**MIRACLE SERIES #12-(Mark 3:1-12).........."HEART PROBLEMS" or "ISSUES OF THE HEART"**

**Intro**: There's a story about the governor of a mid-western state who disguised himself and went into prison for a day to learn of the conditions. While speaking with a likable young convict, he felt a strong desire to pardon him. “***What would you do***”, he asked casually, “***if the governor were to offer you a pardon?***” The convict said, “***The first thing I'd do is cut the throat of the judge who sent me here.***” The governor was saddened as he broke off the conversation and left. That convict stayed in his cell. What was his problem? He had been convicted, but he had allowed his heart to become hard. He could not be helped because of a hard heart. **The earthly ministry of Christ was surrounded by people with HEART PROBLEMS. Controversy swirled around everything the Lord Jesus did. It seems that everything Jesus did made the religious Jews angry. Every word and every work was placed under the microscope of their judgmental attitude. Their hatred of Jesus eventually resulted in His death on the cross. Just as a reminder, they are mad because He forgave a man’s sins, 2:6-7; ate a meal with sinners, 2:16; refused to honor their rituals, 2:18; and because He allowed His disciples to pick and eat grain on the Sabbath, 2:24. Jesus refused to play ball by their rules and they despised Him for it.**

 The passage once again finds Jesus in the synagogue on the Sabbath. This visit to the synagogue probably occurred on the same day that Jesus and His men passed through the wheat fields and had their confrontation with the Jews, **2:23-28**. This passage is a continuation of the same controversy. The Pharisees have followed Jesus to the synagogue. They are looking for some way to trap Him, discredit Him and destroy His ministry. As we study this text, we will see three different types of hearts on display; and as we move through these verses, we need to examine our own hearts.

I. **THE HARD HEARTS OF THE PHARISEES**

A. v. 1-2 **Their Plan** – **We are told that “*there was a man there which had a withered hand*”. The word “*withered*” means it was “*paralyzed*”. Ancient Christian tradition tells us that this man was a stonemason who had injured his hand on the job in an accident. As the story goes, he heard that Jesus was in town and he came to seek healing from the Lord. Others speculate that this fellow was planted to trap Jesus by the Pharisees (probably right!).**

B. v. 5 **Their Problem** – Jesus knows what they are doing, so He calls for the injured man to “***stand forth***”. Then, Jesus asks a very simple question: “***Is it lawful to do good on the Sabbath days, or to do evil? To save life or to kill?***” They have no answer for Jesus because any answer they might have given would have contradicted their own teachings. The problem with these men and with people like them today is that they could have cared less about the needs of a poor, injured man. All they cared about was their rules and their ways....(Is that the way it is here at Nebo? Are we only interested in our own satisfaction?)  **Jesus knows their problem. Mark tells us that they suffered from “*hardness of heart*”. The word for “*hardness*” is the word “*porosis*”. It was the name of a type of marble used in the ancient world. Jesus knew that their hearts were as hard and as unyielding as a piece of marble. The word eventually came to be used of something “*covered with a callus*”. The continual rubbing of the skin will produce calluses. In the same way, continued rejection of the truth will cause the heart to become spiritually callused.**

C. v. 6 **Their Plot** – When Jesus healed this man, they were outraged. They considered this healing to be work...(Shabbat elevators in Galilee!) But, truth doesn’t matter to people like the Pharisees. All that mattered to them was their narrow interpretation of things. The Pharisees and the Herodians were bitter enemies. They were on the opposite sides of every issue. But, they found common ground in their hatred of the Lord Jesus. So, they formed a plot to find a way to “***destroy***” Him. The word “***destroy***” means “***to utterly do away with a person or thing.***” They wanted Jesus dead and they set out to accomplish that end. To show you how MIXED UP these men are...they are upset because Jesus dared to heal a man on the Sabbath, but they have no problem plotting murder on that day. That is evidence of the hardness of their hearts....(people "strain at a gnat and swallow a camel"!)

         **If you are saved your heart can become hard!** It is so easy to become like the Pharisees in our thinking. Far too many Christians get to the place where they are just happy to be saved. You can get to the place where you refuse to listen to the voice of the Spirit. This is called “***grieving the Holy Spirit***”, **Eph. 4:30**. When you refuse to listen to the Lord, you will lose your sensitivity to Him and to His ways.

        **If you are lost your heart can become hard!**. There are multitudes around us who need a Savior. As believers, we need a constant reality check. We can develop a callused heart against soul-winning!

**II. THE HOLY HEART OF THE SAVIOR**

A. v. 3 **His Command** – Jesus knows what they are up to. He knows that this whole thing is designed as a trap to ensnare Him. But, Jesus also knows that this man needs healing, and Jesus is determined to do the right thing regardless of the personal cost. So, He tells the man to “***Stand forth***.” Jesus calls him to come and stand before the whole crowd; HE IS ON DISPLAY!!!-(The miracle couldn't be hid!)

B. v. 4 **His Confrontation** – **Jesus confronts the obvious hypocrisy of the Pharisees by asking them two simple, straightforward questions: Is it lawful to good or evil on the Sabbath? It is lawful to save a life or to take a life? To gain some insight into the mindset of the Jews regarding medical treatment on the Sabbath, history books state that "at the most an injury could be kept from getting worse; but it must not be made totally better on the Sabbath Day...."Medical attention could be given only if a life was in danger...and this man's life wasn't in danger!"**

C. v. 5 **His Consternation** – When they refused to answer His questions, Jesus became angry. The word “***angry***” comes from a word that was used to describe “***sap rising in a tree***”. It is the idea of anger that builds and builds until there is a release of emotion. The longer Jesus sat in that service with the hard-hearted Pharisees, the angrier He became. This is only explicit reference to His anger in the Gospels. There is nothing wrong with anger as long as you are angry over the right things, in the right amount, and in the right way. He is angry because their hearts are hard. We are also told that He was “***grieved***”. This word means “***to feel pain or sorrow***”. Their attitude toward their fellow man broke the Savior’s heart and it made Him angry.

D. v. 5 **His Compassion** **– In spite of their attempt to trap Him, Jesus told the man to stretch out his hand. When he did, it was healed! In spite of His anger at their hypocrisy, Jesus still had compassion on the man with the withered hand. Jesus didn’t come to this world to get caught up in religious debates over the keeping of manmade rules. Jesus came to this world to extend compassion to those who needed help. Don’t let a few religious hypocrites keep you from coming to Jesus!**

III. **THE HOPEFUL HEARTS OF THE NEEDY..**We have seen the hard heart of the Pharisees and we have seen the holy heart of the Savior, in the remaining verses of our text, we see the hopeful hearts of the multitudes. In the bible, uneducated, common people and even demons had more sense than the religious leaders of the day. They saw Jesus as a threat, the average person saw Jesus as One Who offered them hope. A. v. 10 **What They Saw In Jesus** – The people saw what He had done for others and believed, by faith, that He could do the same for them. B. v. 10 **What They Sought From Jesus** – These great multitudes “***pressed upon Him***” because they wanted to experience His healing power. C. v. 8, 11 **What They Said About Jesus** – While the religious leaders were plotting to kill Jesus, the common man was spreading the word about Him. Everywhere, across the nation of Israel, the people were talking about the Man from Galilee.