

March 26

Scriptures: Read Mark 3

Key Verse: “Stretch out your hand…” (Mark 3:27)

Overview

Two things stand out in this chapter. First of all, Jesus heals someone who has had a withered hand all his life. Notice that Jesus asks a man who has never used his hand before to stretch it out. This seems to be a rather unreasonable demand. The man probably expected Jesus to take the initiative in this healing; instead, He looks at the man and says, “You take the initiative. You stretch out your hand.” So he did. As he made the attempt, Jesus empowered him.

This is a good word to us. When we seek God’s touch in our lives we should, from time to time, think in terms of touching Him. We should take the initiative. The other thing standing out in this chapter is the mention of the “unpardonable sin”. (Once again there is a record of evil spirits expressing belief that Jesus is the Son of God.) The religious teachers explain Jesus’ power itself. In fact, they go so far as to say that He is Himself possessed by Beelzebub, the “ruler of demons”. To this Jesus says a house divided against itself cannot stand, and then He goes on to talk about the unpardonable sin – the sin against the Holy Spirit. Many people, feeling spiritually depressed, or just spiritually flat, often think they have committed the unpardonable sin. But look at the context. Jesus is speaking to religious leaders who should know better, but are in fact attributing the power of the Holy Spirit to Satan. He says it is absolutely unacceptable to credit Satan with what is the work of God. As long as one persists willfully in that kind of spiritual blindness and unbelief, he is beyond the reach of Grace.

The unpardonable sin is a deliberate, willful act of unbelief, where one maliciously impugns the work of the Spirit of God. I’ve been in ministry twenty years and I have yet to see anyone guilty of this sin. And I probably never will.

Prayer

Lord, May we learn about active faith from the account of the healing of the withered hand. Your Word tells us that the man had to take the first step, stretching out his hand, before the miracle came, help us to put our faith into action before the answer comes.