

Hard or Soft? > Mark 3:1-12

3:1-6 *Hard hearts plot against Jesus.* The religious officials see a man's disability as a test of whether Jesus will follow their traditions or not. When he heals the man's hand, he also challenges their wrong ways of teaching and acting: it *is* lawful on the sabbath to do good and to save life. Yet, as they prove with their response, they instead seek to kill Jesus.

3:7-12 *Soft hearts come to Jesus.* In a contrast with the corrupt religious officials, Mark records people flocking to Jesus from long distances. They want to be near him, they know that he can and will help them. Rather than avoiding or plotting against our Lord, these folks intentionally seek him out. This is the foundational step on which faith is built.

The Point: Hardness of heart rejects and rebels against Jesus. Softness of heart seeks him out and wants to be near him.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, thank you that – in Christ – you have made a way for us to be right with you and to enjoy you forever. Give us soft hearts, that we would hear and believe all you say, living by faith in our Savior.

Application: Consider the state of your heart – do you love Christ and others? Or do you care more for religious checklists? Ask the Lord to give you a soft heart rather than a hardened one. Then, trusting Christ, aim to tell others of what he has done for you. Be intentional about cultivating a soft heart that loves the Lord and his people in the year ahead.

Here is how I will apply these truths: _____
