

August 6th, 2023
Pinecrest Baptist Church
a.m.

Sermon Series: Striving with the Maker: The Ruin of Resistance
Sermon #3 Title: Learn of Me
Sermon #3 Text: (Matthew 12:9-14)

As we said from the beginning of this series, it should always be the interest of any saved person to know Jesus more. To know Him deeper, and to learn of Him as He stated in Matthew 11:29 – **“Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.”**

The reality is that such a call, and such a command, more often than not falls on deaf ears like darkness after sundown.

No Christian in his right mind would ever do all they could on purpose to strive, fight with, or resist the LORD Jesus. While they would never consciously do it; there are times when you are struggling against the One trying to help you, simply because you’re trying to get your own way.

In the chapter that we are studying, we are not looking at subtle resistance and unconscious resistance; but rather open and combative defiance.

- Never was there a group of people more resistant to our LORD than the group of Pharisees that we see in this chapter.

- In our text, at this time we are barely into the second year of Christ’s public ministry.
- We are in Galilee region, in the area of Capernaum
- The popularity of Jesus among the common people is growing.
- The hostility toward Jesus among the religious authorities is swelling as well.

Coming to this portion of the chapter today, there are at least four big things we see in the events that occurred one sabbath day in Capernaum that many years ago.

The events from verse 9-14 are also recorded in Mark 3:1-5, and Luke 6:6-11. In order to see the entire story, you need to read all three accounts.

When verse 8 ends in the cornfield, it appears that at least a week passes by, and maybe more, because Mark points our attention to a different sabbath day. Not the day of the cornfield confrontation; but another sabbath day.

As we start walking through the text, the first thing we are faced with is the fact that we have an Aggressive Master.

Never get the idea that while the Lord Jesus walked this earth that He was some sort of limp-wristed milquetoast of a man with a passive personality and character. Nothing could be farther from the truth, and this is one event among many that show us Jesus Christ is not a weak man.

I. We have an Aggressive Master – vs 9 **“And when He was departed thence, he went into their synagogue:”**

*Note – They chided Him in the cornfield, He followed them to their assembly.

- It has to be noted that Matthew seems to emphasize “their synagogue.”

- The synagogue of the very Pharisees that tried to confront Jesus and condemn Jesus some sabbath prior.

What do we know about this “synagogue?”

#1 – They were there, and most likely the ruler of the synagogue was in their group.

#2 – We know that the disciples are there.

#3 – We know there was a man there with a “withered hand.”

- literally paralyzed, or shriveled hand

- some have tried to identify if this was palsy, or due to some injury, or some other kind of ailment. – Here’s the point – It didn’t work.

- for further detail, Mark tells us it was his “right hand.”

#4 – We don’t know how many people were there that day; but the language from all the accounts together indicate that the building wasn’t empty; and appeared to have a significant crowd.

- if this does in fact take place at the synagogue of Capernaum, their building is a little bit bigger than the one you’re setting in, but not much.

*Note – Having said all of that why is it important for you to know that Jesus went to “their synagogue?” – We know this; He went one at least to “**Teach in their Presence.**”

A. To Teach in their Presence – (Luke adds) - “and taught.”

1.) Literally to “instruct, inform, and teach”

*Note – The first thing to realize here that tucked into that word is the subtle degree of motive which is the desire for someone to learn!

- There is a difference in me “Telling you something.” And “Teaching you something.” – Jesus did not go in to “Tell them,” but to “Teach them.”

2.) Know this: the Teaching of Christ is a Testing of Christ. – In an ultimate sense one will either bow up, or bow down.

*Note – Remember this – The difference between Christ’s followers and Christ’s foes was not His message; it was their reception of the message.

- Jesus would preach and teach the same thing in the presence of His foes, as He would teach publicly with His friends.

(Now friends would come to know more, because they received more, and would grow deeper. – Foes would come to be hardened more and more)

Now that being said, know this about the Lord Jesus – He would rather reach and teach than judge and sentence; He would rather convert the lost and correct the saved, than condemn the sinner.

On this sabbath day, we cannot help but note exactly what it is, that He was going to teach them. – He told them in the cornfield that the Son of man is Lord of the sabbath; and now He is going to show them in the synagogue.

Not only did He “Teach in their Presence” but He went to “Touch with His Power.”

B. To Touch with His Power – “a man which had *his* hand withered.”

1.) We would be foolish to think that this was a surprise to Jesus.

*Note – This would not be the first time that the Pharisees and the people around would have witnessed Jesus healing.

- In chapter 9, some of the scribes and Pharisees watched Jesus heal a man with the Palsy to show them He was God in the flesh, and that He does in fact have the power to Forgive Sins. – They accused Him of blasphemy...

*Note – This, however will be the first time that they see Him heal “on the sabbath day, in the synagogue.”

*Note – That being said, He has come here to Instruct the People in Mind; and to Heal this man in Body; so that all in attendance would have a deeper knowledge of Who He really is.

- And He did all of this ON Purpose.

#1 – We have an Aggressive Master

II. We face a Combative Fighter – vs 10 “And, behold, there was a man which had *his* hand withered. And they asked him, saying, Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath days? that they might accuse him.”

*Note – The “They” are obviously the scribes and Pharisees, and we notice two things about them...

A. They Had Real Questions – “Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath days?”

*Note – Now if we stopped right there, we might be able to have some sympathy for these Jews. All by itself, that is a fair question for someone who honestly wanted to obey the law of God.

Remember this: -The Lord Jesus never rebuked the Pharisees for keeping the law. The Law was given to be kept.

At one point He told the people “do what they say!” – but don’t do what they do.

- The great sin and evil of the Pharisees was not that they “kept the law” but that they were “hypocrites.”

- Hypocrisy is no small evil –

- it is like a colony of termites eating away at the work of the gospel.

*Note – Don’t get the idea that hypocrisy is not living up to your preaching or teaching; no man save Jesus can do that. Hypocrisy is when you stand on the Word with your mouth, but wink at your friends in behavior.

- The Pharisees lived as though, their Pharisaical devotion meant that they had a pass when it came to the reality of having to abide by that word. When they “messed up” it was okay because they were Pharisees!

*Note -Now that being said, the question all by itself could be taken as an honest question...

- Do no work on the sabbath day, medicinal practicing is work, what should be done?

*Note – According to the Talmud, the Jewish writings, the Rabbi’s had taught that you could in fact render aid to someone who’s life was in danger on the sabbath day. If he’s cut and bleeding out, stop the bleeding. If an enemy has shot a man with an arrow, or spear, get it out. A woman in labor, etc.

- But the practice was simple. – Save the life of a dying person on the sabbath; but do not heal the misery of a sick man, till the sabbath is over.

*Note – The Jews often had conflicting ideas and rules and principles about the sabbath day. – You could rescue a dying man; but at the same time there were occasions in history where an entire city or village of Jews would be wiped out by an enemy because they refused to “fight” on the sabbath day.

- The Sabbath day was a central issue with the Pharisees.

Luke 13:14 – “**And the ruler of the synagogue answered with indignation, because that Jesus had healed on the sabbath day, and said unto the people, There are six days in which men ought to work: in them therefore come and be healed, and not on the sabbath day.**”

*note – They had come to miss the entire doctrine of the sabbath day.

- Was it meant to restrict and control men at all costs?
- Was it intended to teach man to rest in his God?

A man who surrendered to the sabbath was one who ordered all of the practicalities of his life around the Word of God.

*Note – The point here is that it would not be an uncommon thing for a student, or a disciple to ask an honest question...

This was no honest question – It may have been a real question, but they spouted it with rotten motives...

B. They Had Rotten Motives – “that they might accuse Him.”

1.) The common approach and attack that the Pharisees continually used against Jesus began with the question, “is it lawful to...”

*Note – They knew He would not give their answer...

(Listen, I do everything I can to rightly divide this Word of truth for you every time I preach – you may or may not believe that, but I do. – But rest assured, the Lord Jesus will not use my sermon notes to explain anything to you when we get to glory.)

2.) They knew that Jesus would not give the same answers they gave, because by now they knew He had no regard for their additions to His Word.

Here is the spirit of the enemy, and a regular gun they often shoot, which is to do all they know to find a hole in the Word of God; find a flaw in the Son of God, and work to blur and confuse the Truth of God. Some men so parse the words of God, that they actually destroy the Word of God.

- “Let’s break this word down; and we should, to a point. Breaking it down is one thing – tearing it apart is another.”

The Enemy’s strategy has never changed; his tactics have but his strategy has not. From the very beginning in the garden, he has done everything he can from that day till now to discredit God’s Word and God’s Son.

We have an Aggressive Master – We face a Combative Enemy.

III. We have an Instructive Maker – vs 11-12 – “**And he said unto them, What man shall there be among you, that shall have one sheep, and if it fall into a pit on the sabbath day, will he not lay hold on it, and lift it out? 12**”

How much then is a man better than a sheep? Wherefore it is lawful to do well on the sabbath days.”

*Note – Here is an irony that need not be lost. – They have tried to use the Words of God against Jesus, now Jesus turns and uses their own words to teach them.

A. Instruction in Word – “if it fall into a pit on the sabbath day will he not lay hold on it, and lift it out?”

*Note – The Pharisees had some customs; According to the writings and historians; the Pharisaical law was clearly taught that if your sheep falls in the ditch, you can get it out. If your ox falls in the ditch you can get it out.

- Jesus will reference these behaviors in another sabbath confrontation in the future.

Why did they allow this?

First a good Biblical reason - **“A righteous man regardeth the life of his beast”** (Prov. 12:10) – They understood that.

Second a selfish motive – Very often your sheep and your oxen were tied to your livelihood; and while some would not fight a battle under attack, and some wouldn't apply medicine; they certainly thought it acceptable to protect your financial investments.

1.) Jesus appealed to their own use of the Word of God that all were in agreement with.

He instructs in the Word, and then He applies the wisdom:

B. Application in Wisdom – “How much then is a man better than a sheep? Wherefore it is lawful to do well on the sabbath days.”

*Note – Since it should be obvious to the world that it is never lawful to do evil, the sweeping question that Jesus lays at their feet is, is it lawful to do good?

(The Pharisees applied their additions to God's law to mean, you cannot do anything, evil OR good.)

*Note – the Lord's question

1.) **“How much then is a man better than a sheep?”**

*Note – If they didn't know anything else, they knew that the human race was created in the image of God.

*Note – They knew the book of Job 35:10–11- **“But none saith, Where is God my maker, Who giveth songs in the night; Who teacheth us more than the beasts of the earth, And maketh us wiser than the fowls of heaven?”**

*Note – Of course a man is better than an animal, not because we think so, but because the Bible teaches so.

*Note – the Lord's Conclusion – **“Wherefore it is lawful to do well on the sabbath days.”** – That's not a question that's an answer.

- In their own synagogue, on the sabbath day, our Lord taught, informed, and applied the Bible to the Pharisees.

We have an Aggressive Master; we face a combative fighter, we have an Instructive Maker; and we have an Assertive Savior.

IV. We have an Assertive Savior– vs 13 –

*Note – Here we bring in the gospel of Mark who adds a couple of things that Matthew doesn't cover.

Mark 3:3&5 – “And He saith unto the man which had the withered hand, **Stand forth.**” – “And when He had looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts.”

Matthew 12:13 - “Then saith he to the man, **Stretch forth thine hand.** And he stretched *it* forth; and it was restored whole, like as the other.

A. Passionately – “anger and grief”

1.) Jesus is not a passive emotionless personality. – Notice BOTH emotions....

a.) anger – The Bible dictionaries define the word that Matthew wrote as “Wrathful, and/or state of fury.”

b.) grief – “sorrow, moved with sorrow or distress”

(it hurt Him)

*Note – Christ’s emotions were ignited by their un-mitigating resistance, rebellion, and refusal to conform to what they knew to be true.

- Their defiance was without justifiable reason; it was with a growing awareness and understanding.

- He asserted Himself Passionately

B. Publicly – “**Stand forth**” – The picture here is that He had the man come and stand in the middle of the room, so that all could see. Specifically, the ones who despised Him.

*Note- Listen carefully, this is not gonna be hard to understand, but it is going to be hard to accept.

- Jesus knew what He was about to do, would either PUSH them farther away; or draw them in closer – and He did it anyway.

(Sometimes people erroneously say, “If we keep on insisting on such and such truth, so and so is just going to keep

getting further and further away. – It is never the fault of the truth when someone continually rejects it! – Jesus knew that some would go farther, and He what He did publicly, proudly, and even provocatively, anyway.

B. Personally – “**Stretch forth thine hand.**”

The good Dr. Barnes points out, that what the Lord commands, He provides the strength to do. The man whose hand didn’t work, could have said, “I can’t do that.” – And he could not....until he obeyed the instructions of Jesus.

*Note – I want to say a word about this man that the Pharisees didn’t care about:

-Obviously had some degree of humility and heart for the LORD God. The common assumption that such case was a judgment of God upon someone. The disciples wondered out loud to Jesus about the man born blind as to whose sin was he paying for.

- A man with the possible stigma of judgment on him did not retreat from all reminders of that God, but rather still gave himself to Him.

With the judgmental Pharisees apparently a sabbath day part of his regular life.... He still would go and learn about the things of God from the Word.

We have an Aggressive Master, we face a Combative Fighter, We have an Instructive Maker, and an Assertive Savior...

Conclusion - V. We face a Vindictive Destroyer – vs 14 – “**Then the Pharisees went out, and held a council against him, how they might destroy him.**”

- There are those who start out merely resisting Jesus, His Work and His Word, and note where it leads...

There is a difference in refusing Him; and demanding He not exist! – But the line between the two is thinner than anyone is willing to admit.

- The Pharisees began – wondering – then they went to examining with the motive to dismiss – then they went to passive rebellion – then open and aggressive rebellion – to the point of doing all they could to remove every influence of Jesus from this world. Even after they killed Him and He rose again, there were many whose heart was so hardened, whose mind was so charred with pride, they fought Him all the way to hell.

Resistance will always bring ruin. Woe unto them who strive with their Maker.