

MORE BLESSING, MORE OPPOSITION

Mark 3

Intro: As we read through any one of the Gospels, we become familiar with two characteristics of the life and ministry of our Lord.

The first is that He was constantly confronted with human needs. Sometimes those needs were physical; at other times they were spiritual. And so the Lord gave Himself primarily to doing two things: healing the sick, and teaching the truth of God. The people flocked to Him with their needs, and they took special delight in His teaching. Endless opportunities were before the Lord.

At the same time there was opposition, and that opposition did not come primarily from Rome, but from the scribes and Pharisees and other leaders of the Jews. One would think that the Jewish leaders would have welcomed the ministry of the Lord, but instead they were the main sources of opposition. And they were relentless. It seems that wherever He went, they were there. Whatever He did, they saw it. The Lord was looked upon by them as an outsider because He had not been trained like the scribes and Pharisees had. In John 7 we have the attitude of the Jewish leaders expressed in the question that they asked, “How knoweth this man letters, having never learned ?” (John 7:15). They meant that He had never been to their schools, and they could not understand how He could teach the way He did, and where He had learned the truths that He taught. But only in rare cases like that of Nicodemus do we find those religious men really seeking the answer to their own questions. You will remember that Nicodemus had come to the conviction that no man could do the miracles that the Lord was doing unless God was with him. The Jews were so blinded by their own conceit and love of power, that they were not seeking help for themselves, and were doing all that they could to stand in the way so that the Lord could not help those who were in need.

We get so accustomed to reading about the miracles that the Lord performed that we fail to realize how really astounding this was to the people of that day. Sickness and disease and death were everywhere. And all of a sudden this man appeared who had unlimited powers for doing good – healing diseases, driving out demons, and even raising the dead. The prevalence of demon possession during the ministry of our Lord indicates that the forces of Satan were out in full to discredit and to

defeat all that the Lord was doing, and even to destroy Him.

But through it all the Lord continued His work. He was careful around the scribes and Pharisees, but He healed and He taught even when they were present.

Mark here in chapter 3 shows How the opposition was growing against the Lord.

Anyone can see how serious the opposition at this point was by reading verse 6. (Read.) That is the end of the first part of the chapter.

But then we see the Lord moving ahead with His own plans while ministering to the people, He called twelve of His disciples who were to be His apostles. Then it is important to note in verses 20 and 21 the concern of some well meaning friends. Verse 21 marks the conclusion of this part of the chapter.

And then the opposition was both renewed and intensified as the scribes charged the Lord with being an emissary of the Devil, a most incredible charge against the Lord. But the Lord did not hesitate to show how ridiculous such a charge was. And then the Lord brought up the subject of sins and forgiveness. This goes from verse 22 to verse 30.

And then the last five verses of the chapter have to do with the mother of our Lord and his brothers coming to see Him, and how He responded to those who told Him that they were there looking for Him.

So the opposition was from family and friends as well as from his enemies, although the nature of the opposition was very, very different. With the former, the motivation was love; with the latter, it was hatred.

I. THE HEALING OF THE MAN WITH THE WITHERED HAND (Mark 3:1-6).

This was an incident showing the hardness of heart that prevailed among the scribes and Pharisees. “Hardness” means blindness, stupidity, and callousness, a condition which actually disqualified these men for making any claim as being the men they pretended to be. They were phonies!

Notice that the Pharisees went immediately to the Herodians who were

more like a political party than they were religious leaders. And what they had in their hearts toward the Lord was murder.

II. THE LORD'S CONTINUING MINISTRY AND CALLING OF THE APOSTLES (Mark 3:7-21).

In this section we get some relief from the scribes and Pharisees. The popularity of the Lord continued. His teaching is not mentioned, but it is implied because of our Lord's request for a small boat. But then He also healed all who were sick, and cast out demons. But the Lord had not desire to enlist the help of the demons even though they recognized and began to publish Who the Lord was.

But then we have a wonderful section dealing with the calling of the twelve disciples who were to become His apostles. Note His charge to them in vv. 14 and 15. And then their names were given. There were no prominent men among them.

III. THE VICIOUS CHARGE AGAINST THE LORD BY THE SCRIBES (Mark 3:22-30).

No greater accusation could have been directed toward the Lord than that He was serving the prince of the demons, indicating that His work was Satanic. They were really blaspheming His Name. They accused Him of being demon-possessed.

But the Lord issued a warning against blaspheming the Holy Spirit. He did not say that these Jews had committed such an unforgivable sin, but His warning was that they were approaching very close to it. It may be that the Lord was looking ahead to the period following His own time on earth when the Holy Spirit would be given. Such blasphemy against the Holy Spirit and the light which would have been given, would be unforgivable.

IV. THE CONCERN OF THE LORD'S MOTHER AND HIS BROTHERS (Mark 3:31-35).

We really should not need anyone to remind us of the deep love that our Lord would have had for His mother. And the same would have been true about His love for His brothers. He was not being disrespectful nor unkind to any of them. But He was pointing out that our relationship with

each other as the people of God, was what really counts. We are always inclined to put the main emphasis upon human relationships, and boast about those. Remember how there were those who said to the Lord that the woman who gave Him birth, and who nursed Him in His infancy, was especially blessed. But it was not that that secured heaven for Mary the mother of our Lord. I am referring to the words we find in Luke 11:27-28:

27 And it came to pass, as he spake these things, a certain woman of the company lifted up her voice, and said unto him, Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou hast sucked.
28 But he said, Yea rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it.

And so let us make sure that we are not putting our hope on any relationship, nor upon any good deeds, for our salvation. The only people who have heard the Word of God, and do it, are those who have believed in the saving grace of Christ, and whose lives are, therefore, directed by the Word of God.

Concl: Let us make sure that we are trusting the Savior. There are those today who would discredit the Lord Jesus Christ and everything He did. We can say that they are the descendants of the scribes and Pharisees. They may wear clerical robes even, but if they are not trusting Christ and preaching the Gospel, they are wolves in sheep's clothing.