

**Center For Christian Living**  
**The Encounter With Jesus**  
**Hard to See**  
**Mark 3:1-6**  
**Pierre Cannings**

Week 4) Church People; Explanation: The people took the formerly blind man to the Pharisees; The Pharisees were concerned about all the rules and regulations. They questioned whether or not the healing came from God because of the healing on the Sabbath. The church people did not believe in Jesus or his healing power. How do you deal with church people? How do you deal with problems in the church? How do you handle when people in the church treat you ungodly? John 9:13-34

**Introduction**

Attention: I am not a good looker. I just can't find stuff lol. My wife knows this.

Name things you question are legalistic or Bible

Subject: Many times we can't see what Jesus is doing because our hearts are hard.

Scripture: Mark 3:1-6

**Body:**

Transition: Now don't get me wrong I can often find my stuff because I was raised to put things in a system. I can find where I put stuff.

- I. Look for What You Want
  - a. Synagogue- The meeting place and prayer hall of the Jewish people since antiquity. of the Jewish *synagogue* (it is used for a place of assembly for Jews to worship God
    - i. You would think that people meeting for prayer would not have a heard heart
  - b. Watching **observe someone to see what the**
    - i. they kept on watching" or "kept on lying in wait for." Apparently they were more concerned to accuse Jesus than to worship
    - ii. marks a hostile search for further evidence of Jesus' unorthodox stance with regard to the sabbath. Jesus' annoyance (v. 5) is thus not the result of this incident alone, but cumulative. They watched him closely" is in the imperfect tense (Gk. *paretēroun*), meaning "hanging in suspense." Aware that Jesus has already healed there on the Sabbath (1:21-28), all eyes are riveted "to see if he would heal [the man with the shriveled hand] on the Sabbath." Among the congregation some are not simply neutral and impartial observers. They are, rather, motivated "to accuse Jesus

- iii. See if He Would Heal on Sabbath
- c. So they could Accuse
  - i. Accuse - nearly always as legal; **bring charges** in court
    - 1. So Matt. 12:10. Luke has it “that they might find how to accuse him
  - ii. Accuse of What
    - 1. The assumption that to heal on the sabbath was culpable is clearly supported in rabbinic literature. While healing is not mentioned as such in the lists of prohibited acts in (it is not, after all, part of normal work for most people), it is assumed rather than argued that healing is prohibited, the only exception being when there is reason to believe that life is in danger, so that to postpone healing until the next day would risk death. *M. Yom.* 8:6 sums up the principle: ‘If a man has a pain in his throat they may drop medicine into his mouth on the sabbath, since there is doubt whether life is in danger, and whenever there is doubt whether life is in danger this overrides the sabbath.’ Assistance in childbirth was also allowed, presumably because it could not wait. But a paralysed hand could hardly be classed as an immediate threat to life. If anything like the Mishnaic understanding of sabbath law was already recognised (and v. 2 presupposes that it was), for Jesus to heal this man on the sabbath would be a deliberate violation of the accepted code.
    - 2. As we have noted, Sabbath regulations could be overridden only in cases of endangerment to life. Otherwise, the various schools of Judaism were agreed that the Sabbath must be fully upheld. First aid was deemed permissible to prevent an injury from worsening, but efforts toward a cure were regarded as work and must wait the passing of the Sabbath. A withered hand was obviously not life-threatening and did not qualify as an exception to the Sabbath rules. Indeed, “they may not straighten a deformed body or set a broken limb [on the Sabbath]”

Transition: There will be times when Monica gives me pinpoint instructions and I still can't find. Jesus gives us pinpoint instructions to our heart but many times we are too blind to see our hearts

- II. Jesus Knows What You Want
  - a. Get Up Come Forward
    - i. The Greek says “get up in the middle” because, in second- and third-century synagogues at least, the seats were stone benches around the walls.

- ii. **Stand forth** (ἐγείρει εἰς τὸ μέσον [*egeire eis to meson*]). Step into the middle of the room where all can see. It was a bold defiance of the Christ's spying enemies.
  - 1. Jesus was not moving in secret he saw their hard hearts and made sure they saw the miracle. Jesus wants you to see his plan.
- b. Questions their Heart
  - i. Lawful ...
    - 1. free alike from societal norms and the expectations of scribes, Pharisees, and rabbinic interpretation of the Torah. His allegiance is exclusively to the good news of God (so 1:14–15), which in these five stories is directed to needy and alienated people. ✘
    - 2. It is thus not simply permissible to heal on the Sabbath but *right* to heal on the Sabbath, whether or not it is "lawful." A litmus test of true versus false religion is its response to injustice. In the face of the man's need the religious authorities are "silent," but Jesus. The silence of the authorities is evidence that for them religion is about fulfilling stipulations. ✘
  - ii. Question
    - 1. He **asked** the Pharisees a rhetorical question concerning which of two kinds of action was really consistent with the purpose of **the Sabbath** in the Mosaic Law. The obvious answer is: **to do good and to save life** (*psychēn*, "soul"; cf. 8:35–36). Yet failure to use the Sabbath to meet this man's need (cf. 2:27) **was to do evil** (harmful misuse of its purpose) and, as ultimately happened, their malicious plotting on the Sabbath (cf. 3:6) led them to kill. The moral (not legal) issue of "doing good" on the Sabbath was at stake, and the Pharisees refused to debate it.
    - 2. The obvious alternative is that it must be right to do good and save life. To heal is to do good; to do nothing is to do evil. To heal is to "save" a life; not to heal is the equivalent of killing. For Mark merely not doing work and resting on the Sabbath or the Lord's Day was not enough. The day must be used for all kinds of good things.
    - 3. For the conniving observers proper religion is not about the intent of the heart but about things that can be empirically tested and measured, about questions of theological correctness, matters of purity, and fulfilling legal requirements. The observers are willing to tolerate the lamentable condition of another human being and in this instance to use it as possible leverage against Jesus. ✘
- c. Jesus Angered and Grieved
  - i. Anger
    - 1. He uses three strong Greek words that appear nowhere else in the Gospel. Having surveyed the crowd, Jesus is "angry" (Gk. *met' orgēs*); and he is "deeply distressed" (*syllypoumenos*) at their

“Jesus’ anger is a description of righteous indignation. The greatest enemy of divine love and justice is not opposition, not even malice, but hardness of heart and indifference to divine grace, to which not even disciples of Jesus are immune.

2. Jesus’ anger was not sinful, however, because it was directed toward evil and because it was
  - ii. Grieved
    1. It was nonmalicious indignation coupled with deep sorrow (grief) at their obstinate insensitivity (*pōrōsei*, “hardening”; cf. Rom. 11:25; Eph. 4:18) to God’s mercy and human misery.
  - d. Hard Hearts
    - i. their stubborn hearts” could be translated more literally “at their hardness of heart,” but the word “hardness” often takes on the additional idea of willful “blindness.”
    - ii. In the πώρωσις τῆς καρδίας αὐτῶν. This phrase is almost a stock expression in the NT for those who cannot or will not perceive the truth, used most commonly with reference to Israel’s failure to recognize Jesus as their Messiah (Rom. 11:7, 25; 2 Cor. 3:14; Jn. 12:40, citing Is. 6:10), but on two other occasions by Mark to describe the disciples’ failure to appreciate the significance of Jesus’ miracles (6:52; 8:17). If the καρδιά, the seat of mental discernment and spiritual insight, is hardened (πώρω derives from the concretion of minerals to form stone or of bone tissue to form a callus) it cannot function properly to accept new insight. Jesus’ critics are ‘set in their ways’, and their insensitivity (or ‘obdurate stupidity’, Mann) both hurts (συλλυπούμενος) and angers him.
    - iii. stubborn” (*pōrōsei*) hearts. The word translated “stubborn” does not mean malicious (although in this instance it appears to include that) as much as unwilling to understand.<sup>510</sup> Nor is such stubbornness isolated to Jesus’ opponents; it will equally describe his own disciples (6:52; 8:17).
  - e. Jesus Heals
    - i. We can’t see God’s miracles and healing in our life because we are hardened by our own laws

Sometimes even when she tells where to look I still go what is on my mind.

- III. Look for what You want Anyways
  - a. Pharisees Left Immediately
  - b. Conspired with the Herodians

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<sup>150</sup> See K. L. and M. A. Schmidt, “*pōrōō*,” *TDNT* 5.1, 025–28. The Greek word for “stubborn” occurs in both verbal and noun forms in 3:5; 6:52; 8:17; John 12:40; Rom 11:17, 25; 2 Cor 3:14; and Eph 4:18 of Jews, Gentiles, and disciples.

- i. But their association with the Ἡρωδιανοί is unexpected. The two groups will be associated again in 12:13, again with hostile intentions towards Jesus. The Greek term Ἡρωδιανός follows a standard Latin form to denote the supporters or adherents of a leading figure
  - ii. **Hard hearts can make us with partner with politics more than Jesus...** to refer to those who supported Herod the Great, but in Galilee at this time they must have been supporters of Herod Antipas. The surprise sometimes occasioned by the combination of what appear to be religious (Φαρισαῖοι) and political (Ἡρωδιανοί) interests depends on a very modern ideological separation of religion from politics.
  - iii. Ordinarily the Pharisees would have had nothing to do with the Herodians, but common enemies often make strange bedfellows. Perhaps the Herodians opposed Jesus because of his relationship to John the Baptist, who condemned Herod's divorce and remarriage (6:18).
  - iv. If so, their religious interests were certainly not identical with those of the Pharisees, but their cooperation in order to silence a radical religious reformer is no more surprising than that of the various factions of the Sanhedrin in the arrest and trial of Jesus (see on 8:31). It must be remembered, too, that it will be their leader Antipas who executes Jesus' predecessor John (6:17–28),
- c. To Destroy Jesus
- i. **The compassion of Jesus is free but costly.** The hand is restored, but the Pharisees and Herodians “began to plot ... how they might kill Jesus.” The reasons for their resolve are not stated, but the evidence against Jesus has been compounding: Sabbath violations (1:21–25; 2:23–28), fraternizing with sinners (1:40; 2:13–17), disregarding rabbinic custom (2:18–22), and presumption to forgive sins (2:10–11).
  - ii. **Hard Hearts Reject Authority - sins (2:1–12), to eat with sinners and tax collectors (2:13–17), to dispense with fasting (2:18–22), to supersede the Sabbath (2:23–28), and to heal on the Sabbath (3:1–6).** Parallel to the authority of Jesus is the opposition of the authorities, which begins with silent accusation (2:6–7), intensifies to questioning (2:16; 2:24), and concludes with a plot against his life (3:2, 6). The greater the opposition, however, the greater is Jesus' authority. His authority is both the near and helpful presence of God and a stumbling block. This same authority—and the conflicts resulting from it—will be replayed with the Jerusalem religious leaders in the temple (11:27–12:37). The reference to the “bridegroom being taken from them” (2:20) and the plot against Jesus' life (3:6) already lay the cornerstone for the passion and death of God's Son.

**Conclusion:**

My kids just started online school and I can tell you that it is not easy on anyone. The day before I set my heart to know it was going to be a rough day and it was but since I set my heart to have

a bad day I missed the positive. My kids are healthy they are happy they are home etc.  
Sometimes we miss the good because we have already set our hearts on the laws etc

**Cross Reference-**

See Mark 2:23-27 Illustrates the conversation about the sabbath.

**Word Studies**

- Synagogue The meeting place and prayer hall of the Jewish people since antiquity.<sup>2</sup> of the Jewish **synagogue** (it is used for a place of assembly for Jews to worship God<sup>3</sup>)
- Watching- **observe someone to see what the pers<sup>4</sup>. does, watch<sup>5</sup>**
  - **They watched** (παρετηρουν [paretēroun]). Imperfect tense, were watching on the side (or sly). Luke uses the middle voice, παρετηρουντο [paretērounto], to accent their personal interest in the proceedings. It was the sabbath day and in the synagogue and they were there ready to catch him in the act if he should dare to violate their rules as he had done in the wheat fields on the previous sabbath. Probably the same Pharisees are present now as then.
- Accuse- nearly always as legal; **bring charges** in court<sup>6</sup>
  - **That they might accuse him** (ἵνα κατηγορησωσιν αὐτου [hina katēgorēsōsin autou]). So Matt. 12:10. Luke has it “that they might find how to accuse him
- Forward –
  - **Stand forth** (ἐγειρε εἰς το μεσον [egeire eis to meson]). Step into the middle of the room where all can see. It was a bold defiance of the Christ’s spying enemies. Wycliff rightly puts it: *They aspieden him*. They played the spy on Jesus. One can see the commotion among the long-bearded hypocrites at this daring act of Jesus.
- Lawful - **to be authorized for the doing of someth<sup>7</sup>., it is right, is authorized, is permitted, is proper<sup>8</sup>**
- Kept Silent - **But they held their peace** (οἱ δε ἐσιωπων [hoi de esiwōn]). Imperfect tense. In sullen silence and helplessness before the merciless questions of Jesus as the poor man stood there before them all. Jesus by his pitiless alternatives between doing good (ἀγαθοποιεω [agathopoieō], late Greek word in LXX and N. T.) and doing evil

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<sup>2</sup> David Noel Freedman, ed., [“Synagogue.”](#) *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 251.

<sup>3</sup> William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, et al., [A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature](#) (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 963.

<sup>4</sup>**pers. pers.** = person(s)

<sup>5</sup> William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, et al., [A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature](#) (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 771.

<sup>6</sup> William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, et al., [A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature](#) (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 533.

<sup>7</sup>**someth. someth.** = something

<sup>8</sup> William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, et al., [A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature](#) (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 348.

(κακοποιεω [kakopoiēō], ancient Greek word), to this man, for instance, **to save a life or to kill**

- Anger - **state of relatively strong displeasure, w<sup>9</sup>. focus on the emotional aspect, anger<sup>10</sup>**
  - Murder was in their hearts and Jesus knew it. Anger against wrong as wrong is a sign of moral health (Gould)
- Grieved – Strong grief and sorrow
  - Jesus is the Man of Sorrows and this present participle brings out the continuous state of grief whereas the momentary angry look is expressed by the aorist participle above.
- Hardness of Heart - **state or condition of complete lack of understanding, dullness, insensibility, obstinacy<sup>11</sup>**
  - Their own heart or attitude was in a state of moral ossification (πρωρωσις [pōrōsis]) like hardened hands or feet. Πωρος [Pōros] was used of a kind of marble and then of the *callus* on fractured bones. “They were hardened by previous conceptions against this new truth” (Gould). See also on Matt. 12:9–14.
- Restored - **to change to an earlier good state or condition, restore, reestablish<sup>12</sup>**
- Herodians –
  - imperfect tense, offered counsel as their solution of the problem) with their bitter enemies, the Herodians, on the sabbath day still “how they might destroy him” (ὅπως αὐτὸν ἀπολεσῶσιν [hopōs auton apolesōsin]), a striking illustration of the alternatives of Jesus a few moments before, “to save life or to kill.” This is the first mention of the Herodians or adherents of Herod Antipas and the Herod family rather than the Romans. The Pharisees would welcome the help of their rivals to destroy Jesus. In the presence of Jesus they unite their forces as in Mark 8:15; 12:13; Matt. 22:16<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>w. w. = with

<sup>10</sup> William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, et al., [A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature](#) (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 720.

<sup>11</sup> William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, et al., [A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature](#) (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 900.

<sup>12</sup> William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, et al., [A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature](#) (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 111.

<sup>13</sup> A.T. Robertson, [Word Pictures in the New Testament](#) (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1933), Mk 3:1–6.



### Commentary Studies

**3:1** The second sabbath incident is not inherently connected with the first, but the narrative sequence allows us to assume that Jesus and his disciples returned from their controversial walk through the cornfields outside the town to attend the synagogue service of that same sabbath. In that case, and assuming that the same Pharisees who had objected to the disciples' action are now also in the synagogue, the atmosphere is already charged, and the 'watching' of Jesus (παρετήρουν, v. 2) is not out of neutral interest, but, as the sequel shows clearly, marks a hostile search for further evidence of Jesus' unorthodox stance with regard to the sabbath. Jesus' annoyance (v. 5) is thus not the result of this incident alone, but cumulative.

This is presumably again the synagogue at Capernaum: πάλιν suggests as much, and no indication has been given since 2:1 of a change in Jesus' centre of operations. That congregation has already witnessed a remarkable display of Jesus' ἐξουσία, not only in teaching but also in controlling a demon (1:21–28). That incident, together with the post-sabbath healings which had followed it (1:29–34) and the memorable incident with the lame man (2:1–12), has prepared the ground for the expectation of a further display of power—and of Jesus' lack of concern for sabbath regulations. The previous synagogue incident had, of course, also been on a sabbath (1:21), but the issue of sabbath law had not then been raised, perhaps because a command to a demon did not qualify as 'work' in the same way as a physical healing, but also because the question of Jesus' orthodoxy in this matter was not yet at issue. Now it is, and in this pericope the physical healing as such is overshadowed by the question of sabbath observance.

The potential patient is introduced in words similar to 1:23, but whereas in that case the demon took the initiative with a verbal challenge to Jesus, here it is Jesus who apparently takes the initiative by summoning the man in v. 3. Since a χεῖρ ἐξηραμμένη was presumably a long-term condition (paralysed as the result of polio or of a stroke? cf. 1 Ki. 13:4),<sup>141</sup> it is not clear why this man should be specially singled out on this occasion, or why it should be expected that Jesus should heal him on the sabbath, but in some way he is recognised by both Jesus and the Pharisees as a test case for Jesus' sabbath practice.

2 παρετήρουν has no expressed subject (as in 2:18), but the preceding pericope, and the specification that it was Φαρισαῖοι who went out to plot with Ἡρωδιανοί (see on v. 6) against Jesus, indicates that the focus of the hostile attention was Pharisaic, even though no doubt the whole congregation was aware of the tension of the situation. It was the Pharisees who, after the confrontation in the cornfield, would be eager ἵνα κατηγορήσωσιν αὐτοῦ.

The assumption that to heal on the sabbath was culpable is clearly supported in rabbinic literature. While healing is not mentioned as such in the lists of prohibited acts in *m*<sup>15</sup>. Šab. 7:2; *m*<sup>16</sup>. Beṣa<sup>17</sup>h 5:2 (it is not, after all, part of normal work for most people), it is assumed rather than argued that healing is prohibited, the only exception being when there is reason to believe that life is in danger, so that to postpone healing until the next day would risk death. *M. Yom.* 8:6 sums up the principle: 'If a man has a pain in his throat they may drop medicine into his mouth on the sabbath, since there is doubt whether life is in danger, and whenever there is doubt whether life is in danger this overrides the sabbath.' Assistance in childbirth was also allowed, presumably because it could not wait (*m*<sup>18</sup>. Šab. 18:3). See further E. Lohse, *TDN*<sup>19</sup>T,

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<sup>141</sup> See, however, M. Casey, *Sources*, 176–78, for the view that the complaint should not be understood as 'normally incurable', but as the sort of condition a traditional healer would be expected to cure, so that the incident does not focus on any miraculous power of Jesus, but only on whether he would heal on the sabbath.

<sup>15</sup>*m.* Mishnah

<sup>16</sup>*m.* Mishnah

<sup>17</sup>*Beṣah Beṣah* (= *Yom Ṭob*)

<sup>18</sup>*m.* Mishnah

<sup>19</sup>*TDNT Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. G. Kittel and G. Friedrich. ET, 9 vols., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964–74

7.14–15; Str-<sup>20</sup>B, 1.623–29. But a paralysed hand could hardly be classed as an immediate threat to life. If anything like the Mishnaic understanding of sabbath law was already recognised (and v. 2 presupposes that it was), for Jesus to heal this man on the sabbath would be a deliberate violation of the accepted code.

**3** In the command ἔγειρε εἰς τὸ μέσον we see again how partial the motif of secrecy is in Mark's gospel. There is no attempt at privacy, no delay of the healing until a less public occasion when the issue of sabbath observance would not have been raised. Jesus is determined to force the issue by a public display both of his healing power and of his status as κύριος τοῦ σαββάτου.

**4** In Matthew at this point (12:11–12) and in Luke on two other occasions when the issue of sabbath healing was raised (Lk. 13:15; 14:5) Jesus argues from the principle accepted by the Pharisees (but not at Qumran, C<sup>21</sup>D 11:13–14) that relief of animal suffering is permissible, within certain limits, on the sabbath; how much more then human suffering? In Mark this analogical argument is not used, but simply the broad statement of principle, in the form of a rhetorical question (perhaps intended to echo the essential Deuteronomic choice, 'life and good, death and evil', Dt. 30:15), that ἀγαθὸν ποιῆσαι and ψυχὴν σῶσαι are permissible on the sabbath. There is, as often in Jesus' sayings, an element of exaggeration to make the point: to delay healing by one day would not be actually κακοποιῆσαι, still less ἀποκτεῖναι. As in 2:17, 27 the negative functions as a foil to highlight the positive claim: the sabbath is a time for doing good, particularly for the relief of suffering. This positive aim is assumed to override the definitions of 'work' which scribal ingenuity had devised. Together with the principle enunciated in 2:27 (τὸ σάββατον διὰ τὸν ἄνθρωπον ἐγένετο), this verse establishes a positive approach to sabbath observance which is in principle so elastic that it will be hard to rule out any act which is not in itself unacceptable. Certainly, it leaves no scope for the rabbinic enterprise of building a fence around the sabbath law.

The silence of Jesus' critics may be attributed simply to unwillingness to be drawn into an unprofitable argument, but also, as in 11:33, to the astute form of Jesus' question: to answer in the affirmative would be to undermine their whole approach to the sabbath and the basis of their objections to Jesus, but to answer in the negative would be not only impossible in itself (who could defend κακοποιῆσαι ἢ ἀποκτεῖναι, whether on the sabbath or on any day?), but also unlikely to win favour with the synagogue congregation as a whole. (It is ironical that the pericope will in fact finish with these same objectors plotting, presumably still on the sabbath, to take life, v. 6.)

**5** For the double mention of Jesus' emotion cf. 1:41, 43. Here again it is Mark alone who includes this note in the story. This time, however, there is a discernible cause for Jesus' anger, so that no MSS give evidence of embarrassment by omitting or altering μετ' ὀργῆς, as happened with ὀργισθεῖς in 1:41. Indeed, Mark goes on to spell out the reason, in the πῶρωσις τῆς καρδίας αὐτῶν. This phrase is almost a stock expression in the NT for those who cannot or will not perceive the truth, used most commonly with reference to Israel's failure to

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<sup>20</sup>Str-B *Kommentar zum neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch*, by H. L. Strack and P. Billerbeck. Vols. 1–4, München: Beck, 1922–28; vols. 5–6 by J. Jeremias and K. Adolph, München: Beck, 1956, 1961

<sup>21</sup>CD Cairo *Damascus Document*

recognise Jesus as their Messiah (Rom. 11:7, 25; 2 Cor. 3:14; Jn. 12:40, citing Is. 6:10), but on two other occasions by Mark to describe the disciples' failure to appreciate the significance of Jesus' miracles (6:52; 8:17). If the καρδιά, the seat of mental discernment and spiritual insight, is hardened (πωρόω derives from the concretion of minerals to form stone or of bone tissue to form a callus) it cannot function properly to accept new insight. Jesus' critics are 'set in their ways', and their insensitivity (or 'obdurate stupidity', Mann) both hurts (συλλυπούμενος) and angers him.<sup>222</sup>

The cure itself is so briefly narrated in the form of a command and response as to sound almost perfunctory. As a cure it was no more remarkable than others already narrated; it was the situation which made it worth special mention. It may be significant that no touch or other act is mentioned, only a word; if this was 'work', it was of a very nonphysical variety.

6 The Φαρισαῖοι have featured in each of the three preceding conflict stories (2:16, 18, 24), and the assumption that it was again they who were watching Jesus' actions in the synagogue ἵνα κατηγορήσωσιν αὐτοῦ (v. 2) is here confirmed by their going out (from the synagogue, presumably) to make plans against him. But their association with the Ἡρωδιανοί is unexpected. The two groups will be associated again in 12:13, again with hostile intentions towards Jesus. The Greek term Ἡρωδιανός follows a standard Latin form to denote the supporters or adherents of a leading figure (other examples of the form in Greek are Καισαριανός, Χριστιανός); Josephus uses similar terms, οἱ Ἡρώδειοι (*War*<sup>23</sup> 1.319), οἱ τὰ Ἡρώδου φρονούντες (*Ant*<sup>24</sup> 14.451) to refer to those who supported Herod the Great, but in Galilee at this time they must have been supporters of Herod Antipas. The surprise sometimes occasioned by the combination of what appear to be religious (Φαρισαῖοι) and political (Ἡρωδιανοί) interests depends on a very modern ideological separation of religion from politics. The Herod family controlled the appointment of High Priests before A.D. 6 and after A.D. 37; since most of those selected were from the house of Boethus (as opposed to the Sadducees who held the office under direct Roman patronage A.D. 6–37), it has been plausibly suggested that the Ἡρωδιανοί were in fact the Boethusians.<sup>253</sup> If so, their religious interests were certainly not identical with those of the Pharisees, but their cooperation in order to silence a radical religious reformer is no more surprising than that of the various factions of the Sanhedrin in the arrest and trial of Jesus (see on 8:31). It must be remembered, too, that it will be their leader

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<sup>222</sup> Schweizer, however, understands συλλυπέω here as 'to feel sympathy for', and thus translates 'Jesus was angry as he looked around at them, but at the same time he felt sorry for them, because they were so stubborn and wrong'. Stock similarly speaks of 'a godly sorrow for men who could no longer rejoice in the tokens of God's goodness to his creatures'.

<sup>23</sup> *War The Jewish War*

<sup>24</sup> *Ant Jewish Antiquities*

<sup>253</sup> For a full discussion, espousing this view, see H. Hoehner, *Herod*, 331–42. B. D. Chilton, *JSNT* 14 (1982) 104, identifies the Herodians with the Bene Bathyra, a group of rabbinic teachers whose 'prominent place in the Temple administration made them a power to be reckoned with in Jerusalem and beyond as chief partisans of the Herodian settlement'. See also N. Hillyer, *DNTT*, 3.441–43.

Antipas who executes Jesus' predecessor John (6:17–28), an act in which Jesus sees an adumbration of his own fate (9:12–13).<sup>264</sup>

It is not likely that we should take συμβούλιον ἐδίδουν (a unique idiom, for which most MSS substitute the more familiar ποιέω) too strictly as 'adopting a plan' in the sense of a formulated strategy for bringing Jesus to trial and death; the succeeding narrative does not suggest anything so definite at this stage, but rather last-minute measures by the Jerusalem authorities at the final Passover (14:1–2, 10–11), following a further resolution to 'destroy' Jesus in 11:18. Here we have an agreement in principle that Jesus is to be opposed and, when the time is ripe, silenced. If the agreement is that he is wilfully breaking the sabbath, capital punishment properly follows (Ex. 31:14–15; *m*<sup>27</sup>. *Sanh.* 7:4). The reader is thus enabled to put more substance into Jesus' enigmatic hint about the 'removal' of the bridegroom (2:20), and to envisage more concretely the two contrasting reactions to Jesus which will form the framework for the narrative and discourse of chapters 3–4, the rejoicing of the wedding guests and the plotting of those who are determined to 'destroy' the bridegroom.<sup>28</sup>

### A QUESTION OF LIFE AND DEATH (3:1–6)

In style this account repeats a pattern of previous episodes. Mark sets the stage for the narrative in the Greek aorist (past tense, v. 1) and then draws the reader dramatically into the ongoing action by using Greek imperfects and presents (vv. 2–5). The immediacy of the narrative again suggests personal reminiscence, perhaps from Peter.<sup>4296</sup> With this episode Mark concludes the conflict stories begun in 2:1. **In each story Jesus charts a sovereign course, free**

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<sup>264</sup> In view of the lack of other references to Ἡρωδιανοί, W. J. Bennett, *NovT* 17 (1975) 9–14, suggests that there was no group of this name, but that Mark has invented them to link the fate of Jesus with that of John the Baptist.

<sup>27</sup> *m.* Mishnah

<sup>28</sup> R. T. France, *The Gospel of Mark: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Carlisle: W.B. Eerdmans; Paternoster Press, 2002), 148–152.

<sup>2946</sup> So V. Taylor, *The Gospel According to St. Mark*, 220; C. E. B. Cranfield, *The Gospel According to Saint Mark*, 119.

alike from societal norms and the expectations of scribes, Pharisees, and rabbinic interpretation of the Torah. His allegiance is exclusively to the good news of God (so 1:14–15), which in these five stories is directed to needy and alienated people. His mission has not gone unopposed, however. The proclamation and practice of the good news occur amid resistance and even hostility, as Mark signified by linking the commencement of Jesus' ministry with the arrest of John the Baptizer (1:14). Already Jesus has a reputation as a blasphemer (2:7), a colleague of sinners (2:16), an apostate from religious custom (2:18), and a Sabbath breaker (2:24). These sentiments will become manifest in a contract on his life in this the final conflict story, for "the Pharisees went out and began to plot with the Herodians how they might kill Jesus" (3:6). With his entire road still before him, Jesus must conduct his journey in the shadow of the cross.

**1–2** It is the Sabbath, and Jesus is again in the synagogue, presumably at Capernaum. A man is present with "a shriveled hand." The word translated "shriveled" (Gk. *xēraínein*) occurs several times in Mark, with meanings ranging among "dried up" (5:29), "withered" (4:6; 11:20–21), and "stiff" (9:18). A stiff and deformed hand seems to fit the present context. "They watched him closely" is in the imperfect tense (Gk. *paretēroun*), meaning "hanging in suspense." Aware that Jesus has already healed there on the Sabbath (1:21–28), all eyes are riveted "to see if he would heal [the man with the shriveled hand] on the Sabbath." Among the congregation some are not simply neutral and impartial observers. They are, rather, motivated "to accuse Jesus." Markan irony is again present: the authorities deny Jesus the right to do good on the Sabbath while they conspire to do evil on the Sabbath.

As we have noted, Sabbath regulations could be overridden only in cases of endangerment to life (*m. Yom*<sup>30</sup>a 8:6). Otherwise, the various schools of Judaism were agreed that the Sabbath must be fully upheld.<sup>317</sup> First aid was deemed permissible to prevent an injury from worsening, but efforts toward a cure were regarded as work and must wait the passing of the Sabbath. A withered hand was obviously not life-threatening and did not qualify as an exception to the Sabbath rules. Indeed, "they may not straighten a deformed body or set a broken limb [on the Sabbath]" (*m. Shab*<sup>32</sup>. 22:6).

**3–4** Jesus, however, orders the "dexterously challenged" man to " 'Stand up in front of everyone.' " One can almost feel the man's horror. Had he dreamed his handicap would be made a public spectacle he surely would never have braved attending synagogue. Rather than escaping notice, the dread of most persons who bear handicaps or deformities is having people stare them in the face: the man is summoned by Jesus to the center of the synagogue. Jesus asks, " 'Which is lawful on the Sabbath: to do good or to do evil, to save a life or to kill?' "

The first part of the question about doing good or evil obviously refers to healing the handicapped man. For Jesus human need poses a moral imperative. Where good needs to be done, there can be no neutrality, and failure to do the good is to contribute to the evil. It is thus not simply permissible to heal on the Sabbath but *right* to heal on the Sabbath, whether or not it is "lawful." A litmus test of true versus false religion is its response to injustice. In the face of the man's need the religious authorities are "silent," but Jesus is "angered and deeply distressed" (v. 5). The silence of the authorities is evidence that for them religion is about

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<sup>30</sup>*m. Yoma Yoma*, Mishnah

<sup>317</sup> See the discussion of Sabbath observance at 2:23.

<sup>32</sup>*m. Shab. Shabbat*, Mishnah

fulfilling stipulations, like driving the speed limit (to use a modern analogy), even though they would very much like to drive faster. This kind of religion can easily be separated from human need. For the conniving observers proper religion is not about the intent of the heart but about things that can be empirically tested and measured, about questions of theological correctness, matters of purity, and fulfilling legal requirements. The observers are willing to tolerate the lamentable condition of another human being and in this instance to use it as possible leverage against Jesus. But Jesus does not use people, whether powerful or powerless, for ulterior purposes. For Jesus the gospel of God (1:14) is different from proper religion in that it is about the disposition of the heart, which cannot remain unmoved in the face of suffering. Only in Gethsemane (14:34) is Jesus' grief and anguish expressed more forcefully in Mark than in the face of the callousness of the synagogue gathering to the suffering of this man. Questions of theological orthodoxy and moral behavior cannot be answered in the abstract, but only by responding to the concrete call of God in one's life and to specific human needs at hand. The test of all theology and morality is either passed or failed by one's response to the weakest and most defenseless members of society. For Jesus the call of God presents itself urgently in the need of this particular man.

At this point in the story the focus abruptly changes, as it did in the healing of the paralytic (2:5–6). The second part of the question comes as a surprise. What is meant by “to save life or to kill?” The issue in the synagogue is about whether or not Jesus will heal on the Sabbath, not about living and dying.<sup>4338</sup> Or so it seems. But Jesus again knows the intentions of those who have followed this event (2:8; Jn 2:25), perhaps even planned it. The second part of the question no longer refers to the disabled man but to Jesus himself. The man with a bad hand is a pawn. If Jesus makes a habit of violating the Sabbath,<sup>4349</sup> the authorities will have reason to dispatch him. Subtly but powerfully, the framing of the question in v. 4 links Jesus' fate inextricably with the man with the bad hand. “To do good or to do evil” refers to Jesus' response to the unfortunate man; “to save life or to kill” refers to the observers' response to Jesus. His response to the man with the bad hand will determine their response to him. “But they remained silent.” For once an argument from silence is conclusive.

5 Jesus “looked around,” according to Mark. The Greek *periblepesthai*, a favorite of Markan vocabulary, describes a summary and commanding survey, which is usually followed by an authoritative pronouncement (3:5, 34; 5:32; 10:23; 11:11). Mark's description of Jesus' anger at the callousness of the observers is graphic and passionate. He uses three strong Greek words

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<sup>3348</sup> Matthew's version of the story (Matt 12:9–14) omits the reference to “to save life or to kill,” thus maintaining the focus of the story on the healing. The same is true of the version of the story preserved in Jerome (*Comm. on Matt* 12:13), with inclusion of the man's vocation: “In the Gospel which the Nazarenes and the Ebionites use, which we have recently translated out of Hebrew into Greek, and which is called by most people the authentic [Gospel of] Matthew, the man who had the withered hand is described as a mason who pleaded for help in the following words: I was a mason and earned my livelihood with my hands; I beseech thee, Jesus, to restore to me my health that I may not with ignominy have to beg for my bread” (*NTApoc* 1.160).

<sup>3449</sup> In Mark, the Sabbath is a day of contention for Jesus. His healings (1:21; 3:2, 4), “working” (2:23, 24, 27), and redefining Sabbath (2:28) draw opposition, as does his visit to Nazareth (6:2). Only in the grave does Jesus rest on the Sabbath (16:1, 2, 9)!

that appear nowhere else in the Gospel. Having surveyed the crowd, Jesus is “angry” (Gk. *met’ orgēs*); and he is “deeply distressed” (*sylypoumenos*) at their “stubborn” (*pōrōsei*) hearts. The word translated “stubborn” does not mean malicious (although in this instance it appears to include that) as much as unwilling to understand.<sup>5350</sup> Nor is such stubbornness isolated to Jesus’ opponents; it will equally describe his own disciples (6:52; 8:17). Jesus’ anger is a description of righteous indignation. The greatest enemy of divine love and justice is not opposition, not even malice, but hardness of heart and indifference to divine grace, to which not even disciples of Jesus are immune.

Jesus does not equivocate. He does not decide whether or not to act depending on his standing in the polls or on personal consequences to himself. “‘Stretch out your hand,’” he commands. The thing the man with the bad hand most fears is before him. A choice must be made. He may refuse and spare himself humiliation. But in so doing he will only be like the religious leaders who refuse to open themselves to the word of Jesus. Or he may take the risk of faith and act on the command of Jesus. “He stretched it out,” says Mark, “and his hand was completely restored.” In exposing himself to Jesus he is healed. Once again Mark describes faith without using the word. Faith is not a private wager but a public risk that Jesus is worthy of trust when no other hope can be trusted.

**6** The compassion of Jesus is free but costly. The hand is restored, but the Pharisees and Herodians “began to plot ... how they might kill Jesus.” The reasons for their resolve are not stated, but the evidence against Jesus has been compounding: Sabbath violations (1:21–25; 2:23–28), fraternizing with sinners (1:40; 2:13–17), disregarding rabbinic custom (2:18–22), and presumption to forgive sins (2:10–11).

Mark lodges the plot against Jesus with the Pharisees and Herodians. In contrast to that of the Pharisees (see on 2:18), the identity of the Herodians is extremely elusive.<sup>5361</sup> Matthew 12:14 and Luke 6:11 both omit the Herodians from their versions of the story. Apart from three passing references in the NT (3:6; 12:13 [8:15?]; Matt 22:16), the term “Herodians” is absent in ancient literature. The reference in Josephus to “partisans of Herod (the Great)” (*Ant*<sup>37</sup>. 14.447) may refer to this group without identifying them further.<sup>5382</sup> In a separate reference, Josephus

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<sup>5350</sup> See K. L. and M. A. Schmidt, “*pōrōō*,” *TDNT* 5.1, 025–28. The Greek word for “stubborn” occurs in both verbal and noun forms in 3:5; 6:52; 8:17; John 12:40; Rom 11:17, 25; 2 Cor 3:14; and Eph 4:18 of Jews, Gentiles, and disciples.

<sup>5361</sup> Standard reference works are generally negligent of the Herodians, largely because of the dearth of information about them. Good discussions can be found in H. H. Rowley, “The Herodians in the Gospels,” *JTS* 41 (1940): 14–27; S. Sandmel, “Herodians,” *IDB* 2.594–95; and Guelich, *Mark 1–8:26*, 138–39.

<sup>37</sup>*Ant.* Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*

<sup>5382</sup> Rowley notes that the Syriac Peshitta understands Herodians likewise, rendering 3:6 as “those of the house of Herod” (“The Herodians in the Gospels,” *JTS* 41 (1940): 23. C. Daniel, “Les ‘Herodiens’ du Nouveau Testament sont-ils des Esseniens?” *RevQ* 6 (1967): 31–53, makes the highly unsustainable proposal that the Herodians were Essenes who gained the nickname “Herodians” from Herod’s enemies who resented the latter’s patronage of the Essenes. The virtual absence of objective data on the Herodians puts Daniel’s thesis and his conjectural



notes that Herod (the Great) “showed special favor to those of the city’s populace who had been on his side while he was still a commoner” (*Ant*<sup>39</sup>. 15.2). These allusions suggest that the Herodians were not a distinct sect or political party as were the Pharisees or Sadducees or Essenes, for example, but rather sympathizers and supporters of Herod’s cause and the Herodian dynasty. In the NT Herodians always appear in alliance with the Pharisees. This is a curious and unexpected alliance, for the Pharisees staunchly opposed Hellenism and had precious little in common with those who freely compromised with Hellenistic influences and Roman politics.<sup>5403</sup> The alliance of these two otherwise antagonistic parties must argue for the magnitude of their opposition to Jesus. The inclusion of Herodians in v. 6 is a forewarning that the opposition ranged against Jesus is not only religious but perhaps political as well (6:14–29; 12:13; 15:1–2).

Common to each of the five stories in 2:1–3:6 is the showcasing of Jesus’ authority: to forgive sins (2:1–12), to eat with sinners and tax collectors (2:13–17), to dispense with fasting (2:18–22), to supersede the Sabbath (2:23–28), and to heal on the Sabbath (3:1–6). Parallel to the authority of Jesus is the opposition of the authorities, which begins with silent accusation (2:6–7), intensifies to questioning (2:16; 2:24), and concludes with a plot against his life (3:2, 6). The greater the opposition, however, the greater is Jesus’ authority. His authority is both the near and helpful presence of God and a stumbling block. This same authority—and the conflicts resulting from it—will be replayed with the Jerusalem religious leaders in the temple (11:27–12:37). The reference to the “bridegroom being taken from them” (2:20) and the plot against Jesus’ life (3:6) already lay the cornerstone for the passion and death of God’s Son.<sup>41</sup>

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supports of it in serious doubt. See the rebuttal by W. Braun, “Were the New Testament Herodians Essenes? A Critique of an Hypothesis,” *RevQ* 14 (1989): 75–88.

<sup>39</sup>*Ant.* Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*

<sup>4053</sup> Sanders, *The Historical Figure of Jesus*, 130–32, views the mention of Herodians as anachronistic in 3:6. He regards the conflicts in 2:1–3:6 as “fairly minor,” and doubts Herodian opposition so early in Jesus’ ministry. He explains their mention here by supposing that 2:1–3:6 originally was a preface to the passion account that Mark has transposed to the beginning of his Gospel! This is an extreme and unwarranted hypothesis. The conflicts in 2:1–3:6 are scarcely “minor”; blasphemy (2:7) already lays the foundation for a capital case against Jesus. The supposition that 2:1–3:6 once functioned as a preface to a passion narrative is entirely conjectural. Finally, Sanders’ dogmatic suggestions about the Herodians are surprising given the latter’s obscurity. We know that Herod the Great initially ruled Galilee before he displaced his brother Phasaël in Jerusalem. It is entirely reasonable to suppose that his supporters continued to constitute a significant political presence in Galilee, and that the Pharisees, perceiving Jesus’ threat to their religious hegemony, should ally themselves with the politically savvy Herodians in plotting Jesus’ death.

<sup>41</sup> James R. Edwards, [\*The Gospel according to Mark\*](#), *The Pillar New Testament Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos, 2002), 98–102.

The account does not emphasize the healing but the question of Sabbath observance. Therefore it ought to be classified as a conflict and/or pronouncement story, although the pronouncement is cast as a question (v. 4). To understand the Pharisaic position, one must realize that Sabbath observance was one of the more important elements in Judaism and one noticeable distinction between Jews and Gentiles. Mark both gave further insight into Jesus' "liberal" attitude toward the Sabbath and showed how this attitude was a major factor in Pharisaic opposition that culminated in Jesus' death (v. 6). Likely Mark intended Jesus' freedom in observing the Sabbath to justify Christian freedom with reference to that day. Some think the vividness and detail of the account indicates eyewitness testimony, probably that of Peter. This could be, but it is beyond proof.

**3:1** Jesus and his disciples regularly worshiped in synagogues, as did Paul later (see the commentary on 1:21). Inasmuch as this is not really a healing story, the affliction is not described in detail. It probably was some kind of paralysis ("paralyzed hand," GNB).

**3:2** The "some of them" are identified in v. 6 as the Pharisees (see comments on 2:16). The imperfect tense (*paretēroun*) is probably iterative: "they kept on watching" or "kept on lying in wait for." Apparently they were more concerned to accuse Jesus than to worship. The scribal rule the Pharisees followed permitted healing on the Sabbath only where life was in danger,<sup>1423</sup> which certainly was not the present case.

**3:3** The NI<sup>43</sup>V's "stand up front" is a modernization. The Greek says "get up in the middle" because, in second- and third-century synagogues at least, the seats were stone benches around the walls.

**3:4** By his question Jesus lifted the issue of Sabbath observance above a list of prohibitions to the higher general principle. No one would claim that it was "lawful" or right to do evil or kill on the Sabbath. The obvious alternative is that it must be right to do good and save life. To heal is to do good; to do nothing is to do evil. To heal is to "save" a life;<sup>1444</sup> not to heal is the

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<sup>4213</sup> *M. Yoma* 8.6; cf. *m. Šabb.* 18.3.

<sup>43</sup> NIV *New International Version*

<sup>4414</sup> The verb *to save* is used here in its nontheological sense of deliverance from any kind of harm. As previously indicated, all of Jesus' healings of the body are symbols of his healing of the soul, which is often referred to by the technical term "salvation." Jesus' healings were a sign of the nearness of the kingdom of God.

equivalent of killing.<sup>455</sup> For Mark merely not doing work and resting on the Sabbath or the Lord's Day was not enough. The day must be used for all kinds of good things.

The Pharisees were silent because whatever answer they gave to Jesus' question would have undermined their position on Sabbath observance.

**3:5** Here is a certain reference to the anger of Jesus (see also 10:14 and compare the comments on 1:41 and the accounts of the expulsion from the temple). In their parallel accounts Matthew and Luke preferred not to attribute to Jesus an emotion that among humans is often sinful. Jesus' anger was not sinful, however, because it was directed toward evil and because it was controlled. Perhaps "with righteous indignation" would avoid the offense. "At their stubborn hearts" could be translated more literally "at their hardness of heart," but the word "hardness" often takes on the additional idea of willful "blindness." The NEB and REB have a striking rendition here: "Looking round at them with anger and sorrow at their obstinate stupidity." Jesus was angry not only at insensitivity toward suffering but at the entire system of legalism where the letter is more important than the spirit.

**3:6** In all of ancient literature the Herodians are referred to only here and in 12:13 (cf. Matt 22:16).<sup>466</sup> One can only surmise that they supported Herod Antipas, the tetrarch of Galilee and Perea (see the comments on 6:14–29). They may have further advocated restoration of Herodian rule of Judea, which was a Roman imperial province governed by a legate, or (as such officials were later called) procurator, during the ministry of Jesus. Ordinarily the Pharisees would have had nothing to do with the Herodians, but common enemies often make strange bedfellows. Perhaps the Herodians opposed Jesus because of his relationship to John the Baptist, who condemned Herod's divorce and remarriage (6:18).

The first explicit reference to Jesus' death is in v. 6. The verse concludes not only the present pericope but all five conflict stories. The Pharisees' plot to "kill" (*apolesosin*, which literally means *destroy* as one would do to an animal) one who not only saved a life but who came to give life to all exemplifies Markan irony.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>4515</sup> Some think this is an allusion to the plot to kill Jesus mentioned in v. 6. The most natural interpretation, however, is that killing is set in contrast with healing.

<sup>4616</sup> The references in Josephus, *War* 1.16.6 and *Antiquities* 14.15.10 are nontechnical and are associated with supporters of Herod the Great (40–4 B.C.).

<sup>47</sup> James A. Brooks, *Mark*, vol. 23, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1991), 67–69.

3:1–2. On **another** Sabbath occasion in **the synagogue** (probably Capernaum; cf. 1:21) Jesus saw **a man with a shriveled hand** (his “right” one; cf. Luke 6:6). **Some of them** (Pharisees, cf. Mark 3:6) **were** watching **Jesus** closely to see what He would do so they might find **a reason to accuse** Him. They permitted healing on the Sabbath only if a life was in danger. This man’s problem was not life-threatening and could wait till the next day; so if Jesus healed him, they could accuse Him of being a **Sabbath-violator**, an offense punishable by death (cf. Ex. 31:14–17).

3:3–4. **Jesus** commanded **the man, Stand up** so the whole gathering could see his **shriveled hand**. **Then He asked** the Pharisees a rhetorical question concerning which of two kinds of action was really consistent with the purpose of **the Sabbath** in the Mosaic Law. The obvious answer is: **to do good** and **to save life** (*psychēn*, “soul”; cf. 8:35–36). Yet failure to use the Sabbath to meet this man’s need (cf. 2:27) was **to do evil** (harmful misuse of its purpose) and, as ultimately happened, their malicious plotting on the Sabbath (cf. 3:6) led them **to kill**. The moral (not legal) issue of **“doing good”** on the Sabbath was at stake, and the Pharisees refused to debate it.

3:5. Jesus **looked around** (from *periblepomai*, an all-inclusive penetrating look; cf. v. 34; 5:32; 10:23; 11:11) **at** the Pharisees **in anger**. This is the only explicit reference to Jesus’ anger in the New Testament. It was nonmalicious indignation coupled with deep sorrow (grief) at their obstinate insensitivity (*pōrōsei*, “hardening”; cf. Rom. 11:25; Eph. 4:18) to God’s mercy and human misery.

When the man held out **his hand** at Jesus’ command, it was instantly and **completely restored**. Jesus did not use any visible means that might be construed as “work” on the Sabbath. As Lord of the Sabbath (Mark 2:28) Jesus freed it from legal encumbrances, and in grace delivered this man from his distress.

#### *E. Conclusion: Jesus’ rejection by the Pharisees (3:6)*

3:6. This verse climaxes the section on Jesus’ conflicts in Galilee with the religious establishment (2:1–3:5). It is Mark’s first explicit reference to Jesus’ death, which now began to cast its shadow over His mission. **The Pharisees** conspired immediately (*euthys*; cf. 1:10) **with the Herodians** (cf. 12:13), influential political supporters of Herod Antipas, in an unprecedented common effort to destroy Jesus (cf. 15:31–32). His authority confronted and overwhelmed their authority, so He must be killed. Their problem was how.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> John D. Grassmick, [“Mark,”](#) in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 115.