

WEDNESDAY

Hard Hearts

ABSG = Signs, wonders, and miracles, in and of themselves, don't prove that something is of God. But, on the other hand, when they are of God, it's a dangerous thing to reject them.

- Sanhedrin /religious leaders = Sadducees/ Pharisees
- Israel's Supreme Court = religious/civil/criminal jurisdiction
 - Highly politicized / powerful group
 - Expected Messiah / come as conquering King
 - free Israel from Rome's oppression
- So confident of their own self-righteousness
 - failed to see own need for God's mercy
- Quick to condemn sinners = Luke 18 = Parable Pharisee/ tax collector
- Jesus denounced / self-righteous hypocrisy = "whitewashed tombs"
- More concerned about outwardly appearing pious / righteous
 - inwardly corrupt = full of hypocritical lawlessness

Mark 7:13 making the word of God of no effect [invalidated God's Word] through your tradition which you have handed down.

- 4th Commandment = God prohibited work on Sabbath
 - Intended = more customary employment
- Rabbis invented 39 regulations = activities forbidden on Sabbath
 - rigid adherence to man-made regulations / Sabbath-keeping
 - letter of law / rather than spirit of law
- Jesus deeply distressed / Stubborn hearts
- Jesus healed on Sabbath = great act of mercy = trying to provoke religious leaders to realize how meaningless oral tradition was
 - cause them to recognize need for national repentance

John 5:10 The Jews therefore said to him who was cured, “It is the Sabbath; it is not lawful for you to carry your bed.

- Jesus did not break God’s law
 - no prohibition of doing good on Sabbath

ABSG = Healings were allowed on the Sabbath only in an emergency. This man had been disabled for 38 years; thus, his healing was hardly an emergency. And then, too, what was the necessity of having him take up his bed? One would think that someone with the power from God to perform such a miracle would also know if it were permissible to carry a mat home on the Sabbath day. Clearly, Jesus was seeking to take them to deeper biblical truths beyond the man-made rules and regulations that had, in some cases, stifled true faith

John 5:11-14 ¹¹He answered them, “He who made me well said to me, ‘Take up your bed and walk.’ ” ¹²Then they asked him, “Who is the Man who said to you, ‘Take up your bed and walk’?” ¹³But the one who was healed did not know who it was, for Jesus had withdrawn, a multitude being in that place. ¹⁴Afterward Jesus found him in the temple, and said to him, “See, you have been made well. Sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon you.” ¹⁵The man departed and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him well.

John 5:16 ⁶For this reason the Jews persecuted Jesus, and sought to kill Him, because He had done these things on the Sabbath.

- Hardened hearts = ignored His act of mercy
- Spiritually blind / close-minded = willfully resisted His teachings rather than comparing to Scripture
- Focused on minutiae = rather than God’s great moral principles
- **Matthew 23:24** Blind guides, who strain out a gnat [smallest of unclean animals] and swallow a camel [largest of unclean animals]
- Legalism ruled over compassion

- Healing of man crippled 38 yrs during feast
 - ignites their smoldering opposition to open hostility
- Threatened by His influence on people
 - persecuted Jesus repeatedly
 - charge Him w/ Sabbath-breaking / blasphemy
 - sought to kill Jesus
- Other accounts show how spiritually hard people can become
- **More evidence Jesus provided of His divinity**
 - **greater their contempt/anger/hatred became**
- **John 19:1-16** On Sabbath, Jesus healed man born blind
 - Made clay / had him wash
 - **Vs. 16** Pharisees said “This Man is not from God, because He does not keep the Sabbath.”
- **Mark 3:22-26 Jesus healing blind/dumb demoniac**
 - Scribes accused Jesus of casting out demons by power of ruler of demons (Beelzebub) = Jesus said is Satan cast out Satan, he could not stand/ Satan’s kingdom wld be divided

ABSG How could these religious leaders be so blind? The likely answer is that it was because of their own corrupt hearts, their false belief that the Messiah would deliver them from Rome now, and their love of power and lack of surrender to God. All these helped cause them to reject the truth that stood right before them.

What blinds us to truth?

John 5:38–42 ³⁸ But you do not have His word abiding in you, because whom He sent, Him you do not believe.³⁹ You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me. ⁴⁰ But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life.

⁴¹ “I do not receive honor from men. ⁴² But I know you, that you do not have the love of God in you.