MARK 2:23-3:6

1. **REVIEW**

   A. **NOTE: THE PHARISEES LEGALISTIC RELIGION STALKS JESUS AS HE TEACHES IN THE SYNAGOGUES OF THE CITIES OF GALILEE… AND, LIKE TWO LARGE SHIPS ON A CRASH COURSE WITH NO TIME FOR TURNING, A COLLISION IS INEVITABLE:**

      1. **JESUS'S "GOOD NEWS" CHALLENGES THE DRUDGERY OF THE LAW.**
      2. **JESUS'S AUTHORITY THREATENS THE LEGITIMACY OF THE PHARISEES AUTHORITY.**
      3. **JESUS'S CONCERN FOR HUMAN NEED CHALLENGES THE TRADITIONS OF THE ESTABLISHED CHURCH.**

   B. **FACT: LEGALISTS WILL STEAL YOUR JOY.**

      1. **A HUMOROUS DEFINATION OF A LEGALIST IS: A LEGALIST IS A PERSON WHO LIVES WITH "THE HAUNTING FEAR THAT SOMEONE, SOMEWH0065RE, MIGHT BE HAPPY".**

   C. **DAVID McKENNA WROTE THAT "ONCE THE POT OF CONTROVERSY BEGINS TO BOIL, EVERY MEETING BETWEEN JESUS AND THE PHARISEES TURNS UP THE HEAT."**

   D. **IT IS BECOMING CLEAR: THAT *IF* JESUS IS TO BE SUCCESSFUL WITH HIS MINISTRIES OF "GOOD NEWS" … HE WILL HAVE TO LEAVE BEHIND: (1) THE DEAD WEIGHT OF THE MAN-MADE RULES OLD RELIGIOUS SYSTEM (2) THE FORMS OF THE OLD RELIGIOUS SYSTEM (3) THE LEADERSHIP OF THE OLD RELIGIOUS SYSTEM.**

   E. **JESUS'S MINISTRIES OF "GOOD NEWS" INCLUDE:**

      1. **HIS MINISTRY OF COMPASSION (1:40–45)**
         a. **JESUS HEALS A LEPER.**
      2. **HIS MINISTRY OF FORGIVENESS (2:1–12)**
         a. **JESUS FORGIVES THE SINS OF (AND HEALS) A PARALYTIC.**
      3. **HIS MINISTRY OF HOPE (2:13–17)**

a. **JESUS OFFERS HIS MINISTRY OF HOPE TO A HATED MAN (LEVI) *AND* A HATED CLASS (JEWISH TAX COLLECTORS).**

4. **HIS MINISTRY OF JOY (2:18–22)**

a. **JESUS CHALLENGES THE PHARASEE'S RULE OF FASTING TWICE A WEEK.**

5. **HIS MINISTRY OF GRACE (2:23–28)**

a. **JESUS'S DISCIPLES BREAK THE PHARISEE'S SABBATH-REST RULES BY PICKING AND EATING GRAIN IN A FIELD.**

6. **HIS MINISTRY OF MERCY (3:1–6)**

a. **JESUS HEALS A MAN WITH A WITHERED HAND ON THE SABBATH.**

2. MINISTRY OF GRACE: MARK: 2:23-28

A. **Mark 2:23-28 (NASB)** And it happened that He was passing through the **grainfields** on the **Sabbath**, and His disciples began to make their way along while **picking the heads *of grain*.** The **Pharisees** were **saying to Him, "Look, why are they doing what is not lawful (ACCORDING TO THEIR LAWS) on the Sabbath?" And He said to them, "Have you never read** what David did when he was in need and he and his companions became hungry; how he entered the house of God in the time of Abiathar *the* high priest, and ate the consecrated bread, which is not lawful for *anyone* to eat except the priests, and he also gave it to those who were with him?" Jesus said to them, **"The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath. "So the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath."**

B. **THIS IS THE FIFTH CONFRONTATION BETWEEN THE PHARISEES AND JESUS RECORDED BY MARK.**

1. **THIS CONFRONTATION IS OVER LEGALISM REGARDING SABBATH-REST.**
2. **WHAT BEGINS AS A NATURAL AND INNOCENT ACT BY JESUS' DISCIPLES ESCALATES INTO A CONFRONTATION BETWEEN THE AUTHORITY OF JESUS *AND* THE AUTHORITY OF THE PHARISEES.**

C. **BACKGROUND: GOD'S LAW SAID…**

1. **Leviticus 23:22 (NASB)** 'When you reap the harvest of your land, moreover, **you shall not reap to the very corners of your field nor gather the gleaning (LEFTOVERS) of your harvest**; **you are to leave them for the needy and the alien**. I am the LORD your God.'"

D. **SABBATH-REST:**

1. **ORIGINALLY, GOD SET ASIDE THE SEVENTH DAY OF THE WEEK AS A WEEKLY HOLIDAY TO COMMEMORATE HIS CREATION OF THE WORLD.**
   a. **BACKGROUND: "SABBATH" IS DERIVED FROM THE HEBREW VERB "SHABAT" WHICH MEANS "TO CEASE IN ORDER TO REST".**
      1) **GOD "CEASED" BECAUSE CREATION WAS COMPLETE... *NOT* BECAUSE HE WAS TIRED.**
2. **LATER (2,553 YEARS?) THE JEWISH SABBATH ALSO COMMEMORATED AND CELEBRATED THE COVENANT GOD ESTABLISHED WITH ABRAHAM/ ISRAEL BECAUSE HIS PEOPLE FINALLY ENTERED THE PROMISED LAND.**
   a. **FRIDAY AT SUNDOWN BECAME A TIME FOR FEASTING, SINGING, AND CELEBRATING.**
      1) **A TIME WHEN FAMILIES CELEBRATED THEIR GOD OF PROVISION *AND* PROTECTION, AND TO SET ASIDE WORK SO THEY COULD BOND WITH EACH OTHER.**
3. **BY THE TIME OF JESUS'S MINISTRY, THE PHARISEES HAD TRANSFORMED THE SABBATH INTO SOMETHING VERY DIFFERENT FROM WHAT GOD HAD ORDAINED.**
   a. **TO THE SIMPLE COMMAND TO "SABAT" ("TO CEASE IN ORDER TO REST") THE PHARISEES ADDED A LONG LIST OF SPECIFIC PROHIBITIONS THAT, IRONICALLY, TURNED THE DAY OF REST AND CELEBRATION INTO A RELIGIOUS BURDEN.**
      1) **REMEMBER: LEGALISTS WILL STEAL YOUR JOY.**
      2) **THEY CREATED THIRTY-NINE SEPARATE CATEGORIES THAT CONSTITUTED "WORK"… AND FORBID THEM ON THE SABBATH.**

E. **NOTE: AMONG THE MANY MAN-MADE RULES OF THE PHARISEES THERE WERE FOUR WHICH PROHIBITED REAPING, THRESHING, WINNOWING, AND PREPARING A MEAL ON THE SABBATH.**

1. **PHARISAIC LAW: SAID THAT "PLUCKING WHEAT FROM ITS STEM WAS REAPING, RUBBING THE WHEAT HEADS BETWEEN ONE'S PALMS WAS THRESHING, AND BLOWING AWAY THE CHAFF WAS WINNOWING!"**

F. The **Pharisees** were **saying to Him, "Look, why are they doing what is not lawful** (ACCORDING TO THE PHARISEES) **on the Sabbath?" (V. 24)**

1. **UH-OH: SURELY THE PHARISEES SHOULD KNOW BETTER BY NOW!**

G. **WITH A HINT OF SARCASM JESUS'S COUNTERQUESTION ESTABLISHED A DIRECT CORRELATION *BETWEEN* HIM AND DAVID!**

1. **"Have you never read what David did when he was in need and he and his companions became hungry**; how he entered the house of God in the time of Abiathar *the* high priest, and ate the consecrated bread, which is not lawful for *anyone* to eat except the priests, and he also gave it to those who were with him?" **(VS. 25-26)**

2. **IN HIS COUNTERQUESTION, JESUS STATED THE FACT THAT THE SACREDNESS OF THE SABBATH IS BUILT ON THE MORAL PRINCIPLE OF GRACE *RATHER THAN* ON THE RELIGIOUS REGULATION OF THE LAW.**

H. **JESUS SAYS THAT THREE BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES GUIDE SABBATH-REST:**

1. **FIRST: JESUS SAID, "The Sabbath was made for man…" (V. 27a)**

a. **TRANSLATION:**

1) **GOD CREATED THE SABBATH DAY OF REST AS A BLESSING, A GIFT, AND A PRACTICAL AID FOR HUMAN WELL-BEING OF PHYSICAL RESTORATION AND SPIRITUAL RENEWAL, *RATHER THAN* AS AN OPPRESSIVE AND RIGID RULE MEANT TO CONTROL PEOPLE.**

i. **FACT: GOD GAVE THE SABBATH-REST LAW TO HIS PEOPLE TO BLESS THEM, *NOT* TO BURDEN THEM!**

b. JESUS WAS SAYING, IN EFFECT, HUMAN NEEDS, MERCY, AND COMPASSION TAKE PRIORITY OVER RITUALISTIC LEGALISM WHICH FAILS TO COMPLY WITH GOD'S ORIGIONAL INTENTION!

2. SECOND: JESUS SAID "… and not man for the Sabbath." (V. 27b)

a. TRANSLATION:

1) AS THE SON OF GOD, WHO ESTABLISHED SABBATH-REST, JESUS SAID HE HAS THE AUTHORITY TO CORRECT MAN-MADE (PHARISAIC) DISTORTIONS … AND TO SHOW THAT DOING GOOD, HEALING, AND SHOWING MERCY ARE ENTIRELY ALIGNED WITH GOD'S ORIGINAL INTENT FOR THE SABBATH.

3. THIRD: JESUS SAID "So the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath." (V. 28)

a. TRANSLATION:

1) THE LAW WAS GIVEN BY GOD; *THEREFORE*, THE LAW CAN NEVER BE GREATER THAN GOD.

2) JESUS CHALLENGED THE AUTHORITY OF THE PHARISEES, *BECAUSE* THEY HAD BASICALLY STOLEN THE SABBATH FROM GOD.

i. HE SAID, *IN EFFECT*, "THE SABBATH IS NOT YOURS TO REGULATE; IT IS MY GIFT TO MY PEOPLE… *THEREFORE*, I AM TAKING IT BACK FROM YOU."

I. WHEN JESUS RESPONDS TO THE PHARISEES WITH THOSE THREE BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES… HE FREED THE PEOPLE FROM THE LEGALISTIC RULES OF THE PHARISEES.

1. *AND…* GRACE TOOK PRECEDENCE *WHERE* THE LAW HAD FAILED.

J. THE CONVERSATION ENDED *BECAUSE* THE LEGALISTIC PHARISEES HAD NO ANSWER FOR JESUS' LOGIC… *HOWEVER*, THAT WAS FAR FROM THE END OF THE CONFLICT…

1. BECAUSE: LEGALISTS YEARN FOR CONTROL LIKE A THIRSTY PERSON CRAVES WATER;

2. ***AND*… THEY ARE THE MOST DANGEROUS WHEN THEY ARE DEPRIVED OF WHAT THEY WANT… POWER TO CONTROL!**

3. **MINISTRY OF MERCY: MARK 3:1-6**

A. **Mark 3:1-6 (NASB)**

He entered again into a synagogue; and a man was there whose hand was withered. **They** (THE PHARISEES) **were watching Him *to see* if He would heal him on the Sabbath, so that they might accuse Him**. He said to the man with the withered hand, "Get up and come forward!" 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**. **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**. **The Pharisees went out and immediately *began* conspiring with the Herodians against Him, *as to* how they might destroy Him.**

B. **BEGINNING WITH JESUS' HEALING OF THE LEPER THERE HAVE BEEN FIVE CONFLICTS WITH THE PHARISEES… FORGIVENESS OF SINS, EATING WITH SINNERS, FASTING, AND SABBATH RULES.**

1. **IN MARK 3:1-6 JESUS' HEALING OF THE MAN WITH A WITHERED HAND ON THE SABBATH IS THE SIXTH CONFLICT WITH THE PHARISEES RECORDED BY MARK… *AND* IT IS "THE LAST STRAW" FOR JESUS!**

2. **JESUS REALIZES THAT HE CANNOT WIN THE PHARISEES… *SO* TO GET ON WITH HIS MINISTRY OF SERVICE TO PEOPLE IN NEED HE GOES ON OFFENSE:**

   a. **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. 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.

C. **WHEN JESUS ENTERED THE SYNAGOGUE, SOMEONE WITH A SERIOUS NEED SAT IN THE CONGREGATION… A MAN WHOSE HAND WAS WITHERED.**

1. **NOTE: *AS A* RESULT OF HIS WITHERED HAND, THE MAN COULD NOT EARN A LIVING.**

D. **INTERESTING: THE PHARISEES "WERE WATCHING HIM".**

1. **THE GREEK WORD FOR WATCHING IS PARATEREO WHICH MEANS "WATCHING WITH SUSPIICION".**

E. **CONSIDERATION: IT'S POSSIBLE THAT THE PHARISEES PLACED THE MAN IN THE SYNAGOGUE KNOWING JESUS WOULD BE DRAWN TO HIM.**

1. ***AND*… THEY WAITED TO SEE WHAT HE WOULD DO… "so that they might accuse Him"**

a. **THEY WERE "WATCHING" FOR AN OPPORTUNITY TO PUBLICLY CRITICIZE JESUS… AGAIN!**

1) ***BECAUSE* JESUS WAS CHALLENGING THEIR AUTHORITY!**

F. **NOTE THE IRONY: JESUS WANTED TO DO GOOD ON THE SABBATH WHILE THE PHARISEES CONSPIRED TO DO EVIL… WHICH WAS TO CONDEMN JESUS FOR DOING GOOD.**

G. **ACCORDING TO THE PHARISEE'S RULES REGARDING THE SABBATH JESUS SHOULD HAVE WAITED FOR A WEEKDAY TO HEAL THE MAN *BECAUSE* THEIR LAW SAID THIS KIND OF HEALING WAS *NOT* A MATTER OF LIFE AND DEATH… RIDICULOUS!!**

1. ***HOWEVER*, IN JESUS'S MIND, THE FAILURE TO DO GOOD WAS NOTHING SHORT OF AIDING AND ABETTING EVIL.**

a. **FOR HIM, *NOT* ONLY WAS IT PERMISSIBLE TO DO GOOD ON THE SABBATH… IT WAS AN OBLIGATION.**

1) ***EVEN IF* THE HEALING WOULD PROVOKE ANOTHER SHOWDOWN WITH THE PHARISEES.**

b. **FACT: HUMAN NEED ALWAYS CREATED A MORAL IMPERATIVE FOR JESUS … *AND* THE PRIMARY TEST OF ALL THEOLOGY AND MORALITY IS OUR RESPONSE TO THE WEAK AND DEFENSELESS MEMBERS OF SOCIETY.**

H. **JESUS' COUNTERQUESTION TO THE PHARISEES, "Is it lawful (ACCORDING TO THEIR LAWS) to do good or to do harm on the Sabbath, to save a life or to kill?" CREATES A DILEMMA:**

1. **NOTE: *IF* THE PHARISEES LACK THE MERCY TO DO GOOD ON THE SABBATH, THEY INDICT THEMSELVES AS BEING HARD-HEARTED AND HARD-HEADED.**
2. ***AND, IF* THEY LACK THE MERCY TO SAVE LIFE, THEY INDICT THEMSELVES AS KILLERS.**

I. **HOW VERY SAD: JESUS'S "GOOD NEWS" HAS BOUNCED OFF THE CALLOUSED HEARTS AND MINDS OF THE PHARISEES WITHOUT THE SLIGHTEST EFFECT.**

1. ***AND* THE RELIGIOUS LEADERS OF ISRAEL HAVE REJECTED THEIR OWN SAVIOR!**

J. **UH-OH: "GRIVED AT THE PHARISEES HARDNESS OF HEART" JESUS TURNS BACK TO THE MAN WITH A WITHERED HAND AND ASKS HIM TO STRETCH OUT HIS HAND AS A SHOW OF FAITH.**

1. **RESULT: THE MAN OBEYS *AND* HIS HAND IS HEALED!**
2. **IRONY: THIS HEALING ADDS INSULT TO INJURY FOR THE PHARISEES:**
   a. **BY SIMPLY ASKING THE MAN TO STRETCH OUT HIS HAND:**
      1) **JESUS DOES *NOT* BREAK ANY OF THE PHARISEE'S LABOR LAWS RELATING TO THE SABBATH.**
      2) **THE MAN: IS *ALSO* EQUALLY INNOCENT *BECAUSE* THERE IS NO LAW AGAINST OBEDIENCE.**
   b. **UH-OH: JESUS HAS BEATEN THE RELIGIOUS SYSTEM… A G A I N!**

K. ***UNFORTUNATELY*… THE PHARISEES FOOLISHLY BELIEVE THAT THERE IS ONLY ONE ALTERNATIVE AVAILABLE FOR THEM… *AND,* VIOLATING EVERY TENET OF THEIR LAW *AND* EVERY PRINCIPLE OF THEIR FAITH, THEY GO TO THE LEADERS OF THE HERODIAN PARTY TO SEEK COUNSEL ON HOW THEY MIGHT WORK TOGETHER TO "DESTROY" JESUS.**

1. **FACT: POLITICS MAKES STRANGE BEDFELLOWS!!!**
2. **NOTE: THE HERODIANS WERE LOYAL TO ROME AND OWED THEIR POWER TO THE ROMAN EMPERORS.**
3. **PARADOX: GOD'S SPECIALISTS IN HUMAN SALVATION COUNSELED WITH CAESAR'S SPECIALISTS IN HUMAN SLAUGHTER!**

4. **CONCLUSION: (MARK 2:21-3:6)**

A. **OPPORTUNITY:**

1. **FOR THE PEOPLE JESUS HELPED AND HEALED.**
   a. **BECAUSE THE "GOOD NEWS" OF JESUS'S MINISTRY GAVE THE JEWISH PEOPLE:**
      1) **COMPASSION, FORGIVENESS OF SIN, HOPE, JOY, GRACE, AND MERCY.**

B. **OPPOSITION:**

1. **FROM THE PHARISEES WHO ARE SO SPIRITUALLY BANKRUPT THAT:**
   a. **THEY *NOT ONLY* REJECTED THE SPIRIT OF THEIR OWN SCRIPTURES,**
   b. ***BUT*… THEY JOINED WITH THEIR ENEMIES IN A PLOT TO KILL THEIR ONLY SAVIOR.**