

GOOD NEWS FROM THE KING
A Study of the Gospel According to Mark
Mark 3

Holy Bible, New International Version ©2011

"Whoever does God's will is my brother and sister and mother." Mark 3:35

Pray for the Holy Spirit to open your heart to his word.

Read through this week's passage and jot down any thoughts and questions you may have.

Read Mark 3:1–6.

1. Why are the Pharisees "watch[ing] [Jesus] closely" (v. 2) on this particular Sabbath day? (vv. 1–2; review Mark 1:21–28; 2:23–24)

Sabbath Rest

"The word **Sabbath** means a deep rest, a deep peace. It's a near synonym for **shalom** – a state of wholeness and flourishing in every dimension of life. When Jesus says, 'I am the Lord **of** the Sabbath,' Jesus means that he **is** the Sabbath. He is the source of the deep rest we need."¹

2. Jesus knows what the Pharisees are secretly thinking (Luke 6:8) and publicly confronts them.
 - a. What does Jesus do to challenge the Pharisees? (vv. 3–4)
 - b. Why do you think Jesus "deliberately provokes"² them?
3. Jesus does not minimize the importance of keeping the Sabbath, but emphasizes its intent in the question he poses to the Pharisees in verse 4. What kind of work is acceptable on the Sabbath? (v. 4; Matthew 12:11–12; Luke 13:14–16)
4. Though the answer to Jesus' question should have been obvious, the Pharisees remain silent. Why is Jesus angered by their silence? (v. 5; Isaiah 29:13)

In his book *King's Cross*, Tim Keller writes, "Why does Jesus become angry with the religious leaders? Because the Sabbath is about restoring the diminished. It's about replenishing the drained. It's about repairing the broken. To heal the man's shriveled hand is to do exactly what the Sabbath is all about. Yet because the leaders are so concerned that Sabbath regulations be observed, they don't want Jesus to heal this man – an incredible example of missing the forest for the trees. Their hearts are as shriveled as the man's hand."³

5. In verse 5 we read that the man with the shriveled hand is obedient when Jesus commands, "Stretch out your hand," and is instantly and "completely restored." In what ways is the Pharisees' response to this in verse 6 sadly ironic?
6. Reread verses 1–6. What impresses you about Jesus in these verses?
7. The Apostle Paul tells us in 2 Thessalonians 3:13 to "never tire of doing what is good." Take some time to pray that the Lord would enable you by his Spirit to "keep the Sabbath" by doing good so that others might come to know the Lord of the Sabbath and find true rest in him. (Consider also Galatians 6:7–10 and Ephesians 2:10.)

Read Mark 3:7–35.

8. Jesus' popularity is growing and people flock to Capernaum to see him.
 - a. Locate on the map provided the towns and regions from which they are coming. (vv. 8–9; Note: Sidon is not shown on the map. It was located just north of Tyre on the Mediterranean Sea coast.)
 - b. Identify the different groups of people in this passage, what they think about Jesus, and their response to him. Fill in the chart below.

Group	What they think about Jesus	Their response to Jesus
vv. 7–8	vv. 8, 10	v. 10
v. 11	v. 11	v. 11
vv. 21, 31	v. 21	vv. 31–32
vv. 22	vv. 22, 30	v. 22

9. In verses 13–15, Jesus appoints twelve men to assist him in ministry. (They are later called "apostles" [Mark 6:30], those whom Jesus "sends out.") Their purpose is two-fold:
 1. to be with Jesus, and
 2. to be sent out—to preach the good news, to drive out demons with authority from God (vv. 14–15), and "to heal every disease and sickness" (Matthew 10:1).
 - a. Why is it essential for these twelve men to "be continually in the company of" ⁴ Jesus before being sent out to minister in his name?

- b. We are not apostles, but as believers in Jesus, we are his disciples (followers). Why is it important for us to spend time with Jesus in his word and in prayer? (📖* Acts 4:13; 2 Thessalonians 2:13–17)

Reread Mark 3:20–35.

10. In these verses Jesus faces opposition from both his family and the Pharisees. Though the nature of their accusations is different, how are they an equal threat to Jesus' mission?
11. To reveal the absurdity of the harsh accusation made by the teachers of the law (v. 22), Jesus responds in parables.
- a. What point is Jesus making in verses 23–27?
- b. Who has power and authority to defeat the "strong man" of verse 27 (that is, Satan)? (v. 27; Isaiah 49:24–26; 1 John 3:8)
12. What comfort do you find in the assurance Jesus gives? (v. 28; John 6:37–40; 1 John 1:9)
13. In verses 33–35, Jesus seems dismissive of his biological family, but instead affirms as family those "seated in a circle around him" (v. 34). What does Jesus say characterizes members of God's family? (v. 35)
14. What are some benefits to being a part of God's family, and how do they encourage you in the midst of both the joys and struggles of life? (Consider vv. 34–35 and Romans 8:16–17)

**Blaspheming
against the Holy Spirit**

Verses 28–30 contain "one of the most solemn pronouncements and warnings in the whole of the New Testament, coupled, as often, with one of the greatest promises. There is forgiveness with God for every sin and blasphemy except one,....This is the sin of the willfully blind, who persistently refuse the illumination of the Spirit, oppose the Spirit's work, and justify themselves in doing so by deliberately misrepresenting him. For such, there can be no forgiveness, for they have refused the only way of forgiveness that God has provided: indeed, they have slammed the door...."⁵
(📖 Numbers 15:30–31; Hebrews 6:4–6, 10:26–31)

This lesson on Mark's Gospel is adapted from "Life of a Servant" by New Life Glenside Women's Bible Study, 2002–2003.

*📖 indicates the passage is for further study.

¹ Timothy Keller, *King's Cross: The Story of the World in the Life of Jesus* (New York: Penguin Group, 2011), 42.

² David E. Garland, *Mark, The NIV Application Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 108.

³ Keller, 38–39.

⁴ R. Alan Cole, *Mark, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2008), 138.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 145.