

The Mind of Christ - Lesson 64

July 24, 2020

Welcome to this edition of the study on The Mind of Christ. We've been working on this for quite a long time and have recorded a lot of sections so far. We're following A. T. Robertson's book, "The Harmony of the Gospels", a chronological sequence of incidents in the life of Christ.

We've been talking for the last few weeks, several different sections on some occurrences on the Sabbath Day that have given rise to Jesus being severely criticized, accused and even being persecuted because of different things He has done on the Sabbath Day and how this has been handled by the Pharisees and the teachers of the law. So, we're going to see another incident today in Section 51. Again, this is an in-depth study so you will be challenged to go deep into the Scripture. This is not a superficial study of God's Word. We are looking into the deepness of the mind of Christ and so we are going to have to dig deep into the text in order to be able to get all the 'goodness' we can from this study.

I'm glad you are with us. If you would like to go back, there are many of these recordings that are archived, and you can find them on our YouTube channel, but you can also get transcripts of many other of the messages that we've been doing from the beginning. If you will contact us we can let you know where the transcripts of those messages are.

We're going to begin this morning by reading the three texts from the synoptic gospels; Matthew, Mark and Luke and you will see that there are some variations in the three texts, but they are not contradictory.

Matthew 12:9-14

Departing from there, He went into their synagogue. ¹⁰ And a man was there whose hand was withered. And they questioned Jesus, asking, "**Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?**" — so that they might accuse Him. ¹¹ And He said to them, "What man is there among you who has a sheep, and if it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will he not take hold of it and lift it out? ¹² How much more valuable then is a man than a sheep! So then, it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath." ¹³ Then He said to the man, "Stretch out your hand!" He stretched it out, and it was restored to normal, like the other. ¹⁴ But the Pharisees went out and conspired against Him, as to how they might destroy Him.

Mark 3:1-6

He entered again into a synagogue; and a man was there whose hand was withered. ² They were watching Him to see if He would heal him on the Sabbath, so that they might accuse Him. ³ He said to the man with the withered hand, "Get up and come forward!" ⁴ And He said to them, "Is it lawful to do good or to do harm on the Sabbath, to save a life or to kill?" But they kept silent. ⁵ After looking around at them with anger, grieved at their hardness of heart, He said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." And he stretched it out, and his hand was restored. ⁶ The Pharisees went out and immediately began conspiring with the Herodians against Him, as to how they might destroy Him.

Luke 6:6-11

On another Sabbath He entered the synagogue and was teaching; and there was a man there whose right hand was withered. ⁷ The scribes and the Pharisees were watching Him closely to see if He healed on the Sabbath, so that they might find reason to accuse Him. ⁸ But He knew what they were thinking, and He said to the man with the withered hand, "Get up and come forward!" And he got up and came forward. ⁹ And Jesus said to them, "I ask you, is it lawful to do good or to do harm on the Sabbath, to save a life or to destroy it?" ¹⁰ After looking around at them all, He said to him, "Stretch out your hand!" And he did so; and his hand was restored. ¹¹ But they themselves were filled with rage, and discussed together what they might do to Jesus.

Those are the three accounts and there are significant variations in these three stories or accounts, but they're not contradictory. The location, according to Mark was 'a synagogue'. Matthew says it was 'their synagogue'. Luke says, 'On another Sabbath He entered the synagogue'. So, from the context, it seems that He was still in Jerusalem, and would return to Galilee after this incident was over. This is the third Sabbath incident in a row. You get the impression that Jesus is using the Sabbath to make His point and, perhaps, even to stir up some trouble for Himself. Is Jesus intentionally provoking these Pharisees and scribes?

Now Matthew gives the impression that after the incident in the grainfields Jesus went into the synagogue. Mark does not indicate a time frame, but Luke says about the grain field 'it was a certain Sabbath', and about the 'withered hand' incident on *another* Sabbath meaning 'in addition to' or 'different' Sabbath.

Matthew doesn't say He went the same day, and Luke is writing, of course, as he says in **Luke 1:1-4** that he is writing 'an orderly account of the things that happened' (NIV). Luke indicates that Jesus was *teaching* in this synagogue. "Didasko" (διδασκω) is the word for "teaching" here in **Luke 6:6**.

It seems that when I was growing up, if a person was considered to be a false teacher, you did not allow them to teach in your church at all. But they were allowing Jesus, even though they may have considered Him to be a false teacher, they were allowing Him to do it. So, I wonder if that indicates something about their curiosity, that they wanted to be able to hear more or whether it was just an indication of giving Him enough rope to hang Himself so they would have the ability to make accusations and to, as they say, destroy Him. Luke indicates that they were watching Him 'closely', it says. 'He knew what they were thinking' Matthew says. They questioned Him saying 'Is it *lawful* to heal on the Sabbath'? Was He reading their thoughts or were they questioning Him? I would say it's both. Jesus knew *why* they were questioning Him. He read their motives... just like **Hebrews 4:12** says that "*the word of God is able to discern between the thoughts and the intentions of the heart*". And so is Jesus who is the *Living Word of God*.

This constant scrutiny had to be disconcerting to Jesus, I would think. Or was it? Did Jesus stay absolutely calm in His Spirit even knowing that they were plotting and scheming to destroy Him in His work? Jesus knew that they were playing their assigned role, and that God was ultimately in control.

All three accounts agree that there was a *man with a withered hand*. Luke adds that it was his right hand, of course he was a physician and perhaps he would give more attention to these details. The hand was **withered** or it was **dry**. This word is used in **Luke 23:31** where He says, “If they do these things in a **green** tree, what will happen in a **dry** tree”. It is also used in **Matthew 23:15** as “land” opposed to “Sea”. Of course, land is dry and sea is wet. **Hebrews 11:29** says, “By faith they passed through the Red Sea as though they were passing through **dry** land; and the Egyptians, when they attempted it, were drowned.” It’s the word that’s used for “withered” here. In **Mark 11:20**, the cursed fig tree has “withered” from the roots up. So, for this man’s hand, either the blood supply has been cut off from the hand or perhaps there is nerve damage that doesn’t allow the hand to be controlled. There is some loss of ability to draw sustenance either in nerves or in blood flow that causes this hand to be withered or dry or destroyed.

Mark and Luke say that they “watched Him” and Luke adds the word “closely”. Matthew says they “questioned” Him. Eperotao (επερωταω) means to inspect alongside, to note insidiously, scrupulously, they observe or watch Him. The Pero part of eperotao means they observe or watch Him very closely ... they’re very near Him. In **Luke 14:1** the same phrase is used on another Sabbath, “It happened that when He went into the house of one of the leaders of the Pharisees on the Sabbath to eat bread, they were watching Him closely.” And again in **Luke 20:20** it says, “So they watched Him, and sent spies who pretended to be righteous, in order that they might catch Him in some statement, so that they could deliver Him to the rule and the authority of the governor.” It is used of Paul in **Acts 9:24**, “They were also watching the gates day and night so that they might put him to death...” when He was shut up in the city and they were watching closely the City Gate but Paul was let down over the side of the wall in a basket to escape. The word is also used in **Galatians 4:10** when it talks about how “religious days” were ‘observed’, or ‘closely observed’. It reads, “You observe days and months and seasons and years. ¹¹ I fear for you, that perhaps I have labored over you in vain.” Only Luke identifies the watchers as the Scribes and the Pharisees. **Matthew** and **Mark** simply say, “they” were watching Him. **Matthew** says they ‘questioned’ Him, “Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?” They *interrogated* Him and this word is used in many other places. The word that’s used for ‘lawful’ is the word “what is possible”... “What is permitted”. It means to exercise power or authority. Something has to be *authorized* or *allowed* even by God.

It’s interesting that if God did not allow this healing to take place, then why would God give Jesus the ability to heal the man in the first place? The fact of the miracle itself should have been **evidence enough** of Jesus being allowed to do it; even on the Sabbath Day. *Is this why they had to attribute the healing power to Satan or Beelzebub* because they could not deny the miracle, but only the source or the power of the miracle? In **John 5:36** it says, “But the testimony which I have is greater than the testimony of John; for the works which the Father has given Me to accomplish—the very works that I do—testify about Me, that the Father has sent Me.” He is saying that the works He does are a witness that He is sent by God. This is why Paul could talk about signs and miracles that confirmed his Apostleship in **2 Corinthians 12:12**. “The signs of a true apostle were performed among you with all perseverance, by signs and wonders and miracles. ¹³ For in what respect were you treated as inferior to the rest of the churches, except that I myself did not become a burden to you?”

Mark and Luke record Jesus saying to the man with the withered hand, “Arise. Come forward.” Matthew omits this. The translation means ‘to rise into the midst’. Luke records it and adds “rise and stand in the midst”. The man was now front and center. **He stood between two worlds!** He stood **between legalism and grace**. He stood between **accusation and demonstration**. He stood between **error and truth**. He stood between **smallness and greatness**. He stood between **hate and love**. How must this man have felt? Did he understand what was happening, **not just to him** but in the larger scene? Did he know one group cared **nothing** for him; only wanting to see him used as bait; while Jesus truly **loved** him and wanted to demonstrate Divine grace and goodness and truth through the healing? He had to know that this was a tense situation but it was “**his**” opportunity; **his** day had come. He was not going to let some man-made Sabbath technicality stop him from receiving a gift; a perfect gift of healing.

Luke tells us that Jesus knew what they were thinking. Surely, this was not hard to figure out. They have been gunning for Him ever since the beginning of His ministry. Matthew records more of what Jesus says to them. He gives the sheep analogy. “**What man is there among you who has a sheep, and if it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will he not take hold of it and lift it out?**” One sheep was important to their livelihood, their self-interest. They would not think twice about rescuing a sheep. Jesus uses the term, “lift it out”. It means to rouse. It can be used in the context of sleep, or someone who is sitting or lying or getting up. It can be someone who has a disease and they’re lifted out of the disease; even someone who is dead being lifted up. It is certainly not leaving the sheep in its helpless condition. It is acting upon the sheep to save it or get him up out of the pit. It requires work. It requires energy. And, again, that was the very thing they were criticizing Jesus for ... was working on the Sabbath. Then Jesus asked, “How much more value does a man have than a sheep?” He is driving His point home. The sheep have value economically but the man has **intrinsic** value, but they did not see that.

Matthew 12:12 says, “**How much more valuable then is a man than a sheep! So then, it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath.**” Matthew uses the term ‘more valuable’, the Greek word “Diaphero” (διαφέρω). It is from who words; “dia” is the proposition that means **through** and “phero” means to **bear** or to **carry**, or to **bear through**. It seems to me the idea of more value is indicated – that a man is worth “bearing through”. Man is a burden worth carrying through anything; not one to be left on the roadside. Also, these Pharisees had seen or carried sheep through difficult circumstances...interesting, lifting them up as a burden. The picture Jesus is painting is a man walking with a lamb on his shoulders by a man who is **just as ‘in need’** of being carried.

Jesus asked the question: “I ask you, is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do harm; to save a life or destroy it?” In Matthew Jesus answers His own question. “**It is lawful to do good on the Sabbath.**” To “do harm” means to be a ‘bad doer’, ‘to injure’, or ‘to sin’.

In **1 Peter 3:17** it says, “**It is better to suffer for doing what is right than for doing what is wrong**” or “what is harmful.”

3 John 11 says, “**Beloved, do not imitate what is evil but what is good; the one who does good is of God; the one who does evil has not seen God.**” I wonder where John heard this.

At the core of this, is *how we view God*, or *whether we even see God* in the situation.

The other contrast is ‘to *save*’; to save a life or to **kill** it or destroy it. **Luke** uses the word *apolesai* (απολεσαι). **Mark** uses the word for kill, “*apolteinoi*” (αποκτειναι). I’m murdering these Greek words. But the first word means to destroy utterly, to kill, to bring to naught, to make void.

Revelation 9:11 talks about “*apolluon*”, (απολλων), who is the destroyer. It’s a very strong word that means to kill, to destroy, or to annihilate. It is interesting to see that in **Romans 7:11** “for sin, taking an opportunity through the commandment, deceived me and through it *killed* me.” Paul says sin deceived me, killed me, it *annihilated* me. These are strong terms set against ‘saving life’. And these enemies of Christ were on the side of ‘destroying’ and ‘killing’ the man with the withered hand by simply ignoring him. They were killing him even by ignoring him.

Jesus simplified the matter of the Sabbath. Certainly the Sabbath observance is not meant to legislate away ‘doing good’ by making it *illegal* to ‘do good’. Every day was about doing good and saving life.

The norm for Christians: *keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles so that in the things in which they slander you as evil doers they may, on account of your good deeds as they observe them, glorify God in the day of visitation (1 Peter 2:12). For it is better, if God should will it so, that you suffer for doing what is right rather than for doing what is wrong (1 Peter 3:17).*

Mark 3:4 adds, “But they kept silent” when Jesus said this. They are sad words. Often, people who know they have a weak or a wrong position will refuse to answer. They shut down and they begin to harbor anger. What can they say to such a question? Obviously, the right answer is “to do good” but they cannot bring themselves to say it because to do so would be to admit that they were wrong! So *they stay in the darkness of silence*.

There will be a day when Jesus will be silent ... that He will not respond verbally; but He will respond with action. The time for talking will be over. Silence is often like darkness. In **John 3:17** and following, we see that. It’s a place of hiding, it’s a way of avoidance, to be silent, to keep silence, to hold one’s peace, to be essentially dumb, to be stilled, to be hushed, to be calm is not always a virtue.

In **Matthew 20:31** the blind man was told to be quiet, but he cried out all the more. In **Luke 26:63** Jesus kept silent and was adjured by the High Priest to speak. In **Luke 1:20** Zacharias was silent and unable to speak. In **Mark 4:39** the sea was made silent or calm.

Mark and Luke comment on Jesus’ next action. Mark says, “*And after looking around at them with anger, grieved at their hardness of heart...*” Luke merely says, “*And after looking around at them all...*” I wonder what that look was like; the look of anger, the look of grief. The idea is that He deliberately looked at each man in the eye ... a challenge, a confidence that surely unnerved them.

In **Mark 3:5** two words show Jesus' reaction, and one word shows what He was reacting to. It was anger. It was "Orgas" (οργης) in this case, justifiable abhorrence, indignation, wrath, God's aversion to those who live in sin. But 'being greatly grieved' it says. Literally it is to be 'grieved together with'. This is the only place I know of where this word is found. This anger and this great grief was directed towards their hardness of heart. It was a porosis, stupidity, or callousness, or blindness, or hardness. It means 'to harden', to 'petrify', or to render insensitive. There are other words that are closely akin to this like "sklérokardia", a hardness of the heart.

In **Romans 11:25** Paul speaks of a particular *hardening* of Israel until the full number of Gentiles have come in. In **Ephesians 4:18** includes *hardness of heart* in the progression into estrangement towards God or lostness. In **Matthew 19:8** regarding Moses permitting divorce; he did so because of the *hardness* of their hearts. The combination of anger and grief is a powerful response. In **Genesis 6:6** at the sin of man, God is grieved that He even made man. In **Romans 1:18** and **Ephesians 2** we know that the wrath of God which is poured out on the wicked; and in that story we see a foretaste of this Divine indignation towards unrepentant sin.

The look was designed to communicate both *anger* and *grief*, perhaps *disgust* that these men so blinded by their legalism and by their sense of superiority and intelligence, and by their credentials and pedigrees. Their mental block was the feeling that they were right and they were proud of it. That Jesus had reason for His anger and grief was proven by what they did in **Mark 3:6**. It says they went out immediately to take counsel with the Herodians against Him as to how they might destroy Him; and again, this word is "to utterly destroy" Him. This is the word Jesus uses to contrast 'saving' or 'destroying' life. In other words Jesus says, 'look, I came to save life; but you Pharisees were bent on this destruction of life.'

In telling the man, "Stretch out your hand" Jesus was getting it in plain view ... no mistake that it was withered. He wanted no accusation later that this was fake. At that moment, it was restored. How this man must have rejoiced to have the use of his hand restored; but how the Pharisees must have cringed to see this 'foul, evil' deed according to them, performed right before their eyes. Surely this violated their sensitivities and sealed their resolve to destroy this healer, this 'doer of good'- why He did 'good' on the wrong day.

So did they schedule a time to talk with Him more about this, to have the Synagogue rulers weigh in, or to settle this through a study of Scripture accompanied by prayer? No! ...and the Pharisees went out immediately taking counsel with the Herodians against Him as to how they might destroy Him **Mark 3:6**. **Luke 6:11** adds that they were filled with rage. They were filled with stupidity or folly or madness in their minds. 'In their minds' was where their rage was; it was in their understanding. The irony was they were filled with a lack of understanding. When one is enraged, they lack the ability to understand. This is why I don't try to talk or to reason with someone who is very angry or very mad. Even the word 'mad' is often used to describe someone who is crazy. Matthew adds that "the hand was restored to normal" like the other. It was healthy, it was well, it was true, it was sound, it was made whole as regard to sound doctrine. It's often used about healing. Jesus did complete, not partial, healing.

It says they counseled together with the Herodians. It is moved from the heart to the boardroom. Now it is a plot, a conspiracy! And Jesus is not far into His ministry. He hasn't even selected the twelve apostles yet. He only has four men that He has called to follow Him at this point.

So, why the Herodians ... why were *they* called into this? Well, their party connected politically to the Herods, or to the Kings, and because they needed some political authority to destroy Jesus **physically**. This was not just a plot to assassinate His character. They did mean to take it to a much different level!

You can see from these events that there was a great conflict that was brewing between the Pharisees, and **now** the Herodians being brought into it. And this was a great conflict that was building up. That's one of the reasons why you're going to see Jesus going now to Galilee, in order to remove Himself from the heat of this battle. He's going to spend time up there and we're going to see some things that are going to happen.

We're going to stop at this point. This is a good place to stop, it's one story; and then we'll begin next week with another edition of The Mind of Christ.

If you have any questions or comments that you would like to make, you can go, always, to our website <https://www.centralsarasota.org/> and there is a place there where you can send E-mails or you can make posts. If you are part of our Central private page you are welcome to make posts there on Facebook. We'll be glad to hear from you.

If there is anything we can do to help you develop the mind of Christ and to see things in this world as Jesus sees them, (because that's what we're trying to become – is like Him in our thinking) please let us know.

Thank you for joining me and I will see you here on the next occasion. God bless