

Chapter 3

¹On another occasion Jesus entered the synagogue. A man with a withered hand was present. ²They were closely watching him to see if he would heal on the Sabbath in order to make an accusation against him.

³Jesus ordered the man with the withered hand, “Stand here in the middle.”

⁴To those watching him he asked, “Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do evil; to save a life or to kill?” But they remained silent.

⁵Looking around at them with anger, but also deeply grieved by the hardness of their hearts, he said to the man, “Stretch out you hand.” He obeyed and his hand was restored.

⁶The pharisees left and immediately took council against him with the supporters of Herod about how they would destroy Jesus.

⁷Jesus withdrew with his disciples to the sea, and a huge crowd from Galilee followed. ⁸A huge crowd also came to him from Judaea, Jerusalem, Idumaea, from beyond the Jordan, and from around Tyre and Sidon because they were hearing about all the things he was doing. So, he told his disciples to have a small boat ready for him because of the crowd, so that it might not mob him. ¹⁰Because he had healed so many, those who were afflicted pressed around him in order to touch him. ¹¹And whenever the unclean spirits saw him, they fell before him and shouted, “You are the Son of God!” ¹²But he kept rebuking them so that they would not reveal his identity.

¹³Jesus went up on a mountain and called to himself those he wanted, and they came to him. ¹⁴He appointed twelve so that they might be with him, and that he might send them to preach ¹⁵and to have authority to drive out demons. ¹⁶So, he appointed The Twelve: Simon (whom he named Peter), ¹⁷James the son of Zebedee and his brother John (whom he named Boanerges, meaning “Sons of Thunder”), ¹⁸Andrew, Phillip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James the son of Alphaeus, Thaddaeus, Simon the Zealous, ¹⁹and Judas Iscariot (who also betrayed him).

²⁰Jesus entered a house but was not even able to eat because a crowd gathered again. ²¹When his family heard about it, they went to seize him, for they were saying, “He has lost his mind.”

²²Also, the legal experts who came down from Jerusalem were saying, “He is possessed by Beelzebub!,” and, “He casts out demons by the ruler of the demons.”

²³But calling them to him, he began speaking to them in parables. “How can Satan cast out Satan? ²⁴If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. ²⁵And if a house is divided against itself, that house cannot stand. ²⁶If Satan has risen up against himself and is divided, he cannot stand, but is finished. ²⁷In fact, no one can enter the house of a strong man and plunder his stuff, unless he first binds the strong man - then

he will plunder his house. ²⁸Truly I tell you that all evil deeds and whatever blasphemous speech they might say will be forgiven the sons of men, ²⁹but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is guilty of a sin with eternal consequences.”

³⁰He said this because they were saying, “He has an unclear spirit.”

³¹Then his mother and brothers arrived. As they stood outside, they sent for him, calling out to him. ³²A crowd was seated around him and was saying to him, “Hey, your mother and brothers [and sisters] are outside looking for you.”

³³He responded, “Who are my mother and my brothers?” ³⁴Looking around at those sitting in a circle around him, he continued, “Here are my mother and my brothers. ³⁵Whoever does God’s will is my brother and sister and mother.”