



Faithful in a Contrary World: There's a Price on Your Head!

February 18, 2024

Holy Scripture: Mark 3:1-6

Introduction

- **Overview:** Examining the tension between doing right and facing opposition, as demonstrated by Jesus' actions on the Sabbath.
- **Scripture:** Hebrews 13:5 - God's enduring presence amidst our stand for righteousness.

The Cost of Doing Good (Mark 3:1-5)

- **The Setting:** The synagogue on the Sabbath, a day central to Jewish worship and community life.
 - Genesis 2:2-3 (Sabbath's origin): And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. ³ And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made.
 - Exodus 31:16-17 (Sabbath as a covenant sign): ¹⁶ Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the sabbath, to observe the sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant. ¹⁷ It is a sign between me and the children of Israel for ever: for in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested, and was refreshed.
- **Jesus' Confrontation with Legalism:** Highlighting the Pharisees' criticisms and Jesus' teachings on the true purpose of the Sabbath.
 - Mark 2:27-28 ²⁷ And he said unto them, The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath: ²⁸ Therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath.
- **Healing on the Sabbath:** Jesus heals a man with a withered hand, challenging traditional interpretations and prioritizing mercy over tradition.
 - Galatians 6:9-10 (encouragement in doing good): ⁹ And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. ¹⁰ As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.

The Reaction to Righteousness (Mark 3:6)

- **The Conspiracy:** The unlikely alliance of Pharisees and Herodians against Jesus, illustrating the threat Jesus posed to both religious and political authorities.
- **The Cost of Discipleship:** Reflecting on the implications of following Jesus, embracing the cross, and facing worldly opposition.
 - Luke 14:27 ²⁷ And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple.
 - John 15:18 ¹⁸ If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you.

The Price of Faithfulness

- **Our Value in God's Kingdom:** Understanding that opposition for righteousness is a testament to our alignment with God's values.
 - Matthew 5:10-12 ¹⁰ Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
¹¹ Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.
¹² Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.
 - 1 Peter 2:9 ⁹ But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:
- **The Reward of Perseverance:** Encouragement to endure, focusing on the eternal rewards that await those who stand firm in their faith.
 - James 1:12 ¹² Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.
 - 2 Timothy 4:7-8 ⁷ I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: ⁸ Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.

Conclusion

- **A Call to Courageous Faithfulness:** Inspired by examples of faith through history, we are reminded that standing for truth often means standing against the world.
- **Inspiration from Historical Figures:**
 - Martin Luther: Resolute stand for truth during the Reformation.
 - Dietrich Bonhoeffer: Sacrifice in opposing Nazi tyranny.
 - Jan Hus: Boldness in preaching reform before the Reformation.
 - Polycarp: Unwavering faith in the early Christian church.
- **Contemporary Example:**
 - John MacArthur: Fidelity to biblical truth in modern ministry.
- **Assurance of Jesus' Presence:** The promise of Jesus' continual presence gives us strength to face opposition.
 - Matthew 28:20 ²⁰ Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.