

**God is Doing a New Thing**  
How to Recognize Opportunities God Gives us.  
**The Greatest Opportunity Series – Part 6**  
Mk 2:18-3:6  
April 27-28, 2024

**Introduction**

- **Is being skeptical a good thing?** – I’m analytical. That has pros and cons to it. On one hand it allows me to dig down and find truth and push away bogus things. On the other hand, it sets me in a critique mode too often and I’m hardened to what God might be doing.
- **I think a better question is WHY we may be skeptical. Motivation matters because it sets the channel through which information flows into our heart.**
  - **To know the truth?**
  - **To own the truth?**
  - **Fear of feeling foolish?**
  - **Critical of others?**
  - **Prideful to be right all the time?**
  - **Just stubborn?** – here’s the problem...

**STUBBORNESS Stifles Opportunity**

- **Hard-hearted<sup>1</sup>** - The **Biblical way** of describing stubborn criticalness is ‘**hard hearted.**’ It means that our hearts are **resistant to what the Lord wants** to do in us. The definition means, ‘**render insensitive.**’ The **problem** with being insensitive is that **the Holy Spirit tends to be gentle and subtle. Hearing the voice of God is usually a skillset built on sensitive listening to internal thoughts, images, and impressions.** In other words **discerning** the voice and actions of God, which is our **main focus** this year of OPPORTUNITY, is based on being sensitive to the Lord. Hard hearts will miss it almost every time.
  - **Turn with me to Mark 2**
- **Recap – Last week** – Pastor Heather taught us about community.
  - **Paralyzed guy w/friends** - She told the story of the paralyzed man who was brought to Jesus and lowered down through the roof by his friends.
  - **Expand our circles** - She encouraged us to consider expanding our circles to include more people. She talked about **the power of us caring for one another** and sharing life.
  - **Calling Levi** - She talked about how Jesus called a hated tax collector to be a part of His team, named Levi and how he went to **Levi’s house for dinner and ate with his friends who were all outcasts in society.**
  - **Better together** - She explained that **we are better and stronger together** and that **Christianity is a WE faith more than a ME faith.**
- **Today** – we are going to talk about what happens **when we are too stubborn to follow Jesus** and the impacts that has on our lives.

---

<sup>1</sup> Mark 16:14; Rom 2:5; Eph 4:17-18

## Lesson

### • Intermittent Wedding Fasting

#### • Jesus is questioned about His team not fasting

- **Mk 2:18-20** – *“Now John [the Baptist]’s disciples<sup>2</sup> and the Pharisees were fasting.<sup>3</sup> And people came and said to [Jesus], “Why do John’s disciples and the disciples<sup>4</sup> of the Pharisees fast,<sup>5</sup> but your disciples do not fast?” 19 And Jesus said to them, “Can the wedding guests fast while the bridegroom is with them?<sup>6</sup> As long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast.<sup>7</sup> 20 The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them,<sup>8</sup> and then they will fast in that day.”*

- **John’s disciples** – who?
- **Pharisees** – who?
- **Were fasting<sup>9</sup>** – what is this? Most accurately, the discipline of fasting was doing without food. The Pharisees (more strict) fasted Mondays and Thursdays every week from 6am to 6pm.
- **People came and asked... -** who are these people.
- **Why do they fast but Jesus’ disciples don’t?** – what is the point of the question?
  - **Why do we ask the questions we do?**

---

<sup>2</sup> Matt. 11:2; 14:12; Luke 11:1; John 1:35; 3:25; 4:1

<sup>3</sup> “The OT specified only one day when fasting was mandatory upon all Israel. This was the Day of Atonement, designated as a day for cleansing from sin and affliction of the soul (Ex. 20:10; Lev. 16:1–34; 23:26–32; 35:9; Num. 29:9–11). In this context fasting is an act of repentance in preparation for expiation. By the close of the prophetic period other occasions of fasting had become traditional,<sup>57</sup> and these observances continued into the first century. At this time it was customary for the Pharisees to fast voluntarily on Monday and Thursday of each week. While the origins of this practice are obscure, it appears to have been an expression of piety and self-consecration. It is probably to this voluntary fast that reference is made in the statement “the Pharisees were fasting.” NICNT

<sup>4</sup> “The reference to “the disciples of the Pharisees” is not technical since the Pharisees as such did not have disciples (although individual scribes among them did). The designation indicates that larger group of people who were influenced by Pharisaic ideals and practice.” NICNT

<sup>5</sup> Mark contrasts Jesus prior feasting with the Pharisees’ fasting

<sup>6</sup> “It seems better to understand their fast as an expression of repentance designed specifically to hasten the coming of the time of redemption. This understanding gives point to Jesus’ use of the wedding image (which implies a contrast between John’s pre-messianic travail and Jesus’ messianic feast), and appears to be assumed in the two brief parables appended to this initial metaphor.” NICNT

<sup>7</sup> “Jesus, in typical debate fashion, poses a counter-question designed to center attention on the new situation created by his presence with the disciples. He replies: “Can the bridal guests mourn during the bridal celebrations?” The statement may be proverbial for any inappropriate action, since a wedding was a time of great joy and festivity, heralded by music and gala processions. To fast in the presence of the groom would be unthinkable. Although the image of the wedding feast was sometimes used by the rabbis to express the joy of the messianic era, neither in the OT nor in later Jewish literature was the Messiah represented as the bridegroom.<sup>64</sup> It is important to stress this fact, for it indicates that Jesus’ statement would not have been recognized by his disciples or his adversaries as an explicitly messianic assertion. Jesus speaks of himself in an implicit, veiled manner because he has not yet spoken openly and in detail to his disciples about his distinctive mission (see Ch. 8:32). The messianic significance of this use of the bridal image was understood only later.<sup>66</sup> The central comparison between the wedding festivities and Jesus’ disciples lies in the joy which they possess in their master. Jesus emphasizes this with his answer to the critical question. The reason for the fundamentally different position of his disciples is that “the bridegroom is with them,” and in his presence they experience joy. Even on this veiled level of parabolic speech something significant is said: an expression of sorrow is inappropriate to the new situation which has come with Jesus’ presence.” NICNT

<sup>8</sup> “Jesus referred to a period when the bridegroom would be taken away and then his disciples would understand the meaning of sorrow. These words have been judged to be alien to the context with its stress on the joy in the bridal celebrations; here, it is urged, the early Church reflects on Jesus’ passion. This inference is unwarranted. The language is cryptic in its reference to the bridegroom. Jesus speaks only of a time in which he will be taken away from his friends; there is no definite allusion to a violent death. The inner connection between Ch. 2:19a and Ch. 2:20 demands only that the phrase “because he is with them” be placed in opposition to “when he shall be taken away.” When the primitive Christian community reflected upon this word after Jesus’ suffering and death it is natural that they should understand it in the light of that event. But in its original setting the word was veiled and spoke only of a time when joy would be exchanged for sorrow because Jesus would be with them no longer. It is especially important to notice that the specific formulation which Mark has recorded finds no explicit echo in the passion narrative of his Gospel.” NICNT

<sup>9</sup> “But the stricter Jews fasted on two days every week, on Mondays and Thursdays. It is to be noted that fasting was not as serious as it sounds, for the fast lasted from 6 am to 6 pm and after that normal food could be eaten.” NICNT

- Are we trying to bust someone we perceive as wrong?
- Are we trying to find out the truth so we can adjust our opinion?
- Are we trying to start a fight?
- Are we trying to find a reason why we don't need to change (delay)?
- **Jesus' answer to the question** – Jesus didn't have to answer them, but He did. Why? He was a rabbi and that's one of the things that rabbi's do. They create dialogue and share opinions. **Jesus was here partially to explain a new way of thinking** (worldview, paradigm, perspective, etc.)<sup>10</sup>
  - **Easy or Complicated?** – sometimes Jesus will use a parable or analogy that **I'm totally lost on**, and I wonder how much His **original audience** knew what He was saying immediately or if they too had some confusion. I think the answer is **both**. Although **we get lost on the story pieces** (e.g. ancient Jewish wedding styles) and they didn't, I think that the **meanings were challenging for both** them and us. But **that's part of the point of parables**.
  - **Jesus' use of parables**<sup>11</sup> - Jesus tended to teach through parables or analogies. Why is this? **It creates a WORLD of information instead of a single fact**. It's incredibly powerful. It's an **opportunity to both consider the lesson deeper AND to get closer to the Lord**.
    - **4-8 analogies** – In this passage we are studying alone, Jesus is going to use anywhere **from 4 to 8 analogies**. He tended to **use them more with those who didn't know Him very well**, or the religious leaders who were trying to mess with Him. He was a bit more clear to His own close disciples.
  - **Analogy #1 - A wedding analogy (parable)** – **Jesus was brilliant** at coming up with **analogies** that everyone could relate to. He would use things that were **common experiences**, like this wedding analogy. The problem for us 2,000 years later is that we don't automatically know what an ancient wedding was like.
    - **What was this parable's context?**<sup>12</sup> – **A Jewish wedding was a long and massive celebration** both for the couple, their family and the community. For the week after the wedding the couple enjoyed a long feast and their closest friends and family stayed and partied with them. Those close attendees were called, **"children of the bridechamber."** Jesus is using this analogy saying that **He's like the Groom and his crew are His closest friends and family**.

<sup>10</sup> "Like the bridal metaphor, the sayings about the new garment and the new wine describe inappropriate actions (using valuable new cloth to mend a tattered garment; pouring fermenting new wine into worn-out damaged wineskins)." NICNT

<sup>11</sup> "No one ever had such a gift as Jesus for the discovery and the use of homely illustrations. Over and over again he finds in the simple things pathways and pointers to God. No one was ever such an expert in getting from the 'here and now' to the 'there and then'. For Jesus, 'earth was crammed with heaven'. He lived so close to God that everything spoke to him of God." NICNT

<sup>12</sup> "Jesus used a vivid picture to tell the Pharisees why his disciples did not fast. After a Jewish wedding, the couple did not go away for a honeymoon; they stayed at home. For a week or so, open house was kept and there was continual feasting and rejoicing. In lives that were hard, a wedding week was the happiest time. To that week of happiness were invited the closest friends of the bride and the bridegroom; and they were called by the name children of the bridechamber. Jesus likened his little company to men who were children of the bridechamber, chosen guests at a wedding feast. There was actually a Rabbinic ruling which said, 'All in attendance on the bridegroom are relieved of all religious observances which would lessen their joy.' The wedding guests were actually exempt from all fasting." William Barclay Commentary

- **Can the wedding guests fast when the bridegroom<sup>13</sup> is still with them? –** Clearly the context says the answer is ‘no’, but what in the world is He talking about? Why would wedding guests fast? They wouldn’t which is kind of part of the point. It’s inappropriate (which is Jesus’ main theme here). **Fasting means something is wrong, but in the party everything is focused on what’s right.**
  - **They cannot<sup>14</sup> – it’s entirely inappropriate to do something in mourning or sorrow when it’s the ‘happiest day of the groom’s life!’**
  - **Key point: The right time = when the Bridegroom is taken away from them (then they will fast) – why would he be taken away? In a wedding the bridegroom isn’t taken away per se. Yes, he has to go on with his bride and the party will end, but he’s still around. The point is that this season of partying will end and people will go back to normal.**
    - **Meaning – Fasting is usually a signal of a difficult time when you are calling God to hear your cry and respond. That makes sense for Pharisees who are waiting for the Messiah. That makes sense for John’s disciples who haven’t been convinced that Jesus is the Messiah and are staying on his team. But that is totally inappropriate for Jesus’ team that knows He’s the Messiah and is celebrating. God DID hear and DID respond! No need to fast in that moment. But when Jesus is gone again (taken away), they will once again return to need and longing for His return. They will then return to fasting to cry out to God for Him to draw near and help them in their pain.**
- **Sewing and Storing**
  - **New ideas need a new heart to receive them**
    - **Mk 2:21-22 – “No one sews a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old garment. If he does, the patch tears away from it, the new from the old, and a worse tear is made. 22 And no one puts new wine into old wineskins. If he does, the wine will burst the skins—and the wine is destroyed, and so are the skins. But new wine is for fresh wineskins.”**

---

<sup>13</sup> Jesus uses wedding imagery to describe Himself - Wedding imagery suggests new beginnings, new relationships, celebration. Jesus refers to himself as the bridegroom. This is a veiled messianic claim (the audience would have missed this) – Yahweh as Bridegroom. Today we look back and talk about the Church being the bride of Christ and Jesus being the bridegroom but they didn’t know that language yet. As weddings are joyful so too is Jesus’ ministry is joyful and expectant. He’s offering freedom, healing, and forgiveness.

<sup>14</sup> “In this context the meaning of these sayings is quite specific. If Jesus’ disciples were to pursue the Pharisaic practice or continue to emulate the Baptist, they would be like people who put a new piece of cloth on an old garment, or who pour new wine into old skins. The practice of John’s disciples was oriented to preparation for the coming of the Kingdom, especially in its aspect of judgment. That is why they fast. Jesus, on the other hand, came proclaiming that the time was fulfilled, and it is his presence which is the decisive element of fulfilment. The behavior of his disciples reflects the joyful certainty of the breaking in of the time of salvation. They experience the joy of the Kingdom because they belong to him. The time of the bridegroom signals the passing of the old and the coming of “the new.” Here “new” means that which is totally different; it is a characteristic which belongs to the final age. The new disrupts the old and bursts its mold. That is why maintaining what is old (fasting as an expression of repentance in preparation for the judgment to come) represents a misunderstanding and a basic ignorance that the time of salvation has already come with Jesus. The Pharisaic practice of fasting perpetuated the old in an unbelieving mechanical fashion blind to the new moment which God had introduced.” NICNT

- **Analogy #2: No one sews a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old garment<sup>15</sup> – Does anyone remember when iron on patches were a thing?** I had plenty, especially on the knees of my jeans as a kid. So, Jesus was again using a very common experience to make a spiritual point, something that everyone could relate to. **Darning, sewing or fixing clothes were a common activity for the common folks.** But there were **rules** for how you put things together. The most obvious to them was that if you grab a new piece of unwashed, unshrunk, material and sew it into an old garment, what's going to happen when it's washed? The new piece will need to shrink, but the old part is already shrunk as far as it's going to go. As the new patch shrinks it pulls at the stitching and will tear.
  - **Reason: the patch tears away and a worse tear is made** – Not only does it not work, **it makes things worse!** You used to have one sized tear, now you have a much larger one.
  - **Key point: use new patches for new clothes and old patches for old clothes** – The simple solution is to **be mindful to match the materials. Use new with new and old with old.**
    - **Meaning** – **The new covenant and reality of Jesus coming to earth (Incarnation – and even more the rescue via the cross) is so radically new that if you tried to merge the two realities and use what Jesus was doing to be an add-on to the old religious system, it would make the matter worse. It would create a bigger hole that couldn't be filled and everything would come apart.**
- **Analogy #3 – no one puts new wine into old wineskins<sup>16</sup>** – Again, this was a common understanding and practice. Back in the ancient world **water purity couldn't be trusted.** The process of **wine making would purify whatever water you had (fermentation).** So, most households had a diluted wine mixture

---

<sup>15</sup> "He speaks of the danger of sewing a new patch on an old garment. The word used means that the new cloth was still undressed; it had never been shrunk; so when the garment got wet in the rain the new patch shrank, and being much stronger than the old, it tore the old apart. There comes a time when the day of patching is over, and re-creating must begin. In the time of Martin Luther, it was not possible to patch up the abuses of the Roman Catholic Church; the time for reformation had come. In the time of John Wesley, for Wesley at least, the time for patching the Church of England was done. He did not want to leave it, but in the end he had to, for only a new fellowship would suffice. It may well be that there are times when we try to patch, when what is wanted is the complete abandonment of the old and the acceptance of something new." William Barclay Commentary

<sup>16</sup> "Wine was kept in wine skins. There was no such thing as a bottle in our sense of the term. When these skins were new they had a certain elasticity; as they grew old they became hard and unyielding. New wine is still fermenting; it gives off gases; these gases cause pressure; if the skin is new it will yield to the pressure, but if it is old and hard and dry it will explode, and wine and skin alike will be lost. Jesus is pleading for a certain elasticity in our minds. It is fatally easy to become set in our ways. J. A. Findlay, the Principal of Didsbury Methodist College in Manchester, quotes a saying of one of his friends—'When you reach a conclusion you're dead.' What he meant was that when our minds become fixed and settled in their ways, when they are quite unable to accept new truth and to contemplate new ways, we may be physically alive but we are mentally dead.

As they grow older almost everyone develops a constitutional dislike of that which is new and unfamiliar. We grow very unwilling to make any adjustments in our habits and ways of life. Lesslie Newbigin, who was involved in the discussions about the formation of the United Church of South India, tells how one of the things that most often held things up was that people kept asking, 'Now, if we do that, just where are we going?' In the end someone had to say bluntly, 'Christians have no right to ask where they are going.' Abraham went out not knowing whither he went (Hebrews 11:8). There is a great verse in that same chapter of Hebrews: 'By faith Jacob, when dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph "bowing in worship over the top of his staff" ' (Hebrews 11:21). With the very breath of death upon him, the old traveller still had his pilgrim staff in his hand. To the end of the day, with the evening now upon him, he was still ready for the road. If we are really to rise to the height of the Christian challenge, we must retain the adventurous mind. I received a letter once which ended, 'Yours aged 83 and still growing'—and with the inexhaustible riches of Christ before us, why not?" William Barclay Commentary

around on hand. But the making of wine was tricky. First of all there was no such thing as glass bottles, so most wine was kept in leather pouches, or what became known as wineskins. But here's the thing. Wine<sup>17</sup> is transformed grape juice and the way that it gets to being wine is called fermentation. The sugars are converted to ethyl alcohol. You do this by adding a form of bacteria to grapes. As it chemically transforms it puts off a CO<sub>2</sub> gas and looks like it's bubbling<sup>18</sup> This gas pushes outward with pressure and if the container doesn't have any give it will rupture/explode.

- **Reason: wine will burst the skins and it's all ruined** – An old wineskin has already been through the fermentation process and has stretched to its limit. It has no more give to give. So if you put in fresh new wine that demands expansion, it's going to tear and you'll lose everything all over the ground.
- **Key point: New wine is for fresh wineskins** – New wine needs to be put into a new flexible container to deal with the pressure of change.
  - **Meaning** - The new covenant and reality of Jesus coming to earth (Incarnation – and even more the rescue via the cross) is so radically new that it breaks the old mold and renders the old ways inappropriate. To try to fit the new reality of Jesus into the old system (sacrificial – sin-based) would break everything. It's not going to work and it's going to make a mess.
  - **Are we too old to change?** – this analogy demands the question. Are we too old to change? A better way to ask it, because it actually has nothing to do with chronological age, is, are we done changing? Are we shut down from new things of God? Have we done all the transformation we are going to do? Has the pressure of growing in the past made us resistant to going through that process anymore? If so, you are no longer going to be as helpful to the Lord as He moves forward. When God does something fresh, you are going to tap out. You can't handle it.
  - **Transformation demands cushion/margin** – Any change requires flexibility and too often we live at max and don't have any more cushion or margin for change. We are resistant because we live too filled. We have never healed from the past so our hurts and scars are taking up too much room. Sometimes we have received so much praise for our prior ideas and accomplishments that we stopped learning new and risking being ignorant again. All of this means less connection to God.
  - **Example – Hippies to LGBTQ Revival** – Imagine being a bit older during the 1960's and 1970's hippie movement. As

---

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.vinumhadrianum.com/blogs/news/the-ancient-way-of-making-wine>; <https://www.britannica.com/science/fermentation>;

<sup>18</sup> Fermentation comes from the Latin word 'fervere' which means boiling. <https://kids.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/frym.2021.568656>;

you were frustrated and disgusted by hippies, suddenly God does a major revival that we now call the **Jesus People Revival**. We all celebrate it today looking back and many of us in Bridgeway are products of that movement. But **what about those who were forced** to accept that revival and it was really hard for them? They had to go through a brutal learning curve. **God's paradigm shifted right in front of them and pushed them further than they wanted**. What's going to happen if that same person had to go through **another revival with another group of people different from them that they didn't understand**? What's going to happen when God does a new revival but this time through the **LGBTQ community**. I believe this is the new great revival field. But if you are **exhausted from the last learning curve**, you may not want to do it again because it's messy, confusing and frustrating. I get it, that was 50 years ago and its only a smaller percentage of our congregation that will have to face that. But **what will you do? Do you wonder why perhaps this is why God spaces out revivals the way that He does?**

- **Meaningful Sabbath**

- **Jesus teaches on the intent of the Sabbath**

- **Mk 2:23-28** - *“One Sabbath he was going through the grainfields, and as they made their way, his disciples began to pluck heads of grain [to eat]. 24 And the Pharisees were saying to him, “Look, why are they doing what is not lawful on the Sabbath?” 25 And he said to them, “Have you never read what David did [in 1 Samuel 21], when he was in need and was hungry, he and those who were with him: 26 how he entered the house of God [the Temple], in the time of Abiathar the high priest,<sup>19</sup> and ate the bread of the Presence, which it is not lawful for any but the priests to eat, and also gave it to those who were with him?” [Matthew added] “Or have you not read in the Law [Numbers 28] how on the Sabbath the priests in the temple profane the Sabbath [by working the temple and offering sacrifices] and [yet] are [held] guiltless? I tell you, something greater than the temple is here. And if you had known what this means, ‘I desire mercy, and not sacrifice,’ you would not have condemned the guiltless. 27 And he said to them,*

---

<sup>19</sup> “The chief problem in the allusion to David’s act is the reference to Abiathar the high priest. If the meaning is that David received the five loaves of holy bread at the time when Abiathar was high priest the reference is incorrect. The incident occurred when Ahimelech was high priest, and it was he who gave David the bread. Abiathar was a son of Ahimelech who escaped the massacre of the high priestly family, and who enters the record for the first time a chapter later (1 Sam. 22:20). Because he served as high priest and was better known in association with David than his father, it is commonly assumed a primitive error entered the tradition before it came into Mark’s hands or an early marginal gloss which was in error moved into the text. The difficulty was early felt and is reflected in the manuscript tradition. An attractive proposal is that Mark’s intention has been misunderstood in the translation of the passage. The same grammatical construction occurs in Ch. 12:26, where it must be translated “have you not read in the book of Moses, in the passage concerning the Bush, how God spoke unto him ...?” The construction is designed to call attention to the section of a biblical book where the reference is found, in the above instance Ex. 3:1ff. In Ch. 2:26 Mark may have inserted the reference to Abiathar to indicate the section of the Samuel scroll in which the incident could be located.” NICNT

*“The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. 28 So the Son of Man is lord even of the Sabbath.”<sup>20</sup>*

- **ESV Combo Account** – Mt 12:1-8; Mk 2:23-28; Luke 6:1-5 – *“At that time on a Sabbath, while Jesus was going through the grainfields, as they made their way, his disciples were hungry, and they began to pluck heads of grain, rubbing them in their hands, and to eat. But when some of the Pharisees saw it, they were saying to him, “Look, your disciples are doing what is not lawful. Why are you doing what is not lawful to do on the Sabbath?” And Jesus answered them, “Have you never read what David did when he was in need and he was hungry, he and those who were with him: how he entered the house of God, in the time of Abiathar the high priest, and took and ate the bread of the Presence, which is not lawful for him to eat nor for those who were with him, but only for the priests? And also gave it to those who were with him?” And he said to them, “Or have you not read in the Law how on the Sabbath the priests in the temple profane the Sabbath and are guiltless? I tell you, something greater than the temple is here. And if you had known what this means, ‘I desire mercy, and not sacrifice,’ you would not have condemned the guiltless. The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath.<sup>21</sup> For the Son of Man is lord even of the Sabbath.”*
  - **Scriptural Color Key**
    - Luke is black
    - Matthew is orange
    - Mark is green
    - John is red
- **One Sabbath Jesus was going through the grainfields, and His disciples plucked heads of grain to eat** – the **Mosaic law provided a protection for the poor and needy**. It demanded that no one glean their fields so tightly that some wasn’t left over for the poor to come through at the end and pick up for themselves. The disciples weren’t doing anything wrong in taking the grain. The question was whether they were allowed to do it on the Sabbath.
  - **What kind of field/grain?** – it’s not clear if this was wheat or barley. It technically (due to language) could have been corn but that’s not likely in that part of the world. It would likely be wheat.
  - **Why the Sabbath matters<sup>22</sup>** – **From Israel’s earliest forming, God instituted a 7 day week and made resting on the 7<sup>th</sup> day mandatory**. The point was to stop working, stop striving, and spend time recuperating, spending time with family and community, and letting your heart soak in God. To make sure the greed and workaholics in the group didn’t mess things up, God was **vicious about that regulation**. There were stiff

---

<sup>20</sup> “The problems of the text that have encouraged conjecture arise from the MS tradition of verse 27, the apparent lack of cohesion between verses 27 and 28, the divergences between Mark and Matthew,<sup>94</sup> and the interpretation of the title “Son of Man” in verse 28. These problems justify asking whether verse 27 or verse 28, or both united, existed in isolated fashion in the tradition, or whether from the beginning they were joined to the controversy recorded in Ch. 2:23–26... In the face of such problems and objections it is mandatory to understand the text in its Marcan intention. With the introduction to verse 27 (“and he was saying to them”) Mark indicates that the statement which follows has no direct relationship to the immediately preceding verses. This literary device recurs several times and in each instance it signals that only a fragment of the conversation or teaching which took place has been recorded. Jesus’ initial response to the Pharisees was broken off after verse 26. The pronouncement in Ch. 2:27 stands on its own as the conclusion to a larger discourse, of which only the most salient point has been preserved.” NICNT

<sup>21</sup> Ex. 23:12; Deut. 5:14

<sup>22</sup> “The Mosaic Law provided explicitly that “when you come into your neighbor’s standing grain, then you may pluck the ears with your hands, but you shall not bring a sickle into your neighbor’s standing grain” (Deut. 23:25). The disciples’ conduct came under the critical scrutiny of the Pharisees only because it occurred on the Sabbath. The action of plucking grain was interpreted as reaping, an act of work in violation of the Sabbath rest. Reaping on the Sabbath was formally prohibited by the Mosaic Law (Ex. 34:21), and of the 39 main categories of work forbidden on the Sabbath in the Mishnah, the third is reaping.” NICNT

penalties if Israelites violated the Sabbath. Through the years the religious leaders became more and more sensitive and legalistic to make sure they never violated it. They went overboard and added in restrictions that God never intended. **God didn't intend the Sabbath to be a burden but a blessing.** But as human beings normally do, they took the blessing and made it a burden and made it miserable. They restricted all kinds of movement even to the degree that you weren't allowed to help certain people. **It was ridiculous and Jesus is about to call them out for it.**

- Ex 20:8–11 - *“Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. <sup>9</sup> Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, <sup>10</sup> but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates. <sup>11</sup> For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.”*

- **Pharisees challenge Jesus<sup>23</sup>** – why do they think they have the right to do that? What are they doing here? **On one hand it's kind of their job**, their thing. They were the ones who were super-Scripture knowledgeable so people trusted that if something was anti-Biblical they would know about it and handle it. **On the other hand we know that they took that responsibility too far** and used it as a matter of control. Not only did they not agree or like Jesus they became nasty about it.
  - **Look at what your guys are doing** – that's a challenge and rebuke. This is them standing in judgment on Jesus as if they were superior to Him (which they thought they were).
  - **Why are they dishonoring the Sabbath like that?** – why are they 'working' when they shouldn't be? They considered gleaning (harvesting) to be work. Of course, the disciples were not working, they were simply gathering along the way to eat, which was totally legal. But to the Pharisees, who had their own set of rules they made up, the disciples were in the wrong.
- **Jesus responds** – He gives them **two examples and makes four points**
  - **Example 1 - Do you know/remember what King David did?<sup>24</sup>** – call back to Old Testament example. When did David do this? He did this back when he was **running from King Saul who was trying to kill him.**
    - 1 Sa 21:1–6 – *“Then David came to Nob, to Ahimelech the priest. And Ahimelech came to meet David, trembling, and said to him, “Why are you alone, and no one with you?”<sup>2</sup> And David said to Ahimelech the priest, “The king has charged me with*

---

<sup>23</sup> “Among the scribes it was assumed that a teacher was responsible for the behavior of his disciples. For this reason the Pharisees address their protest directly to Jesus. They raise a question of halakha, of what is legally permitted or prohibited, perhaps with the intention of satisfying the legal requirement of a warning prior to prosecution for Sabbath violation.” NICNT

<sup>24</sup> “He cited the story which is told in 1 Samuel 21:1–6. David was fleeing for his life; he came to the tabernacle in Nob; he demanded food and there was none except the shewbread. Exodus 25:23–30 tells of the shewbread. It consisted of twelve loaves placed on a golden table three feet long, one and a half feet wide, and one and a half feet high. The table stood in the tabernacle in front of the Holy of Holies, and the bread was a kind of offering to God. It was changed once a week; when it was changed it became the property of the priests and of the priests alone, and no one else might eat it (Leviticus 24:9). Yet in his time of need David took and ate that bread. Jesus showed that Scripture itself supplies a precedent in which human need took precedence over human and even divine law.” William Barclay Commentary

a matter and said to me, 'Let no one know anything of the matter about which I send you, and with which I have charged you.' I have made an appointment with the young men for such and such a place. <sup>3</sup> Now then, what do you have on hand? Give me five loaves of bread, or whatever is here." <sup>4</sup> And the priest answered David, "I have no common bread on hand, but there is holy bread—if the young men have kept themselves from women." <sup>5</sup> And David answered the priest, "Truly women have been kept from us as always when I go on an expedition. The vessels of the young men are holy even when it is an ordinary journey. How much more today will their vessels be holy?" <sup>6</sup> So the priest gave him the holy bread, for there was no bread there but the bread of the Presence, which is removed from before the LORD, to be replaced by hot bread on the day it is taken away."

- **He and his team were in need and hungry** – they were on the run and weren't able to have enough provisions. They were starving and in desperate need. They needed a safe place where they would be protected and where the people would be compassionate to them.
- **David went into the temple and ate the holy bread with his guys<sup>25</sup>** – Now, this is a radical story, which is why it was included in the Old Testament. The holy bread was called the 'showbread,' or the 'bread of the presence.' It was 12 loaves, freshly baked by the priests, for the 12 tribes of Israel, and placed daily before God as an offering, in the holy place of the temple. It was God's bread. It was special bread. Only after removal and putting new bread in were the priests allowed to eat it. David and his team went in and ate the bread. I'm guessing that it was the bread that had been recently removed to be replaced.<sup>26</sup> It's highly unlikely that David would demand God's bread that was for Him alone. David was asking the priests to share their portion with him and his men and they did.
- **During Abiathar the Priest** – the problems with this reference is that it makes it sound like David got the bread from Abiathar who was there. That never happened. Abiathar wasn't high priest when David did this. Abiathar is a son of Ahimelech who was the high priest during this time and actually handed the bread to David. So, what do we do with that? There are two suggested explanations: 1.) Abiathar was the more well-known of him and his dad so it was a reflection on an era; 2.) Jesus intended to explain that the story can be found in the section of the Old

---

<sup>25</sup> "The allusion to David and his men receiving the showbread has often been felt to be inappropriate since there is no explicit reference to the Sabbath in the 1 Samuel account. Why is this particular incident relevant to the situation at hand? Jesus' reference to this occasion in David's life was not an isolated phenomenon in early Jewish exposition, for it attracted the attention of the rabbis as well. From details in the text, and especially from David's words, "how much more than today," they concluded that the incident occurred upon the Sabbath. This interpretation may have been current already at the time of Jesus' ministry. There is, however, no reflection of this exegetical tradition in Mark's narrative. The emphasis rather falls on the association of David and his men, because this is the detail that provides the parallel to Jesus and his company of men. Twice in the text inferences are drawn from 1 Sam. 21:3–6 to underscore this fact ("when he had need and was hungry, he and they that were with him ... he gave also to them that were with him"). David's conduct included that of his men. The relationship between the OT incident and the infringement of the Sabbath by the disciples lies in the fact that on both occasions pious men did something forbidden. The fact that God does not condemn David for his action indicates that the narrowness with which the scribes interpreted the Law was not in accordance with the tenor of Scripture. Jesus argues that the tradition of the Pharisees is unduly stringent and exceeds the intention of the Law." NICNT

<sup>26</sup> <https://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/13611-showbread>

Testament that was near the famous Abiathar section to be read and a copyist later adjusted it thinking that Jesus was talking about the actual time of the story (which most learned Jews knew wouldn't line up historically). Doesn't really matter but it's helpful to know there are options.

- **What's the temple?** – the temple is the holy place where people could go to feel close to God. It's a building compound where God allowed a thick portion of His presence to dwell so that people didn't feel far away. It was a place that was run by Priests and Levites (certain tribe of Israel). People could only go into certain portions of the temple. It was very special.
- **What's the bread of the Presence?**<sup>27</sup> – see above. It's the food offering to God that's replaced every Sabbath in the holy place (just outside the Holy of Holies) on an acacia wood table overlaid with gold (3' x 1½' x 2'). It's matzah (unleavened). Leviticus 24 gives directions on how to make it. **Each loaf was approximately 5 lbs!**<sup>28</sup> they were laid in 2 stacked rows of 6 each. According to the Mishnah the bread was made two loaves at a time (so I'm guessing that all the measurements are divided by 2 so they can fit on the table). When combined the 2 loaves side by side, were the same size as the table.<sup>29</sup> My hands are 4 inches wide (handbreadth). The Mishnah<sup>30</sup> says that the bread loaves were, "10 handbreadths long and 5 wide, and it had rising corners that were 7 finger widths high' (my finger widths are 1"). So, if I'm baking this thing, the two loaves would be 3 1/3' long 1 2/3' wide and 7 inches high folded over on the corners. I'm a big dude, so let's compensate and call each loaf **3 feet long by 9 inches wide with weird sides and corners**. I'm assuming the length was the same on both, but it was the thickness that was doubled. There was no expected thickness recorded (if it's unleavened how did the corners rise?). It says that 4 priests brought in the new batch, 4 priests took out the old batch. It's a lot of bread.
  - Le 24:5–9 - *"You shall take fine flour and bake twelve loaves from it; two tenths of an ephah shall be in each loaf. <sup>6</sup>And you shall set them in two piles, six in a pile, on the table of pure gold before the LORD. <sup>7</sup>And you shall put pure frankincense on each pile, that it may go with the bread as a memorial portion as a food offering to the LORD. <sup>8</sup>Every Sabbath day Aaron shall arrange it before the LORD regularly; it is from the people of Israel as a covenant forever. <sup>9</sup>And it shall be for Aaron and his sons, and they shall eat it in a holy place, since it is for him a most holy portion out of the LORD's food offerings, a perpetual due."*

---

<sup>27</sup> [https://www.chabad.org/library/article\\_cdo/aid/2974301/jewish/The-Showbread-The-How-and-Why-of-the-Temple-Bread-Offering.htm](https://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/2974301/jewish/The-Showbread-The-How-and-Why-of-the-Temple-Bread-Offering.htm)

<sup>28</sup> Another reference said each loaf was 11lbs. but that seems extreme since they are unleavened. <https://theisraelbible.com/the-shewbread-a-reminder-that-godprovides-our-physical-sustenance/>

<sup>29</sup> <https://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/13611-showbread>

<sup>30</sup> <https://www.showbreadinstitute.org/Kranot-corners-of-the-Showbread>



(although some would have heard him saying that Human Beings are more important than the Sabbath<sup>33</sup>), is more important than the Sabbath and as the God-Man can make rules about the Sabbath clearly because He knows the heart of the Father and is God Himself.

- **Sabbath for Healing**

- **Jesus heals a man with a withered hand on the Sabbath**

- **Mk 3:1-6** - “[On another day] [Jesus] *entered the synagogue, and a man was there with a withered<sup>34</sup> hand. 2 And [the Pharisees] watched Jesus, to see whether he would heal him on the Sabbath, so that they might accuse him. 3 And he said to the man with the withered hand, “Come here.” 4 And he said to them, “Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do harm, to save life or to kill?”*”

[Matthew added - *Which one of you who has a sheep, if it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will not take hold of it and lift it out? Of how much more value is a man than a sheep! So, it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath.*] *But they were silent. 5 And he looked around at them with anger, grieved at their hardness of heart, and said to the man, “Stretch out your hand.” He stretched it out, and his hand was restored. 6 The Pharisees<sup>35</sup> went out and immediately held counsel with the Herodians against him, how to destroy him.”<sup>36</sup>*

- **ESV Combo Account** - Mt. 12:9-14; Mk. 3:1-6; Luke 6:6-11 - “*On another Sabbath, he went on from there and again entered their synagogue and was teaching, and a man was there whose right hand was withered. And the scribes and the Pharisees asked him, “Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?” And they watched Jesus, to see whether he would heal on the Sabbath, so that they might find a reason to accuse him. But he knew their thoughts, and he said to the man with the withered hand, “Come and stand here.” And he rose and stood there. And Jesus said to them, “I ask you, is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do harm, to save life or to destroy it? Which one of you who has a sheep, if it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will not take hold of it and lift it out? Of how much more value is a man than a sheep! So it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath.” But they were silent. And after looking around at them all with anger, grieved at their hardness of heart, he said to him, “Stretch out your hand.” And*

---

over the Sabbath itself. With this word Mark drives home for his readers the theological point of the pericope. These things were written that they may understand Jesus’ true dignity: he is the Lord of the Sabbath.” NICNT

<sup>33</sup> Jesus is progressively revealing himself in teaching and action. Exercising increasing spiritual authority starting with teaching, then demons, physical illnesses, forgiveness of sins, and now the Sabbath.

<sup>34</sup> “Gr. ἐξηραμμένην from ξηραίνειν meaning “to make dry, harden, cause to wither,” and in the passive, “withered.” The description is medically imprecise. Cf. J. Preuss, *Biblich-talmudische Medizin* (Berlin, 1911), pp. 351–354.” NICNT

<sup>35</sup> The decision of the Pharisees to conspire with the Herodians to destroy Jesus is indicative of the seriousness of the conflict with authority which erupted in Galilee. The Sabbath controversies reported by Mark did not originate in subordinate departures from the scribal tradition, but were symptomatic of Jesus’ entire attitude toward the oral law. Jesus refused to observe the traditional rules; he moved in grace toward sick individuals and healed them without regard to the day of the week. From the Pharisaic point of view Jesus’ word and action totally undermined their interpretation of the Law, their piety and their actions. Jesus was not simply another scribe who advocated an independent opinion; he constituted a threat to true religion and ancestral tradition. When Jesus failed to submit to the scribal regulation of the Sabbath he broke the tradition, and authority confronted authority. It was inevitable that conflict should ensue, and that the Pharisees should seek to destroy Jesus.” NICNT

<sup>36</sup> “The decision to destroy Jesus climaxes the conflicts in Galilee. God’s grace toward Israel, proclaimed and demonstrated through Jesus, will be rejected by the responsible leaders of the people. Their considered intention is an ominous sign, both for Jesus and for Israel. For Jesus it means that the passion already impinges upon him. This was inevitable from the moment he decided to submit to the Father and bear the brunt of the judgment upon the people. But Jesus now feels the sting of that decision with a new reality. It was ominous for Israel because it entailed the rejection of the Bearer of salvation. Jesus answered the question of what is permitted on the Sabbath by healing the man with the withered hand. Ironically, the guardians of the Sabbath determine to do harm and to kill. The decision points forward to the Passion, but it also contains the seed of self-destruction. The rejection of Jesus entails the rejection of life and redemption and leaves men prey to distress and death. This is the bitter fruit of that hardness of heart which provoked in Jesus both anger and godly sorrow.” NICNT

*the man stretched it out, and his hand was restored, healthy like the other. But the Pharisees filled with fury went out immediately and held counsel with the Herodians against him and conspired with one another what they might do to Jesus, how to destroy him.”*

- **Again, Jesus entered the synagogue** – what’s a synagogue and why does it mention He went into one again? It’s the house of worship for the Jewish people (their church). Jesus was a Jew, and this was a familiar place. Synagogues were designed to be engaging and interactive. They provided a place for Jesus, a rabbi, to speak to the people about spiritual things.
- **A man was there with a withered hand – why is that odd?** What’s a withered hand? The only odd thing about it seems to be the set-up of the religious leaders. The withered hand guy, I don’t think is barred from the synagogue, but some of the Jews of that day believed that to be disfigured was to be cursed by God, so maybe that’s what was odd. **There is no indication what caused the withering of the man’s hand or what it was.** Was it a disease? Was it pulling in like from cerebral palsy? Was it an injury where tendons were damaged? It’s not clear but it seems to be disease related.
- **They watched Jesus** – who watched Jesus? The **Pharisees**. They were on a mission to condemn Him and they were gathering evidence to sink Him.
- **Why: to see whether he would heal him on the sabbath so they might accuse Him<sup>37</sup>** – They knew that Jesus was a compassionate healer and guy and struggled to walk by suffering. They made sure this guy was at synagogue that day when Jesus was coming (Jesus traveled to different synagogues).
  - **Why would they assume He would heal the guy?** – Jesus had a **reputation** as a healer and a compassionate leader. Notice that faith that Jesus could heal wasn’t a problem.
  - **Why would it be a problem to heal him on the Sabbath?<sup>38</sup>** – The Pharisees and other legalistic groups had added restrictions onto the Old

---

<sup>37</sup> “It was the Sabbath day; all work was forbidden, and to heal was to work. The Jewish law was definite and detailed about this. Medical attention could be given only if a life was in danger. To take some examples—a woman in childbirth might be helped on the Sabbath; an infection of the throat might be treated; if a wall fell on anyone, enough might be cleared away to see whether the person was dead or alive; anyone found alive might be helped, but a dead body must be left until the next day. A fracture could not be attended to. Cold water might not be poured on a sprained hand or foot. A cut finger might be bandaged with a plain bandage but not with ointment. That is to say, at the most an injury could be kept from getting worse; it must not be made better. It is extraordinarily difficult for us to grasp this. The best way in which we can see the strict orthodox view of the Sabbath is to remember that a strict Jew would not even defend his life on the Sabbath. In the wars of the Maccabees, when resistance broke out, some of the Jewish rebels took refuge in caves. The Syrian soldiers pursued them. Josephus, the Jewish historian, tells us that they gave them the chance to surrender and they would not, so ‘they fought against them on the Sabbath day, and they burned them as they were in caves, without resistance and without so much as stopping up the entrances of the caves. They refused to defend themselves on that day because they were not willing to break in upon the honour they owed to the Sabbath, even in such distress; for our law requires that we rest on that day.’ When Pompey, the Roman general, was besieging Jerusalem, the defenders took refuge in the Temple precincts. Pompey proceeded to build a mound which would overlook them and from which he might bombard them. He knew the beliefs of the Jews and he built on the Sabbath day, and the Jews lifted not one hand to defend themselves or to hinder the building, although they knew that by their Sabbath inactivity they were signing their own death warrant. The Romans, who had compulsory military service, had in the end to exempt the Jews from army service because no strict Jew would fight on the Sabbath. The orthodox Jewish attitude to the Sabbath was completely rigid and unbending. Jesus knew that. This man’s life was not in the least danger. Physically he would be no worse off if he were left until the next day.” William Barclay Commentary

<sup>38</sup> “Like other aspects of Jewish life, the practice of medicine and healing on the Sabbath was regulated by legal tradition. It was an accepted principle that “any danger to life takes precedence over the Sabbath.” The scribes, however, had determined precisely in which cases it was proper to speak of immediate danger to life, and to what extent aid could be granted. In none of the recorded healings which Jesus performed on the Sabbath would the scribes have agreed that there was any immediate threat to life. The presence in the synagogue of opponents who were scrutinizing Jesus’ activity indicates that they were convinced of his ability to heal. They did not regard his capability as extraordinary but as a power he shared with others who did not exercise it on the Sabbath.” NICNT

Testament laws and codes (they were very burdensome). One of those was that since there wasn't to be any work on the Sabbath, then **any activity that was producing was considered wrong. This included helping people.** They had split hairs and said that anyone could stop someone from getting worse, but they couldn't get them better. They had to stay as they were for the whole Sabbath.

- **Why do they want to accuse Him?** – **they think that He's a fraud.** They think that He's pretending to be a Messiah when He's not. They believe that He is blaspheming God and that is reason for death.
  - **Is it possible that some people come to church not to learn and be transformed but to critique those that present?** **Yes, unfortunately it is. It's all too common.** I see it and hear it all the time. **If you leave a service with only a heart full of things they got wrong instead of being open to what God did in your heart despite that? You are out of line.** If you have a critique you should think to yourself, 'wow, I was able to hang on to that critique even after my deep experience of transformation with God. Wow!'
  - **When and how to critique a service, a sermon, or a church leader** – Church is a place where we are supposed to learn and be transformed. It is not a place to simply want to be affirmed for your already held convictions. It's a place where you are challenged. It's a place where you hear fresh revelation from God through the lens of God's leaders. **We only NEED bring correction when it's necessary. Necessary is relative. My encouragement is to only bring correction when it's beneficial.**
- **Jesus calls the man forward – why?** **To make him an example.** They were trying to be sneaky, and Jesus wanted to bring it all into the open. He calls him up front where Jesus is already standing to teach.
- **Jesus asks a question to the group: Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or harm, save life or kill?** – what is His point? His point is asking **what the Sabbath is really about. Is it truly to harm people?** Obviously the answer is no. He then points out that the heart of the Sabbath is healing, saving, and blessing life, not death or harm.
  - **Matthew's added parable/example/analogy** – *“Which one of you who has a sheep, if it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will not take hold of it and lift it out? Of how much more value is a man than a sheep! So, it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath.”* – **what does that mean?** It means that people would rescue an animal that is in danger on the sabbath as part of their flock. So, why wouldn't we help human beings?!?!
- **They were silent** – why? **They knew He was right, but they were simply waiting for their moment to pounce.** They weren't there for truth, they were there for accusation.
- **He looked at them with anger, grieved at their hardness of heart** – why is Jesus so mad? What is hardness of heart? What does grieved mean? It means

that Jesus was so frustrated by their lack of open hearts to God. They had their own agenda and were blinded by it. They wanted to kill that which was bringing them life. Jesus was 'grieved' meaning he was sad and frustrated by it all. Their hardness of heart, like we talked about at the beginning intro was what was ruining their ability to be touched by the Savior.

- **Jesus tells the man to stretch out his hand** – why? Perhaps to show people the healing. Perhaps as an act of faith that he COULD be healed. Not sure.
- **He stretched it out, and his hand was restored** – it seems to have been healed AS he stretched it out rather than beforehand.
- **The Pharisees left immediately to plan with the Herodians how to kill Jesus<sup>39</sup>** – These stories explain that the anti-Jesus movement among the religious leaders had grown to such an animosity that they wanted to kill Him. Why do they want to kill Jesus? (see above)
  - **Who are the Herodians?<sup>40</sup>** – They were **supporters of Herod Antipas**. They don't normally connect with the Pharisees.<sup>41</sup> They would be helpful to the Pharisees to get the support of Rome to get rid of Jesus. They would only care about this situation because it **could destabilize the region** with an uprising.
  - **Missing miracles because of a problem with the messenger – Is it possible that we miss many miracles and thereby miss giving God His due glory because we don't like the package that the miracle arrived in? Yes.**

## Conclusion

- **Religiosity ruins a right response<sup>42</sup>** – **Stubbornness stifles the Spirit. Hard hearts hamper transformation.**
- **God is doing a new thing at Bridgeway** – we are in a new fresh season and picking up speed. Are you on board?
  - **We need fresh wine so that demands new wineskins – Have a sensitive heart to the Lord and a flexibility of spirit to roll with learning new and fresh.**<sup>43</sup>

---

<sup>39</sup> "In these next narratives it is evident that opposition to Jesus has become heightened and outspoken (Ch. 2:18, 24). It reaches a point of culmination in the decision to seek his death (Ch. 3:6)" NICNT

<sup>40</sup> "In their opposition to Jesus they had the support of the Herodians, who are mentioned also in Ch. 12:13 in association with the Pharisees. Apart from one reference in Josephus, the Herodians are not mentioned in any other ancient source, a fact which indicates that they were not a sect or an organized party. The word is of Latin formation (Herodiani), designating "adherents" or "partisans" of Herod; in Galilee this would mean Herod Antipas. Their name suggests a common attitude of allegiance to Herod in a country where large numbers of people chafed under his rule. In Josephus the term clearly denotes those who were sympathizers and supporters of the cause of Herod the Great. It is reasonable to understand Mark's term in the same light: in Ch. 3:6 and Ch. 12:13 the Herodians are, apparently, influential men of standing who loyally support Herod Antipas. Their concern with tribute money in Ch. 12:13 indicates that they were also loyal to the Roman control of Palestine upon which the Herodian dynasty depended. Undoubtedly they lent their support to the Pharisees because they saw Jesus as a threat to the peace and stability of the tetrarchy. The history of Herodian Galilee is marked by popular uprisings under the leadership of quasi-messianic figures, and they may have envisioned that Jesus posed this kind of peril to the land." NICNT

<sup>41</sup> "This shows the lengths to which the Pharisees would go. No Pharisee would normally have anything to do with a Gentile or someone who did not keep the law; such people were unclean. The Herodians were the court entourage of Herod; they were continually coming into contact with Romans. For all normal purposes the Pharisees would have considered them unclean; but now they were prepared to enter into what was for them an unholy alliance. In their hearts, there was a hate which would stop at nothing." William Barclay Commentary

<sup>42</sup> Where are we so set in our ways we're missing the new thing? How do we avoid stubbornness?

<sup>43</sup> How do we prepare ourselves for new things? How do we stay open to change?