

**Monday Evening Bible Reading Group: Monday October 7th 2019: Mark Chapter 3: 1-19:
Some Notes**

Content: The healing of the man with the bad hand – in the synagogue, on the Sabbath, in the face of the traditionalists who have put rules before people. Is healing “work”? An unlikely alliance between the orthodox Pharisees and the political Herodians. A multi—ethnic crowd flocks to Jesus for healing [and teaching?] The (also unlikely) choosing of the Twelve – note the significance [rather artificial?] of Twelve in Jewish history. The real beginning of the Church, as a shared ministry.

The “planted spies” sounds weird, as does complaining about rather than rejoicing in healing. But Christianity, indeed St George’s, has its own examples of people feeling seriously threatened by change which some see as going uphill and some see as going downhill. Once you translate the fundamentally important Sabbath into a vast set of detailed rules, any technical infringement can be seen as threatening the whole structure. The man with the bad hand probably wasn’t in pain or dying: his bad hand could have waited. Hard to find a 10 a.m. parallel, but think Consecration prayer beginning, and a small child bursts in determined to share her Junior Church drawing. Is “religion” a potential enemy to faith? Jesus was angry: do you share his anger? P.S. The Gospel According to the Hebrews says the man was a stone-mason who had an industrial accident and could no longer work. Further P.S. Some orthodox Jews would not defend themselves against violence on the Sabbath, choosing to die instead of “working” by defending themselves.

The multi-ethnic crowd is interesting: Edom (Idumea) in particular was traditionally a hostile place for Jews.

How many of the Twelve do we know much about? If you have ever been part of a job selection process (on either side of the table), you will be struck by Jesus’ rather unorthodox selection process. At least he, in some ways, ticked the diversity box – a collaborating tax collector and an ardent nationalist; though all are Jews and all are men. There are two key features of the Twelve: they spend time with Jesus (walk with him), and they are sent out to do his work. Do we walk with Jesus? Do we see ourselves as “sent”?