

How Does Jesus Look at You?

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[0 : 01] Let us turn again to Mark's Gospel, Mark chapter 3, and particularly verse 5 that I want to look at.

We'll see in verse 4 Jesus asked this question of the religious leaders. Luke's Gospel tells us that it was the scribes and Pharisees that he asked the question of.

But he had called over this man who had withered the paralyzed hand, and he asked that man to come here. And then he addresses the scribes and the Pharisees in verse 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? But they were silent. Verse 5, And he looked round at them with anger, grieved at their hardness of heart, and said to the man, Stretch out your hand.

And he stretched it out, and his hand was restored. But particularly these words, And he looked round at them with anger, grieved at their hardness of heart.

[1 : 05] Now this verse opens with us seeing Jesus entering the synagogue on the Sabbath day. And the Bible makes it very clear to us that it was Jesus' custom, it was his habit, to go to God's house on the Sabbath.

That this was his pattern, and it was his custom. And Jesus still expects us to gather together in God's house on God's day.

It's not something that's to be debated about. It is something that the Scripture endorses. It's Scripture commands. And indeed, it was a practice of our Lord.

We were singing in Psalm 87. We've said it often enough before, that the Lord delights in the gates of Zion more than in all the dwellings of Jacob. In other words, God is a great delight upon where his honor is and where his name is to be praised and worshiped, even above all other dwelling places.

And the Lord still expects us to worship. And it's a great thing to see people gathering together. It's lovely to see, particularly on a night like this, where many people are able to walk.

[2 : 20] But however we come, it's great to see. And it's a witness to people. Let us not underestimate that. It's a witness to people that God is. Every person, it doesn't matter their age, every person who is making their way to God's house is witnessing to the fact that God is, that people are going to worship God.

And there is a sermon even in that in itself. But it's important that we come to worship the Lord and that we should always have the gathering together like this as a priority within our lives.

It is a priority. Because we've got to remember, when we come together, when God's people come together, that the Lord has promised, there's something extraordinary happens.

The Lord promises, Jesus has promised that, that where even two or three gather together in his name, that he's there in the midst. Jesus has come in a very wonderful way, where his people gather together.

And so when we come to God's house, we ought to come prayerfully and come expectantly.

Because we're coming to a place, not only where we are seeking to give, in the sense of seeking to worship God, and to give to him something of the respect, something of the adoration that is within our hearts, we begin the week in the right way, by beginning, by giving to God, acknowledging that God is the Lord, who is worthy of all honor and praise and glory.

[3 : 59] And so that is why, that is all part and partial of what is caught up in our coming to worship God. But we also come in order to receive, in order that we may receive feeding, sustenance.

Because the word of God, remember, is food. It is spiritual food. And just as we need to eat physically, we need to eat spiritually. Jesus said, man shall not live by bread alone.

We cannot. Because we have never dying souls. And we need sustenance, and we need food for our souls. If we don't get that, we will perish. Just in the same way as people will die physically, if they don't get food, people will also die spiritually, if they are not nourished.

And so when we come to God's house, if you've come here tonight and said, I do not know your own situation, and condition, and your own standing before God, in relation to Jesus Christ, you know where you stand.

And at the end of the day, it's between yourself and the Lord. You remember that, as I must remember that. That we all have to give an account.

[5 : 13] We don't, at the end of the day, give an account for somebody else. We have to give our own account. It's personal. It's individual. Each one of us. So we've got to make sure where our standing is before the Lord.

But as we come, if anybody is here tonight without Jesus Christ, you pray, and I hope that it's your habit and pray as you come, Lord. May tonight be the night where my heart is opened in order that I may see Jesus as Savior.

Lord, tonight may it be the night where all the obstacles and the hindrances and the things which up to now have been stumbling blocks that have kept me away from Jesus, may they be removed.

In order that I may see Christ as a Savior of sinners, the Savior who is there to be my Savior. You ask the Lord that as you come to his house.

And we need to ask that the Lord will give us what will sustain us in the coming week. As we go back, wherever people go, whether they're going to the workplace, or whether you're going to colleges or schools, or whether you're going to be at home or working with children, or to the office, or wherever it might be, that there will be nourishment and strength given something to uplift us along the way.

[6 : 33] Anyhow, it was Jesus' custom to make his way to the synagogue. And when he came in there, there was a man, this is what has been highlighted, there was a man there with a withered hand or a paralyzed hand.

His hand was absolutely limp and powerless. He was incapable in any way of being able to lift it up or do anything with it. And when Jesus came in, he entered the synagogue and a man was there with a withered hand.

And they watched Jesus. The moment Jesus walked in, and here's this man with a withered hand, knowing what Jesus was like, and his desire for healing and restoring and helping, straight away the focus went on to that man and went on to Jesus.

Will he? Won't he? It's a Sabbath day. And as we said in Luke's gospel, it tells us that it was the scribes and the Pharisees. Straight away, here is this challenge.

And unfortunately, there were those who were always ready to find fault and to criticize the Lord Jesus Christ.

[7 : 46] And you know, I think it's one of the sad things in life that so often there are people who will find fault and criticize, and they will condemn. There are people who will always see what is wrong in others.

They can't see the good. You know, an awful lot of, there are people, you know, remember Naaman in the scripture. The definition that is given to us of Naaman was that he was a great man.

He was a mighty man. He was an honorable man. Naaman the Syrian was quite an exceptional man in his day. He had done many great things, many wonderful things, many honorable things. Naaman was right up there at the very forefront in the land of Syria. And then it says, but he was a leper.

And the extraordinary thing is that we only remember Naaman as a leper. We don't remember the great things, the good things, the honorable things, so much about Naaman's life we don't remember.

[8 : 54] but we remember that he was a leper. And far too often we allow that kind of thinking to invade our minds.

And if we find it within our shelves that we begin to think of people in this way, we've got to deal with it. Because it begins to produce a jaundiced look at life.

We're beginning to view things in such a judgmental and critical way. It's almost like the way the Pharisees were and the scribes. They couldn't see any good in Jesus. Everything that he did was wrong.

His healing was wrong. His restoration was wrong. Everything was wrong. In fact, Jesus, they had worked out, was healing by the power of Satan. It was through the prince of the devil by Beelzebub. And so we've got to be very, very careful that we don't develop a condemning and judgmental spirit and particularly that we do not begin to judge and condemn things which God may be approving. [10:00] These religious leaders thought that they were right in judging Christ and of course they were absolutely wrong. And so they watched Jesus to see whether he would heal the man on the Sabbath day so that they might accuse him.

That they might accuse him. And so we find that Jesus is reading their heart 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 then he addressed the scribes and the Pharisees. Jesus was singing to their heart in the same way that he's singing to your heart and to my heart tonight.

fortunately we cannot see into each other's hearts or into each other's minds. We're not able to see what other people are thinking.

In fact, often we don't even understand what we're thinking ourselves. Often we don't even work out the motive as to why we do things.

[11:10] so often we get things wrong. So often our judgments are wrong. So often our motives are wrong. Often we will do something which may be right in itself but it's done with a wrong motive.

If it is done in order if it's done with a spirit of pride you know we can do right things with a spirit of pride with a spirit of trying to get one over another.

We can do it in order to make ourselves look better than other people. If we are doing anything with that kind of motive then we're doing it in the wrong spirit. We're not doing it to God's glory not to his honour.

So you see the Lord is assessing us all the time as to what we're doing. And what may appear to other people outwardly a great act may indeed be in the Lord's sight not a great act at all.

The Lord sees what is done by faith. The Lord sees what is done out of a heart of love. The Lord sees what is done to his name and for his glory.

[12:19] And so the Lord is taking note here of what was taking place. And Jesus knew their thoughts and it's really quite a remarkable verse here where it says and he looked round at them with anger grieved at their hardness he looked round at them with anger.

What a look that was from the Lord. You know sometimes a look can be more powerful than a word. Sometimes a look and I'm sure we've all at one time or another received a look from somebody and we know straight away what that look is saying.

You don't need to words are not necessary. Sometimes people can be broken by a look can be withered by a look sometimes people can be encouraged by a look.

You take for instance Peter the night that he betrayed his Lord. You remember how he was not sorry not betrayed his Lord but denied his Lord. Remember how he denied his Lord with oaths and curses.

and Jesus had told Peter this very thing would happen. He said you know Peter before the cock will crow you are going to deny me three times and remember when the cock when the crowing was heard it tells us that Jesus turned and he looked at Peter didn't say a word he just turned and looked at Peter and it tells us what happened that Peter went out and he wept bitterly that look of Jesus absolutely broke Peter so that he went out with an broken heart and he wept bitterly he was in absolute brokenness of heart through that look from the Lord Jesus Christ but it was a very very different look the look that the

[14:31] Lord gave these scribes and Pharisees was not the look that he gave Peter the look that he gave Peter I believe there was sorrow in it there was pity in it there was love in it there were all these things I don't think there was anger in the look of the Lord when he looked at Peter but there was anger on this occasion it's quite amazing there was anger and there was grief Jesus was angry and he was grieved at the hardness of the heart of the rulers these men they would rather see this man with a paralyzed hand this man who was incapable of lifting his hand to his mouth to put food in it incapable of lifting his hand to shake hands and give a welcome to anyone incapable of doing anything with that hand it was useless it was worthless it was withered and they would rather see him in that state than that his hand would be healed on the

Sabbath day Jesus looked at these people and their self-righteousness was just spilling over and so Jesus was angered and he was grieved he was angry at their absolute blindness and their absolute prejudice against the truth because you see Jesus asked them a very straightforward question it's great the way that Jesus dealt with the situation Jesus knew what they were thinking so what Jesus did was he asked them a question and it was the most straightforward question that really there was only one answer to Jesus asked them this and he said to them is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do harm well it's very obvious the answer to that is it lawful on the Sabbath to save life or to kill well there's only one answer only one answer and what answer did they give they remained silent they knew the answer but the prejudice the self-righteousness the distorted view that they had their hatred towards Jesus was such that they couldn't get themselves to give the answer there they were facing truth the truth was hitting them in the face and they refused to answer and my dear friends you know that's an incredibly solemn situation and that's what made

Jesus angry when he saw these people faced with the truth faced with the words of truth they these people knew the truth they knew these were people who were steeped in the Old Testament and they knew the law concerning the Sabbath day they knew that there were works of necessity and works of mercy were to be condoned that they were to be done and so in a sense they were going to be breaking the law by refusing to do a work of mercy they would but their self-righteousness was such that they just refused to answer the question that Jesus was asking and Jesus was angry there was an anger a holy righteous anger in Jesus his heart at this prejudiced sinful opposition to the light and the truth that was facing them in the eyes but he was also grieved he was grieved at their hardness of heart because he was grieved in knowing that this hardness of heart was going to destroy them they were sitting in judgment of Jesus and Jesus knew that the way things were going it wouldn't be long until they would be sitting in front or standing in front of him as when he was judge over all they were refusing to be blessed by him they were refusing the light and the love and the joy and the peace of Jesus to enter their soul my dear friends let's jump ahead or leave for a moment where we're at and bring it into our own situation

I wonder as Jesus looks at us tonight how is he looking at us because we are also faced with light and we're faced with truth and Jesus asks us questions as well the word of God is asking us over and over again as we've sat under the truth what will you do with Jesus what do you think of Christ that question is being asked of you over and over and over again what do you think of him is he the savior of sinners is he who he says he is is the revelation of Jesus given to us in the bible true and you have to say yes well the next question is what are you doing with it then what are you doing with his truth are you accepting it or are you rejecting it because if you're rejecting it in a sense you're doing the very thing that these scribes and Pharisees were doing they were faced with the truth and yet they were rejecting it they were pushing it away from them or pushing him away from them so we've got to bring the situation to ourselves and we've got to face up to this very thing you see the lord is speaking to us in many different ways speaks to us primarily in the word and you know my dear friend that's one of the great things about coming to church and you know there's always hope always hope for a passion who comes under the word there will always be hope for a passion who sits under the word of

God what do you do with that word well that is up to you and you seek that the lord will open your heart and enable you to believe in him as your lord and savior but I repeat again there's always hope for a passion who is under the word because faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God this is the means that God above all that he has used in order to bring people to himself so keep coming my friend under the word you you cannot do better than that and keep coming under the word and ask that the lord will bless it to you but God speaks to us in providence and I'm sure all of us at different times have been shaken by God's providence maybe through sudden death maybe through things which have shaken us to the very core and we felt that there was that our own mortality was made so real to us you know how every so often something like that happens we go through life and so often we are being reminded in different ways that we're just passing through that life is short we know all these things but every so often there's a situation or something that hits home to you in a very powerful way it might not with others but it does to you it's affected you

[22 : 44] I believe everybody in here knows what we're talking about here that in a particular way in your experience you have been shaken to the core by something that has happened and that it has made you realize that death is really just a step away and then there's a great eternity and there have been times when we've been shaken by these things and times maybe where we've said to ourselves we've got to seek the Lord we've got to deal with this but one of the solemn things when

we're under the word and when we're shaken by providence if we don't deal with these things is that we can become hardened and that we become used to these things and it's like you know when you waken maybe when you were young and you wakened in the night and there was something which was troubling you and when you woke it was like it was huge and the anxiety was great but the longer you remained awake the more the anxiety subsided and then it sort of got quieter and quieter and things became calmer and in a sense it's often like that we become used and we become blessed to these things and it's like water off a duck's back and you know

I think it's probably one of the saddest and most solemn things is when there may have been people who came to church were under the word and they seemed but a step away from the kingdom and there were times when God's word seemed so close times when they were moved times when they were saying I want to be a Christian and times maybe I hope there's nobody in here tonight who is looking back and thinking of days when you walked out of Kenan and your heart was melted and you were saying before I get home I've got to get this sorted with the Lord and today the word of God is like water off a duck's back you hear it but it doesn't penetrate these thoughts of salvation have gone I hope that's not the case with anyone in here because we've got to we have got to guard against guard under the word of God because we read here of how Jesus looked upon them and how he was grieved because of the hardness of their heart because you know there will come a day for all who will die without Christ those who have rejected him those who have refused his lordship that the Lord will give and remember when Jesus tells people to depart from him he is simply giving to people what they have chosen here in this world when you think about it logically that is it Jesus is reinforcing the choice that our passion has made in this world because when our passion in this world refuses Jesus they are really saying depart from me leave me alone I don't want you as my Lord and in the judgment Jesus is reinforcing the choice that has already been made where he says you asked me maybe not in so many words but in your actions of refusing me to depart from you well now eternally you must depart from me depart from me for

I never knew you how awful and how solemn and I believe that those who will be made to depart from Christ that the look that will accompany the blazing where people will see the wrath of the Lamb and where the blazing eye of Christ will with that look of judgment that that will be a look that will haunt throughout an endless eternity my dear friend tonight you are on mercy's ground and tonight the Lord is looking upon you in the gospel and tonight he is holding out this gospel to you the word of God is described in scripture like a hammer it's one of the many descriptions well I would pray tonight that the word might be like a hammer in your experience that whatever rocky resistance is there that the word would come in and break it that the Lord in his word would smash whatever barriers are holding you back so that you may come to the peace and to the freedom that is in the gospel and that Jesus will not look upon you with a look of anger and of grief but a look of love that's what I pray that we might all know the look of Jesus with our look of love into our souls let us pray oh Lord our God we ask of thee tonight to help us to believe to help us to lay hold upon the scripture we have had many opportunities under the word what have we done with them oh Lord help anybody in here tonight who is seeking Jesus to find and we're told the word tells us that those who seek will find

[28 : 41] Lord we pray that those who may be seeking will go on seeking and we pray for light and for love we ask you to bless each one of us do us good guide us in this coming week in all that we're about take us home safely and forgive us our sin in Jesus name we ask all Amen