

Sabbath Anger

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[0 : 00] Amen. Tonight we'll cover Mark chapter 3 verses 1 through 6.

So let's go ahead and read the verses. Speaking about Jesus, Mark wrote, And he entered the synagogue, and a man was there with a withered hand. And they watched Jesus to see whether he would heal him on the Sabbath, so that they might accuse him.

And he said to the man with the withered hand, Come here. And he said to them, talking about the religious leaders, Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or do harm, to save life or to kill?

But they were silent. 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.

The Pharisees went out and immediately held counsel with the Herodians against him, how to destroy him. Here's the main idea of this passage.

[1 : 24] The religious leaders joined forces with their enemies in a plot to kill Jesus after Jesus again heals on the Sabbath. Once again, the religious leaders joined forces with their enemies in a plot to kill Jesus after Jesus again heals on the Sabbath.

Here's a recap of the first four conflicts that led up to tonight's passage. First, the religious leaders complained that Jesus claimed to be God and to forgive sins. That was in Mark 2, verses 1-12.

Next, they were offended because Jesus fellowshiped with sinners. That was in chapter 2, verses 13-17. Then Jesus did not fast according to their religious traditions.

We saw that in chapter 2, verses 18-22. In the fourth conflict we looked at last week, they took issue because Jesus did not honor the Sabbath the way that they believed that he should.

And that was in Mark 2, verses 23-28. We've seen that each of the conflicts has a common pattern. The religious leaders ask Jesus a question, or at least think about a question.

[2 : 33] Jesus responds in such a way that silences the questioners. And we're going to see that same pattern tonight. In the first conflict, the religious leaders' question was, who can forgive sins but God alone?

In the second conflict, the question was, why does he eat with tax collectors and sinners? The question in the third conflict was, why do John's disciples and the disciples of the Pharisees fast, but your disciples do not fast?

And their question in the fourth conflict was, look, why are they doing what is not lawful on the Sabbath? Conflict with the religious leaders about the Sabbath was nothing new for Jesus.

Jesus purposely took issue with additional Sabbath regulations imposed by those religious leaders. Those additional requirements, some of which that we looked at last week, had no basis in Scripture.

Because the scribes and the Pharisees' distorted version of the Sabbath was central to their religious system, Jesus had to address the corrupted seventh day to expose the spiritual bankruptcy and also the error of the Pharisees and scribes.

[3 : 43] That's exactly what he did, both in word and deed. Jesus publicly defied the unbiblical rules and artificial regulations invented by the rabbis, and the religious leaders hated him for that.

The Sabbath conflicts documented in Mark are two of the three major Sabbath controversies that are recorded in the Bible. We read about the other controversy last week when we cross-referenced John 5, verses 2-18.

By openly defying the man-made traditions regarding the Sabbath, Jesus put himself in direct conflict with the religious leaders at their most sensitive point. But Jesus went even further than that.

In Mark 2, verse 28, which we looked at last week, Jesus rightly proclaimed himself to be Lord of the Sabbath. By claiming to be Lord of the Sabbath, Jesus essentially declared his authority over

the whole system of Jewish religion.

Sabbath observance was that religion's high point. And the implications of Jesus' claim struck deeply. The pattern for a day of rest was established at creation when God himself rested on the seventh day.

[4 : 54] Furthermore, it was God who wrote in the tablets of stone in Exodus 20, verse 8, Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. God was the one who established the Sabbath.

Jesus' claim to be Lord of the Sabbath was a claim to be God, a reality that was not lost on the Pharisees and the scribes. They became incensed by what they considered to be blasphemy. I said just a minute ago that each conflict began with a question from the religious leaders. But you may have noticed that the only question in tonight's Mark text is Jesus' question in verse 4.

However, the religious leaders also initiated this conflict by asking a question. To see that, we have to go to Matthew's account of this episode. Listen to Matthew 12, verses 9-14.

Again, these verses are Matthew 12, verses 9-14. Speaking of Jesus, Matthew wrote, He went on from there and entered their synagogue.

[5 : 59] And a man was there with a withered hand. And they, talking about the religious leaders, asked him, Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath so that they might accuse him?

He said to them, Which one of you 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. Then he said to the man, Stretch out your hand. And the man stretched it out, and it was restored, healthy like the other.

But the Pharisees went out and conspired against him how to destroy him. Notice the question in Matthew 12, 10 that started the conflict.

It came from the religious leaders when they asked Jesus, Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?

Jason Meyer said, One almost feels sorry for the scribes and Pharisees at this point.

[6 : 59] Imagine the audacity of trying to ambush God incarnate. It is mission impossible. Trying to ambush Jesus as God incarnate is exactly what the religious leaders keep trying to do.

The scribes and the Pharisees are overmatched. They're like kids in Little League trying to hit a Major League fastball. Unfortunately for them, though, baseball had yet to be invented, so they had no concept of three strikes and you're out.

They kept swinging. They're already up to try number five to discredit Jesus here. And they're going to try valiantly one more time. Perhaps Mark was feeling a bit sorry for the religious leaders and that could be why, unlike his other accounts, he omitted their initial question that started the episode.

This lesson is titled Sabbath Anger because anger permeates the story. The hostility between Jesus and the religious leaders reaches a climax in this fifth controversy and we see anger on both sides.

For Jesus, that anger stemmed from the leaders placing limits on when it was right to do good and to save a life. For the Pharisees and the Herodians, the anger was over this young rabbi's continuous undermining of their traditions, their religious rules, and for the Herodians, the overall status quo.

[8 : 23] So great is their outrage that they will begin at this early stage of Jesus' ministry to plot how they can destroy him. For his part, Jesus seems to deliberately be provoking a confrontation between the religious leaders and himself.

He's overtly inviting their critical judgment about what he's about to do. And we're going to split tonight's passage into three sections, starting with verses 1 and 2 of Mark chapter 3.

In these verses, we'll set the synagogue scene. So the synagogue scene is your first set of blanks. Listen to Mark chapter 3, verses 1 and 2 again.

And he, Jesus, entered the synagogue, and a man was there with a withered hand. And they watched Jesus to see whether he would heal him on the Sabbath so that they might accuse him.

Luke's account of the event gives us another detail. Listen to Luke chapter 6, verse 6. Luke chapter 6, verse 6 says, On another Sabbath, he entered the synagogue and was teaching, and a man was there whose right hand was withered.

[9 : 37] The word withered indicates that the problem with the hand was not congenital, but was a result of an accident or a disease. The withering didn't involve the whole arm, but just the hand.

However, that would make the arm virtually useless too. Given that most people, except for Mike, are right-handed, this condition would be debilitating.

The Greek word translated withered there is a term that refers to atrophy. It's used of dead plants that have dried up and wasted away. We talked last week about how the Pharisees and the scribes had developed additional rules and traditions, including restrictions on what level of care could be given to those who were sick or injured.

Unless a person's life was at stake, the rabbis determined that doing anything to improve someone's physical condition constituted work. The most a physician or even a relative was permitted to do was to keep the sick person alive if they happened to be on the Sabbath. They could only maintain the status quo of the condition until the following day. Anything more than that was considered work and violated the Sabbath rules. This man's condition was not life-threatening.

[10:54] Jesus could have waited until after the Sabbath to heal him, but the Lord was intent on making a spiritual point. He wanted to confront the unbiblical restrictions contrived by the rabbis.

The religious leaders obviously did not care about the physical well-being of the disabled man, nor did they care about the unprecedented supernatural power that Jesus would display by healing the man's hand.

Their only concern was whether Jesus would break their petty traditions. If he did, they could indict him as a Sabbath violator, an irreligious blasphemer in their minds who, according to them, deserve to be condemned.

Luke's account of this event gives us another important detail. Listen to Luke 6, verse 8. Luke 6, verse 8 says, But he, talking about Jesus again, knew their thoughts.

And he said to the man with the withered hand, Come and stand here. Jesus knew what those religious hypocrites were thinking. He knew they were trying to trap him.

[12:01] And instead of avoiding that trap, Jesus headed straight toward it. Jesus had a point to make, and he was going to make it. Going back to our Mark text, Mark 3, 2 shows us just how deplorable the religious leader's behavior was.

Look at Mark 3, verse 2 again. It says, And they watched Jesus to see whether he would heal him on the Sabbath so that they might accuse him. The verb for watching there is in the imperfect tense, indicating that this had become a continuing practice of theirs.

Even without knowing that tidbit about the verb tense, we already had a good idea that the Pharisees and the scribes were making a habit of watching Jesus. We saw the Pharisees and the scribes show up in the grain field on a Sabbath last week.

An appearance like that doesn't happen by coincidence. The confrontation we are studying today was even worse than what happened in the grain field. The events in today's passage happened in the synagogue, a place where the religious leaders should have worshipped God instead of accusing God.

Talking about how they should have been worshipping God instead of accusing God, J.C. Ryle said this, What a sad proof we have here of the wickedness of human nature.

[13:22] It was the Sabbath day when these things happened. It was in the synagogue where people were assembled to hear the word of God and to worship God. Yet even on the day of God, and at the time of worshipping God, these wretched hypocrites were plotting mischief against our Lord.

I would say they were plotting more than mischief, but that's an interesting way to put it. He continued by saying, The very men who claimed to be so strict and holy in little things were full of malicious and angry thoughts in the midst of the whole assembly.

Then he added a secondary point. He said, It is good for all Christians to keep this before their minds. Wherever we go and whatever we do, let us remember that like our Master, we are watched. The thought should make us exercise a holy jealousy over all our conduct that we may do nothing to cause the enemy to blaspheme. It should make us diligent to avoid even the appearance of evil. Above all, it should make us pray much to be kept in our tempers, tongues, and daily public demeanor. The Savior, who was watched closely himself, knows how to sympathize with his people and to supply grace to help them in time of need.

[14:42] Mark 3.2 says that the religious leaders were watching Jesus to see whether he would heal. They already knew Jesus could heal. They had seen Jesus heal many people.

Their only question was whether Jesus would heal and would violate their contrived regulations. The man with the withered hand might have been there by coincidence, but some scholars

speculate that the man might have been a plant by the religious leaders.

They might have been testing to see what Jesus would do. After all, Jesus allowed his disciples to pick grain on the Sabbath, but would he really do work himself? Jesus himself had given the answer to this already when he pronounced himself Lord of the Sabbath, but they wanted to see how far he would go.

It's sad when we use our religion as a weapon and ignore human need just to prove a point, but that's exactly what the religious leaders were doing. Their silly additional regulations had become more important than the people that they were supposed to serve.

So now that we've set the synagogue scene, let's move on to the next section of the lesson. In verses 3-5 of Mark 3, we learn about the Sabbath silence.

[15:59] So the Sabbath silence is your second set of blanks. Listen again to Mark 3, verses 3-5. Talking about Jesus again, it says, Try to imagine yourself as the man with the withered hand.

When Jesus asked the man to come to him, that man must have had conflicting emotions. People with obvious physical differences usually try to avoid being singled out for those differences.

But this man's disability was about to be highlighted in front of a crowd. Additionally, the tension between Jesus and the religious leaders had to have been obvious. The man was being asked to step right into the middle of a fight.

That would have caused the man even more anxiety. However, the man probably was curious and excited, too. He most likely knew that Jesus had healed many other people, and if so, he had to have been hoping that perhaps Jesus would also heal him.

Jesus likely had at least three reasons for having the man stand in front of everyone. First, by doing this, the man would be admitting his need.

[17:43] Before people can be helped, they must acknowledge that they need help. Second, this miracle would further authenticate Jesus' message. Third, Jesus wanted to give everyone the chance to see that human need takes precedence over religious law.

Here stood a man whom most of them knew, whom they possibly had shunned because of his deformity. Jesus was giving them a chance to see the man through eyes of compassion.

We saw from Matthew 12, 10 that the religious leaders started this conflict with the question, is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath? Jesus answered their question with a question of his own in Mark 3, verse 4.

He said to them, Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do harm, to save life or to kill? The question was a powerful charge against them on at least three levels.

First, it exposed the unlawful nature of their extra-biblical restrictions and traditions. Clearly, the Old Testament law encouraged people to do good and prohibited them from doing harm.

[18:57] But the rabbinic regulations of the Pharisees caused harm to those trying to follow them. It was the Pharisees and not Jesus who were violating God's law.

Second, the question exposed their callous attitude toward suffering and pain. They were more interested in bringing harm on Jesus than they were in helping the suffering man.

And finally, the question targeted the Pharisees' plot against the Lord. How ironic is it that the self-professed protectors of the Sabbath secretly wanted the Messiah himself to violate their restrictions so that they could one day put him to death?

God had made it clear in the Old Testament that he was more concerned with his people doing good and showing compassion to others than with their fastidious observance of religious ceremonies and rituals.

Isaiah makes that point unmistakable. Listen to Isaiah chapter 1 verses 11 through 20. Isaiah chapter 1 verses 11 through 20 say, What to me is the multitude of your sacrifices, says the Lord.

[20:08] I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams and the fat of well-fed beasts. I do not delight in the blood of bulls or of lambs or of goats. When you come to appear before me, who is required of you this trampling of my courts?

Bring no more vain offerings. Incense is an abomination to me. New moon and Sabbath and the calling of convocations. I cannot endure iniquity and solemn assembly.

Your new moons and your appointed feast my soul hates. They have become a burden to me. I am weary of bearing them. When you spread out your hands, I will hide my eyes from you.

Even though you make many prayers, I will not listen. Your hands are full of blood. Then God continued, Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean, remove the evil of your deeds from before my

eyes, cease to do evil, learn to do good, seek justice, correct oppression, bring justice to the fatherless, plead the widow's cause.

Come now, let us reason together, says the Lord. Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow. Though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool.

[21 : 31] If you are willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land. But if you refuse and rebel, you shall be eaten by the sword, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.

Getting back to our Mark text, notice how the leaders responded to Jesus' question. The leaders did the only thing that they could do with the question about whether or not it is lawful to heal on the Sabbath.

If they said no, they would have revealed their cruel hearts before the people in the synagogue who were sympathetic toward the man's need. And if they said yes, they would have gone against their own Sabbath rules.

They certainly did not want to say yes and lose their argument with Christ and their ammunition for further attacks on Jesus. So the end of Mark chapter 3, verse 4, tells us how the leaders responded.

Mark simply said, but they were silent. The word used here for silent has the sense of a determined, continuing silence.

[22 : 35] It was not the silence of someone who had nothing to say, but the rebellion of someone who refused to be touched. Consider what already has happened here.

Jesus has exposed them for the frauds that they are. The religious leaders don't care about people. They lack compassion. They lack hearts that are set on doing good or saving life.

Their motive for following the rules is not love. The Sabbath has been turned into a competition to see who can do nothing best. We mentioned that quote last week, but think about that.

They were so busy on making sure that people did not do work, they had turned it into a competition to see who was best at doing nothing. And the Sabbath loses all meaning when it's disconnected from God's own heart to bless His people.

The religious leaders' silence condemns them and it reveals a tragic flaw in their theology concerning the nature of God. We know that God is a God of grace and mercy, love and compassion.

[23 : 43] Thankfully, though, Jesus knew exactly what to say to expose their fault. Do you also see the irony in the situation here? Jesus knew what was going on in the minds of the religious leaders.

They were ready to bring charges against Him for doing good on the Sabbath day even while they were plotting on that same Sabbath day to kill Him. Could there have been any worse way of violating the sanctity of the day God had set apart for the well-being of His people than to plot to kill the Lord of the Sabbath on that very day?

Matthew's account shows us that Jesus was not yet ready to let the religious leaders get off their hot seats. In Matthew's account, we see that Jesus asked the religious leaders one more question before directly answering their own question and their own original question to Him.

Here are Matthew chapter 12 verses 11 and 12 again. Jesus said to them, 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. Jesus was arguing from the lesser to the greater.

[25 : 06] If it's permissible to help a sheep on the Sabbath, how could it be wrong to help a human being whose worth far exceeds that of an animal? No Pharisee would have argued that sheep were more value than people.

They knew that human beings were created in the image of God. Yet in practice, the Pharisees treated their livestock with more compassion than they treated other people.

Incredibly, they would sooner suspend their religious traditions to help an animal than to help another person. Let's go back to Mark chapter 3 verse 5 and check out what Jesus did next.

Mark 3, 5 says, 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.

Verse 5 tells us that Jesus looked at those hypocrites with anger. Can you sense the tension in the room as Jesus likely paused to make eye contact with each of them?

[26 : 14] Jesus paused and stared His enemies down, looking around at them with an angry glare. The Greek word that Mark uses here is the word for fury.

Jesus was outraged that the religious leaders cared more about their traditions than the welfare of a suffering human being. As the religious leaders' silence filled the room, their consciences must have burned under the weight of His piercing gaze.

There was no mistaking Jesus' point, nor could they have missed the righteous indignation that filled His heart and flooded His countenance. Jesus was certainly angry at other times, but this is the only place in the Gospels where the text specifically states that Jesus was angry.

In the same way that the Lord, God, was angry at the hard-heartedness of Israel in the Old Testament, Jesus became angry toward the calloused unbelief of the Pharisees.

Jesus was grieved at their hardness of heart. He was filled with wrath toward their cold-hearted unbelief, yet His wrath was intermingled with sorrow and sadness because of their necessary condemnation.

[27 : 27] He knew what would come upon them, and even in His anger toward them, Jesus was filled with pity, knowing that eternal destruction awaited them on account of their stubborn rebellion.

So here we see both the justice and the compassion of our God. Dr. Graham Scroggie notes that the word for anger here is in the aorist tense in the Greek, and that means it carries a sense of momentary anger.

But the Greek word for grief here is used in the present tense in the sense of continuing grief. Jesus had just a flash of anger, not a grudge or a thought with malice of forethought, but the grief for their hardness of their hearts was something that Jesus carried with Him.

He always had that awful grief because of their hardness of heart. Jesus had that grief for those religious leaders, even though He knew that the hardness of their hearts would one day lead to His death.

Meanwhile, consider what the man with the withered hand must have been thinking while all of this was happening. If he obeyed Jesus and stretched out His hand, he would be siding with Jesus instead of the religious leaders.

[28 : 42] going against the religious leaders could cause Him to be expelled from the synagogue. And if Jesus failed to heal him, the man would find himself in an even tougher spot than he was before.

The withered hand would have made it difficult and perhaps impossible for him to earn a living. The man probably depended upon help from synagogue members just to survive. So if he got kicked out of the synagogue, he would be in deep trouble.

The end of verse 5 tells us what the man did after Jesus told him to stretch out his hand. The end of verse 5 says he stretched it out and his hand was restored.

The man obeyed Jesus' command and the man's faith was rewarded. When the man held out his hand at Jesus' command, that hand 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, Jesus freed the Sabbath from legal encumbrances.

[29 : 47] In grace, Jesus delivered this man from his distress. In this act of mercy, Jesus also shows love toward his Father. Jesus loves his Father by expressing God's character and compassion toward this man who is undoubtedly one of God's precious creatures.

Likewise, Jesus loves this man through his kind healing. The Pharisees knew nothing about this love and were far from fulfilling the law of Moses. So we've set the synagogue scene and we've considered the Sabbath silence.

In Mark 3, verse 6, we see the sinister setup. So the sinister setup is your last set of blanks.

We learn about that in Mark 3, verse 6, and here is Mark 3, 6 again. The Pharisees went out and immediately held counsel with the Herodians against him how to destroy him.

Luke's account of this same event says this in Luke 6, 11. It says, But they were filled with fury and discussed with one another what they might do to Jesus.

[31 : 06] The Pharisees, unmoved by the power of Jesus, refused to be convinced. Having placed their confidence in their self-righteous works and their rabbinic traditions, they shut their hearts to both the Word of God and the Son of God.

Unable to refute Jesus' arguments and unable to deny the reality of his healing power, they went out from the synagogue embarrassed and outraged. They likely would have tried to kill Jesus on the spot were it not for his popularity at that time with the people.

Mark 3, 6 climaxes the section on Jesus' conflicts in Galilee with the religious establishment. It also is Mark's first explicit reference to Jesus' death which now began to cast its shadow over Jesus' mission.

But Jesus' authority confronted and overwhelmed the religious leaders' authority and therefore the religious leaders thought that Jesus must be killed.

Their only problem was how to do that. This verse is the first time that the Herodians show up in Mark. The Herodians were an irreligious and worldly political group that supported the dynasty of Herod the Great and by extension Rome.

[32 : 27] These secular Jews were viewed by their fellow countrymen as being loyal to the Greco-Roman culture and therefore traitors to their own religious heritage. The Herodians could not have been more different than the Pharisees at least not on the surface and normally those two groups regarded each other as arch enemies.

But these groups found a common enemy in Jesus. The Pharisees hated Jesus because he openly opposed their hypocritical system of works righteousness.

The Herodians hated Jesus because of his popularity with the people. That popularity made him a threat to the power of Herod and of Rome. Consequently, both groups for different reasons rejected God's Son.

There are only three passing references to Herodians in the New Testament. If you're interested, the other two are in Mark chapter 12 verse 13 and Matthew chapter 22 verse 16.

They appear each of the three times in a surprising alliance with the Pharisees. Despite the Pharisees and the Herodians' hatred for one another, their common hatred of Jesus was enough to bring them together to plot against him.

[33 : 44] Consider the level of anger that it had to have taken to cause the Pharisees to form such an unusual alliance. Mark 3 6 tells us that the religious leaders wanted to destroy Jesus.

But to do that, those religious leaders needed the government's help. The Pharisees had no political power to carry out capital punishment. They had to make an alliance with the supporters of King Herod.

Herodians wanted to keep things the way they were. They wanted to keep the peace because they were the people in power. Jesus stirring up trouble and proclaiming himself to be king was a threat to that peace.

If there were too much political unrest, the Romans might come and destroy the Herodians. Those Herodians were living for the here and now, and the Pharisees did not believe that the Herodians were authorized to rule.

The only thing that the two groups could agree on was the need to get rid of Jesus. The Herod currently in power was Herod Antipas, and he was the one who imprisoned and later beheaded John the Baptist.

[34 : 55] His father was the one who killed all the babies in the Bethlehem vicinity. That past history between the Herods and the Jews made this alliance between the Herodians and the Pharisees even more unusual.

Remember the main idea. the religious leaders joined forces with their enemies in a plot to kill Jesus after Jesus again heals on the Sabbath.

As we wrap up the study of these five consecutive conflicts between Jesus and those religious leaders, consider the conflicts as a group. The religious leaders viewed Jesus as a serious threat to their religious system.

He conversely rebuked them for being imposters. With righteous indignation, he condemned them for perpetuating a burdensome system of external ritualism.

They considered themselves holy. He called them hypocrites. But rather than repenting, their hardened hearts were even more hardened against him.

[36 : 01] The more Jesus preached, the deeper their resentment toward him grew. The fact that he openly associated with the outcast of society, even calling a tax collector to be one of his closest disciples, only added to the tension between them.

They mockingly called him the friend of sinners, but Jesus embraced that title, reminding them that he did not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

For centuries, the nation of Israel had eagerly awaited the coming of the Messiah. Messiah. His advent was anticipated at the beginning and the end of the Old Testament.

Yet when the long-awaited Messiah arrived, Israel rejected him. As the apostle John explains, he came to his own, and his own people did not receive him.

Rather than embracing their long-awaited deliverer, the people turned against him, eventually crying out for his public execution. Those leading the campaign against the Messiah were none other than Israel's religious leaders, the self-proclaimed experts on the promised anointed one.

[37 : 15] In spite of the indisputable miracles that Jesus performed, the leaders only grew more and more resentful toward him. They hated him, and not because he healed people or casted out demons, but because he challenged their authority, violated their customs, and claimed to be the Son of God.

They were especially infuriated by his claim to deity, an assertion that they regarded as blasphemous and worthy of punishment by death, and they hated it even though Jesus kept giving them undeniable proof that his claim was correct.

Speaking about the fifth conflict and the Pharisees' hardened hearts, R.C. Sproul said this to believers. He said, we must guard against reading a story like this where we see our Lord angry and grief-stricken over human sin and simply say to ourselves, oh, those bad Pharisees.

When we do that, we are just like them. Rather, we should go to God in prayer and say, oh, God, do not be angry with me. Do not let me give you cause to be furious with me.

Do not let me grieve you because my heart is hardened. Instead, tell me what you want from me.

Give me ears to hear and a heart open to embrace everything that you say.

[38 : 38] For unbelievers, the consequences are even more severe. God offers salvation by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone. Those who believe that good news of the gospel have all their sins forgiven and also receive something even better than that, eternal life.

We know that from John 3.16. As good as the news of John 3.16 is, we sometimes forget about John 3.18-20.

To get the full context from Jesus, listen to what Jesus said in John 3.16-21. Jesus said, For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish, but have eternal life.

For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.

And this is the judgment. The light has come into the world, and people love the darkness rather than the light, because their works were evil. For everyone who does wicked things hates the light, and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed.

[40 : 05] But whoever does what is true comes to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that his works have been carried out in God. All of us have sinned against God multiple times, and all of us deserve death because of those sins.

However, in a single sentence in Mark 1, verse 15, Jesus summarized how we can avoid that punishment that we deserve. Jesus said in Mark 1, 15, the time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand.

Repent and believe in the gospel. Let's pray. Father, we thank you again for this reminder that rather than shy away from conflict, Jesus took the opportunity to dive into the conflict and show where the scribes and the Pharisees were wrong.

Help us to avoid being like them, and help us to be willing to help other people, both physically and spiritually, whenever we see people in need. In Jesus' name we pray.

Amen. Amen. Amen. you