so that they can hear and have a saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. And what God does is he gives discernment to those that are humbled, not hard-hearted. And so God gives us a heart of discernment, which is caring for the general or the genuine need of people's souls. That's what discernment comes in. And here's the thing. If you have helped people with a discerning heart, an open heart, then you will continue to have discernment of who is genuine and who is false, who is truly in need, who actually does need spiritual help and recognizes that help from those that are false and deceptive and are only coming here to maybe receive a secondary means, which is the good Christian love, the meals that we may prepare you for after our time from hearing the sermon that that's your focus that is all self-interest instead of pleasing God.

And so cultivating a heart of discernment is primarily imparted by the Holy Spirit. You see, we can't have this kind of a heart without the Holy Spirit working in us and through us. And scripture demonstrates that spiritual discernment is a deepening wisdom of knowing from truth, from error, from good, from evil, nurtured by a regular practice of caring for people spiritually and physically, persistently praying for them and not just praying for yourself only like Pharisees would do. And they would have a heart of discernment would be faithfully devoted to God's word. That word devotion is you're fully immersed in God's word that you would treasure God's word that you would want God to show you more understanding of his word so that you can continue to please him. That's what we want as God's people, right? We want

that kind of reality. And the text that I'm going to with all this that I just share with you is Hebrews 5:14. This is what it says. "But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil." In contrast to this text is the false view that man can earn or maintain God's favor, a true salvation from sin and self-righteousness by your own human strivings by your own compliance, by your own rule making instead of humbly trusting the unmerited favor, grace given to you granted solely through the faith not in yourself but in Christ Jesus alone. When you have that understanding then you have what Hebrews 5:14 speaks about. Your heart will have more discernment, more spiritual wisdom for what? Soul-winning. For winning souls, to get outside of ourselves into God's heart, we got to constantly get outside of our heart. Amen. And have the heart of God.

So with all that understanding, let's go to verse three and four. Now we get to the words of Jesus here. He saith unto the man which had a withered hand, "Stand forth." And he saith unto them, "Is it lawful to do good on the Sabbath days, or to do evil? To save life, or to kill?" But here it is. They held their peace. Jesus refuses to play by the Pharisees dishonest rules and submitting to their trap that they had for him in the synagogue. Instead of quietly dismissing and not answering them this time, he then publicly shows grace offered to this man with a withered hand. Just like the paralytic that we read from Mark chapter 2. And so Jesus commands the man with the withered hand, stand forth or get up and come forward. By calling this man directly into the center of the synagogue, Jesus shifts the focus from a theological dispute with the Pharisees and scribes and looks at the man that actually needs help. And he points everyone including the Pharisees and the scribes and everyone that was in that synagogue to see what the purpose that Jesus was there for. And so grace was put on public display inviting all to see then God's heart to turn away from the Pharisaical heart.

So Jesus turns to the religious group and asked, "Is it lawful to do good on the Sabbath days or to do evil to save a life or kill?" And the Pharisees framed the Sabbath around human restrictions. And so their question instead of how Jesus framed it was, "Is it lawful to heal?" We saw that in the previous verse. Whereas Jesus reframes around God's purpose with, "Is it lawful to do good and save life?" See, questions are important to God, to have God's heart. And how you ask your question determines how God answers that question. And so God's commandments were never designed to restrict acts of love, of mercy, of relief. And we saw that with the story of King David. No, they were

to give and to promote life and goodness.

And if you want, you can turn to Matthew 12:11 and 12. And we see this. We see the Lord Jesus use the illustration of a sheep fallen into a pit on the Sabbath day. Let me just read his words to you. This is Jesus Christ himself saying this. He said, "What man shall there be among you, that shall have one sheep, and if it fall into a pit on the Sabbath day, will he not lay hold on it, and lift it out? How much then is a man better than a sheep? Wherefore it is lawful to do well on the Sabbath day." He's saying, how much more valuable is the image of God, rather the bearer of God's image, than a sheep? That's what he's framing this with. And he says based on how his question is then said he is clear that doing good and preserving life rather than allowing destruction is then the accepted standard for all by God himself. So he goes from their standard to God's standard. This is God's standard.

On the other hand, the Pharisaical rules prevented people from showing love by helping someone with their infirmity. And so the Pharisees cared more about themselves than the well-being of others. Again, another instance of what a hard heart does is just only focuses on yourself instead of seeing what God can do, his miracles. And so Jesus' question reveals when you have the power to do good and relieve suffering withholding that good is equivalent to doing evil and committing harm.

Let me just read from James 4:17. It says, "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin." Very clear, very explicit. This is talking about sin of omission. Failing to do a good action when you know it is good versus sin of commission which is doing a wrongful deed on purpose. You know it's wrong and you go ahead and do it anyways. Both sin of omission and commission is sin defined by God.

And so we go back to the text with the Pharisees. They held their peace, meaning that they were silenced. If they said no, they would publicly expose themselves as cold-hearted religious frauds. If they said yes, they would validate the Lord Jesus healing the man. So now, who is the one being trapped? Regardless of their response, they could not find any grounds to charge Jesus. And so their primary motivation for bringing him, the man with the withered hand and the Lord Jesus Christ on the Sabbath was simply a stage of accusation that completely fell apart. And thank God for that because you know why? There's scripture to back up the situation. It's from Psalm 7:14-15. It says this, "Behold, he," the wicked, "travaileth with iniquity, and hath conceived mischief, and brought forth falsehood. He made a pit, and

digged it, and is fallen into the ditch which he made." People who plan to do evil will eventually be destroyed by their own wicked schemes. This is how sin works. You think you can outsmart sin? No. It will always do its purpose of destroying you. That is clear from the text.

And so Jesus flipped the script on the Pharisees. Rather than walking into their trap, he turned the tables and exposed their lack of mercy and their open hypocrisy. And they were humiliated right inside their own synagogue. See, when our faith leads to apathy in the face of human suffering, it strays from God's heart. That's the worst thing. That's what sin does. It turns away from God's heart. True righteousness in Christ alone goes beyond simply avoiding wrong. Simply avoiding wrong, sin of commission, but it actively seeks to demonstrate mercy and grace avoiding the sin of omission.

And so we go to the text now. Verse 5. He says, "And when he had looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts, he saith unto the man, Stretch forth thine hand." And he stretched it out, and his hand was restored whole as the other. So we see Jesus here scanning the room that's silent and he gives a penetrating gaze directly at the scribes and the Pharisees and he looked upon them with anger being grieved for what? Their hardness of their hearts. You see what the Lord Jesus demonstrated here is perfect holy indignation against merciless rules with deep sorrow over their unrepentant hardened souls. You see God hates the sin of religious pride yet this is the holy indignation, yet grieves over the sinner. I want you to catch that. That's why Jesus is perfect. He can be righteously angry and yet grieved over hardened hearts, over the sinner. Think about that. Examine your own heart. Because many times in our sinfulness, we just are angry at people, aren't we? And never really care about the sinner and grieve over their hardened hearts. And Jesus shares here that both these feelings are perfectly present in the Lord Jesus Christ at the same time. This is the Lord Jesus Christ. This is whom we serve as the Lord and who is our savior.

Turning away from the silent accusers, he then turns attention away from the merciless rules and back to what truly matters. Jesus commands the man with the withered hand, "Stretch forth thine hand." You see, humanly speaking, the command was impossible. Humanly speaking, the man's hand was completely withered. It was completely decayed. There was no life in it. It was paralyzed, completely paralyzed. But when Christ commands his word, here it is, carries supreme authority over life. And so, he can do it. And so he fulfills it. So the man did not argue. If you notice in the text, he doesn't say, "I

can't move my arm." He doesn't look at his arm. He looks at the Lord Jesus Christ and he hears his words. That's something to note. Sometimes we get so caught up. Look how bad my sin is. Look at how bad it is. And Jesus is right there saying, I can save you. I can heal you. How many of you in this room are stuck with your sin and you're trying to fix your hand or whatever sin that you have right now and you don't gaze at the Lord Jesus Christ and hear his words instead of your own words. That's something to note here. And so the man did not argue but in faith and obedience to Christ words he stretched it out. It's there in the text and instantly his hand was restored whole as the other shows supreme authority of Christ. The supreme authority of Christ.

In this single moment, I want to share with you what just occurred here. Number one, he showed compassion by restoring a suffering human being to physical wholeness. He cared about being whole. You remember the text? I came not for those that think that they're whole, but I came for those that are sick to make them whole. To make them truly whole, not the false kind of whole that the Pharisees and the scribes ascribe to. Number two, he proved beyond doubt that he is a true Lord of the Sabbath. Verse 28. And not with the Pharisees or anyone else defining the Sabbath. And number three, he exposed the utter bankruptcy and uselessness of Pharisaical rulekeeping which undermined their authority. He did all that in this one act.

And then we go on to verse six. We go on to verse six. And the Pharisees went forth and straightway took counsel with the Herodians against him how they might destroy him. I want you to just observe here the contradiction of what religious hypocrisy can end up doing to your heart. Jesus used the Sabbath day to do good and save a life. The Pharisees on their other hand used the Sabbath day to come to conspire and plot a murder. You see that good and evil right there for us to see in verse six.

They hated Jesus so intensely that they broke their own strict rules here. Again adding to their hypocrisy, they align themselves with political Romanized Jews, the Herodians, the people who selfishly supported Herod's ungodly politics like killing every newborn baby. And we've seen that, right, with Moses as well. And then with the Lord Jesus Christ having to flee. And so they aligned themselves, breaking their own rules, being more hypocritical, being more blind, being more hardened in their heart to align with enemies, with their own enemies just to destroy the son of God. This is what sin does. Darkness, blindness towards the miracles of God.

Every single one of us must recognize then we are born spiritually dead. We're dead to everything that God desires in his word. Our souls are withered by sin primarily unable to stretch out and work our way to God. A withered hand could not move because it was dead. And we try to work our ways to God with a dead hand. So unable then to keep God's law and unable to heal ourselves. You see legalistic effort cannot heal a withered spirit. Only the quickening work of the Spirit can. The law can expose our deadness. That's what the law should do. It should show how dead our hearts are, how hard-hearted our hearts are, but the law should never be the end point. It's good to know that, but that's not the end because only Jesus then can impart life. You must see completely that you're dead in order to receive complete life. There is nothing in between that. There is not synergism as a word is called that I do something as a man to please God and then Christ does something. No, Christ does the whole work from A to Z. That's what we see here in the text.

And so the Pharisees plotted to destroy Jesus on the Sabbath, but God turned their evil trappings into a means of our salvation. Isn't that great? He showed us a picture of salvation. And just think about it. On Calvary, what did he do? He showed us that he stretched out his innocent hands to be nailed on the cross so that our withered, sinful hands could be restored whole. He took the wrath we deserve for our hard-heartedness due to sin. And through the Holy Spirit, he gives us new hearts of flesh that loves God. Loves him instead of wants to destroy. What a wonderful thing that having a saving knowledge of Lord Jesus Christ, having his blood cleanse us of all of our sin by his pure blood. This is what he imparts us with his saving grace.

And so Jesus values living mercy over merciless rules. He restores our broken lives that glories in man to then glorying God. Complete transformation. Not little changes. No, it's huge. You must see salvation as an impossible thing with man, but all things possible with God. Imagine then a church where broken, hurting, and withered souls walk through our doors not to be judged or used as bait, but to encounter the living Christ who says, "Stand forth. Stand forth." So we must abandon a hard-hearted religious pride, embrace the merciful Lord of the Sabbath. And God uses our restored hands to bring healing, to bring hope, to offer a message. We are messengers once we become Christians of the saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ and to share it as good news. Amen. And this is all for then what? For the glory of God in Christ.

So I want to just share with those that know and understand this truth, be encouraged by this message, be encouraged. But for those that don't understand this truth, has not been truly saved by the grace, the unmerited favor of God's grace imparted to you by what Christ has done for you on the cross when he said, "It is finished." You cannot add to this great salvation. Stop keeping up with your rules and breaking your own rules in hypocrisy. He can change your heart of stone into a heart of flesh that actually knows how to respond to God's word for what it is and not the way you interpreted God's word. That's what a heart that is transformed is can truly obey God. Would you want to have that? Has God spoken to you by his own word by the Lord Jesus Christ, his dear son? May his word impart life. Amen. Let us go to prayer.

Father, it is an honor to come before your throne of grace, to obtain mercy, to find grace, to help in time of need. Father, without your mercy and grace, Lord, we are living in vain. We need, Father, you to move amongst those that are already saved in Christ to continue to be obedient. But we also, and I also pray, Lord, for those that are outside of Christ, but are those that you have chosen again before the foundation of the world. I know father if they are here they will listen and they will then stretch forth when Jesus calls them. So I pray father that they will respond to the words of Jesus Christ that they will stand forth and know that he can save from all sin and from the judgment to come. Father I pray that you would speak in this way and that you would use me father as your messenger this morning to do that. Thank you father for your blessings here today and throughout the day. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.