

Title: The Book of Mark: Part 8

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Passage: Mark 3.1-12

Big idea: 4 Responses to Jesus and how we can learn from them.



When my parents got married, they were given a camera as a gift from my uncle who owned a photography store. Now this camera was not like the ones on our phones, this one was retro. It was one of those cameras you needed to put *film* in, 35 mm film to be exact. The great thing about this camera was that when you took a picture the film would advance not one scene but half a scene. So that would mean that if you put a roll of film with 36 frames it would double. Instead of being able to take 36 pictures you could take 72 pictures that were all different. Now, to see the photos, you would take this film to get it processed. So, we would wind up the film in the camera. You had to make sure the film was totally rolled up in its little canister because if it wasn't in and you open up the camera all the film would be exposed, and all the pictures would be ruined.

We would take this camera with us on trips or bring it out on Christmas morning. Once the film was used up, and the photos were processed, we would go home and take a look at all the pictures. Out of all of them we would pick one that we called the big picture of Christmas or the big picture of our family vacation.

There are a few different settings or scenes in this passage of Mark and in each scene, there are different groups with different responses to what Jesus is doing. As we look at each response, be open and transparent yourself on what your real response would be to God.

## BIG IDEA

4 Responses to Jesus and  
how we can learn from them.



<sup>1</sup> Another time Jesus went into the synagogue, and a man with a shriveled hand was there. <sup>2</sup> Some of them were looking for a reason to accuse Jesus, so they watched him closely to see if he would heal him on the Sabbath. <sup>3</sup>

Jesus said to the man with the shriveled hand, “Stand up in front of everyone.” <sup>4</sup> Then Jesus asked them, “Which is lawful on the Sabbath: to do good or to do evil, to save life or to kill?” But they remained silent. <sup>5</sup> He looked around at them in anger and, deeply distressed at their stubborn hearts, said to the man, “Stretch out your hand.” He stretched it out, and his hand was completely restored. <sup>6</sup> Then the Pharisees went out and began to plot with the Herodians how they might kill Jesus. <sup>7</sup> Jesus withdrew with his disciples to the lake, and a large crowd from Galilee followed. <sup>8</sup> When they heard about all he was doing, many people came to him from

Judea, Jerusalem, Idumea, and the regions across the Jordan and around Tyre and Sidon. <sup>9</sup> Because of the crowd he told his disciples to have a small boat ready for him, to keep the people from crowding him. <sup>10</sup> For he had healed many, so that those with diseases were pushing forward to touch him. <sup>11</sup> Whenever the evil spirits saw him, they fell down before him and cried out, “You are the Son of God.” <sup>12</sup> But he gave them strict orders not to tell who he was.

Mark 3:1-12

To truly appreciate this passage, let's put ourselves in it. We see Jesus going to synagogues to teach. His teaching at times seemed radical to the people of this culture, but it is very biblical. The Pharisees, of the Hebrew faith are looking at Jesus and realizing this guy may be 'crazy'.

We have to remember, that the people of Israel are under occupation of the Roman Empire and the Hebrews were looking for a deliverer to come and save them, like the kings of ancient Israel. As that is in the mind of the Hebrew people, there are false teachers and false prophets proclaiming to be the deliverer, the Messiah of Israel. The Pharisees are very concerned when someone comes and teaches - but they are being overly concerned when it involves Jesus.

The first big picture is Jesus' teaching about **LIFE**

Mark 3.1, "Another time Jesus went into the synagogue, and a man with a shriveled hand was there."

Now there is no information about which synagogue Jesus was in except for the fact that he was in the region of Galilee which is where most of this biblical account has already taken place.

In the synagogue there is a man with a shriveled hand.

Mark 3.2, "Some of them were looking for a reason to accuse Jesus, so they watched him closely to see if he would heal him on the Sabbath."

This is the first group of people we will look at, the Pharisees

So, the Pharisees were watching and waiting to see whether Jesus would break the laws again, the laws in the way they defined it.

Jesus had already raised suspicions in their minds because of the way he taught. These religious leaders were at the synagogue not to worship God, but spy on Jesus as it says they watched him closely.

The issue was not "could he", but "would he" heal. Rabbinical law allowed healing on the Sabbath only in the event that life was actually in danger.

As Jesus is going around from synagogue to synagogue, he is proclaiming the message of life in God.

Proclaiming the Kingdom of God, he is talking about how God wants us to live, he is talking about how God wants us treat others, he is talking about how God wants us to have a relationship that is pure with him. But that teaching that is proclaimed, doesn't reach the ears of the Pharisees.

Mark 3.3-4, "Jesus said to the man with the shriveled hand, "Stand up in front of everyone." Then Jesus asked them, "Which is lawful on the Sabbath: to do good or to do evil, to save life or to kill?" But they remained silent."

Jesus knew exactly what the Pharisees were doing. Jesus, instead of carefully acting, Jesus commands the man to stand up and come to the front. Jesus places the man, and what he is about to do in center stage.

Now when you look at verse 4 the religious leaders do not verbalize their questions to Jesus, but Jesus knows their hearts. Jesus asks the question about the Sabbath: to do good or to do evil, to save a life or to kill?

The question that Jesus is asking, would have been perceived by the hearers as a commonsense answer. They would have maybe laughed a little when he asked this question. Of course, the answer is to do good to save a life as opposed to doing evil or to kill.

The phrase to do good or to do evil is a semitic idiom that simply means "to do anything". In this context it is better to do good which is to heal rather than to kill, doing nothing. According to John Calvin "there is little

difference between manslaughter and the conic of him who does not concern himself about relieving a person in distress”<sup>1</sup>

When you look at, it is very hypocritical what the Pharisees are doing. They are looking to charge Jesus for breaking the Sabbath laws, even though what Jesus is doing is good. All the while they are plotting to kill him.

Mark 3.5, “He looked around at them in anger and, deeply distressed at their stubborn hearts, said to the man, “Stretch out your hand.” He stretched it out, and his hand was completely restored.”

Anger is not an emotion that we see too often of Jesus. This was not an expression of injured self; it was concern with godly indignation. What a good man feels in the presence of evil. Now this anger is also attached to compassion. The phrase “around at them in anger” was temporary, momentary, quickly replaced with compassion.

Jesus was deeply distressed because of their stubborn hearts. Heart referring their mind, their thoughts, and their will. It was their consistent failure to recognize what Jesus was doing. It was an inability or refusal to see who Jesus really was. Jesus is grieved at what they are doing - full of sorrow for them.

In this scene, Jesus shows compassion to the man and completely restores him.

Mark 3.6, “Then the Pharisees went out and began to plot with the Herodians how they might kill Jesus.”

The Pharisees start plotting to kill Jesus and join forces with the Herodians. This is significant because the Pharisees represent the religious elite, and the Herodians are politicians. Jesus is getting very famous during this time, and this is causing problems for the politicians as well, because people believed that the Messiah was the deliverer and was sent to overthrow the Roman Empire that is occupying the area. The Herodians are supporters of Herod who rules the area and supporters of the Roman Empire. We now have two uncommon groups connected over their hatred of Jesus.

Now let’s look at the response of the Pharisees. Remember the big picture for this scene is *life*, let’s look at the picture of the Pharisees’ response.

### **Self-righteous attitude.**

The Response: of the Pharisees to what Jesus is saying about life is a self-righteous attitude against God.

To the Pharisees, life was about rules made to ensure the people follow the word of God, the initial intentions were good however it evolved into a system of rules to promote self righteousness. Looking good on the outside but on inside corrupt and sick.

Jesus is proclaiming life to the fullest. But these people see things totally differently it is all about actions as opposed to what is in the heart of an individual. Looking at the response of this group, we need to ask ourselves a question.

What is our response?

As God talks to us in the Bible about living life to the fullest - do we as followers have a self-righteous attitude about what God wants us to do?

Doing what is right according to our own eyes. When you look at scripture many times people did what was right in their own eyes. People like Abraham and Sarah, not believing what God had for them, made bad decisions, because they ‘knew’ best. We have had kings like David, a good man, but at times, he made decisions that just did not make sense. Do we at times act like Abraham, Sarah, or King David?

Mark 3.7, “Jesus withdrew with his disciples to the lake, and a large crowd from Galilee followed.”

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<sup>1</sup> pg. 639, Expository Commentary Mark 3:3-4

Jesus withdrew, moved away from those who had become his enemies by deliberately separating from them. However, even as he moved away to be separated, large crowds still followed.

Mark 3.8, “When they heard about all he was doing, many people came to him from Judea, Jerusalem, Idumea, and the regions across the Jordan and around Tyre and Sidon.”

The crowds that came to see Jesus were not only from the regions of Galilee but everywhere, they came from the South from Jerusalem in Idumea from the east across the Jordan river from the northwest interior and in all of these people came to see Jesus because of what he could offer of them.

The second picture is, **HEALING**

When Jesus was speaking, he was talking about a pure relationship between God and humanity. Those that came from a Jewish background would have been taught in Hebrew school of what had happened in the garden of Eden, the great and tragic separation between God and humanity. How sin entered the world and has brought into the world death and the grave. Jesus’ message was about healing, but not simply a physical healing but the healing of the soul.

Mark 3.9-10, “Because of the crowd he told his disciples to have a small boat ready for him, to keep the people from crowding him. For he had healed many, so that those with diseases were pushing forward to touch him.”

This is the second group of people we want to look at, the crowds. They kept on coming wanting to be with Jesus. There were so many in the crowd that he had to tell his disciples to get a small boat so he could be out in the lake so that people wouldn't crowd him. Now Jesus healed many physically, but those with diseases were pushing forward to touch him constantly.

The crowds responded to Jesus’ ministry of physical healing, but let's really take a look at the response of the crowd. What was the motivation behind coming to Jesus?

### **Self-centered desires.**

The crowd seems to have had little interest in Jesus other than being a miracle worker. But despite this Jesus shows compassion on many of them. They were more concerned to be relieved of their pain and suffering in the physical body as opposed to being relieved of their pain and suffering in the spirit. When they went to Jesus, they weren't seeking the giver of the healing they were seeking the gift to be healed. It is interesting that this same crowd that comes, is the same crowd that would have welcomed him to Jerusalem with shouts of “Hosana” and then a few days later be the ones shouting, “crucify him”. They were not true disciples of Jesus at all, it was all about their selfish desire.

The healing that Jesus proclaims and has come to earth to do was partially physical, but it is more than that. Jesus came to heal at a spiritual level as well. For when humanity sinned in the garden it just did not cause sickness to enter our bodies, it was the spiritual sickness of our souls. These individuals valued their bodies but not their souls. It was always about the spiritual, about the soul of an individual. That is what Jesus was proclaiming, a healing of their sin through the ultimate sacrifice of himself on the cross.

What is our response?

Now as God talks to us in the Bible about healing, spiritual healing do we as followers only seek physical miracles as opposed to a better spiritual healing in our relationship with God? Do we resemble the people in the crowd? Are our requests to Jesus in prayer focused on our physical problems or physical needs and other things that we love?

Jesus himself said, “What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul”<sup>2</sup>. It is not just about the physical, it is about spiritual, it is about the soul. We must make our soul top priority.

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<sup>2</sup> Matthew 16:26

The third picture is, **POWER**

As Jesus was ministering, he was not only getting the attention of the religious leaders, of the political collaborators, of the crowds or of the mob, but of another group.

This is the third group are the evil spirits,

Mark 3:11-12, “Whenever the evil spirits saw him, they fell down before him and cried out, “You are the Son of God.” But he gave them strict orders not to tell who he was.”

Jesus is getting the attention of the spiritual world. The devil and the evil spirits know what is going on and it is not good for them. For the first time in history, God decides to come to earth in flesh, in bodily form, being 100% human and at the same time 100% God. The enemy has never, ever seen this before.

The evil spirits came down - they fell down before Jesus. It was in the posture of deferential respect and proclaiming him as the Son of God.

The evil spirits recognized who Jesus was even if the crowds did not. They were crying out to Jesus as a futile attempt to make him harmless by saying “Son of God”. It was designed to control him and strip him of his power. There was this misconception in the world at that time, that the knowledge of the precise name or quality of a person gives power over him.

However, Jesus gives them strict orders not to mention who he is. It was not time for Jesus’ divine identity to be proclaimed. They should not be the ones proclaiming Jesus as God, that was for humanity to do. The response of the evil spirits was:

### **Self-obsessed control.**

The response of the evil spirits to Jesus’ power is to attempt to take power from him. To take control from Jesus and to have control over him.

They want to be the ones to set the agenda, having full control of the situation. The evil spirits are upset because they cannot control what happens, they do not have the power.

Jesus has always had the power he has always been the authority - all things are through him and under him. God has given him all authority in heaven and on earth. But do we as followers of Christ we believe that?

Now as God talks to us in the Bible about power, do we as followers want to have the power for our own? Are we self-obsessed, preoccupied with our own agenda, wanting to take control from Jesus because it fits our schedules and plans better? Or, have we totally submitted, yielding ourselves to Christ, his power, his timing, and his plans?

All things are under his authority, and he calls us coheirs with him. So, as we are Christ followers in this world, we have the power of the Holy Spirit in us to guide us, that we may know what we must do for the Kingdom of God. Do we passionately yield to Christ, or do we want to hold onto our own self-obsessed control?

Now I want to go back into the early part of this passage and to talk about a fourth picture and response, the BIG PICTURE of the passage.

Jesus comes into the synagogue, and he sees a man. A man that has a shriveled hand. Now we know nothing about this man, we can assume a few things.

1. he was a Hebrew because he was in a synagogue.
2. he had physical issue with his body, a shriveled hand.
3. He is in the synagogue to hear some teaching.

And what does the Messiah, the savior of the world do? He looks at that man and calls that man up. Jesus tells him to stretch out his hand and it is not withered anymore.

This man didn't really know Jesus, but Jesus knew him, before he created the universe. Jesus called to this man, and the man answered the calling.

The fourth picture, the *Big Picture*, is, **THE GOSPEL**

Jesus, without the man asking, shows grace, love and mercy and radically changes his life. Jesus presents to him life, healing, and power.

What is the response of this man?

## **HUMILITY**

Not humility as in humiliation, but one of humbleness, not being full of the self. Not full of a self-righteous attitude, or self-centered desires, or self-obsessed control.

Here is this person with nothing to offer God but a withered hand. So, God out his Love, decides to call him into relationship with him to bring life into him, to bring healing upon him (both physical and spiritual), and the power of God upon him to live out the rest of his life.

The bigger picture is the Gospel message. That God sent Jesus Christ to give life, healing, and power so we can live our lives in a relationship with him.

God takes all of our "self", attitudes, desires, and controls; and makes us better, makes us new.

I love what the Gospel does. Jesus says in Revelation "behold I have made all things new". He takes us who are in our sinful nature, which separates us from God and looks at us with love and grace and mercy and he takes us as we are, forgives us and bring us into a relationship with him through the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross and his resurrection- he gives us life to the fullest, healing us spiritually and gives us his power to live out our lives. We become new, as Paul says in Corinthians - we are new creations, the old has gone and the new has come.

Did you ever think that maybe God has something better for you? In the world that you are living in he has a better plan for you. But it is those three things of "self" that keep us from having relationship with him.

And you may think that you have done things that will prevent you from having relationship with Christ. But all those things you have done, those images of our "self", those sins against God they can be wiped away totally clear.

God has a better image for you, a better picture, it is the Gospel.

What is your response?

If you are a follower of Christ, take your selfishness, self-righteousness, selfish desires, and self-obsessed control and laying it before God and submit to him.

If you are not a follower of Christ, come to him as the man came to be healed.

God is here and he is calling you into a relationship with Him. He is looking right at you and with his arms opened wide, has a new life for you in a relationship with Jesus.

I encourage you to enter into a relationship with Jesus Christ. Asking God to forgive you of your sins. Believing that Jesus is the only God and that he was raised from the dead. And commit your life to Christ.