

The Gospel of Mark

Walking with the Servant Savior

Lesson 9 Mark 6:1-29

Day One: Once a Carpenter, Always a Carpenter!

In the previous lesson we witnessed two stories of great faith; now we will contrast those with another exhibiting great unbelief. While the early ministry of Jesus brought out many eager to see the miracles and listen to the messages, from here on we will continue to see the opposition grow and the hostility increase.

Read Mark 6:1-6

Jesus considered Capernaum His headquarters, but Nazareth his home. Going home to most people means returning to the familiar; anticipating faces and places long remembered and loved. Returning to the neighborhood where He grew up no doubt felt comfortable to Jesus too! It was there He would find His mother, brothers, sisters, and perhaps even some cousins. And there He would also find the carpenter's shop where He first learned how to work with wood.

He returned home, followed closely by the disciples. Though an earlier visit had resulted in the people rejecting Him, now He would again present them with the opportunity to believe in Him.

1. Jesus' teaching in the synagogue prompted some questions among the people. What were they asking one another? v. 2
 - a. What was the summation of the people's attitude toward Him? v. 3b

The term *they were offended* or *they took offense* is a strong one, derived from the English word *scandal*. Different translations read: *they repelled*; *fell away*; and *stumbled*. The idea conveyed in the Greek is that of being offended or repelled to the point of abandoning (it does not specify whether temporary or permanent).

2. How did Jesus respond to their skepticism? v. 4

Jesus used the same proverb in an earlier visit to Galilee (John 4:44), realizing He would not be well received there either.

Put yourself in the sandals of Jesus' relatives and neighbors. To them He was just a local boy who had made it big! He had left a small town carpenter and returned a well known prophet. But He taught like no prophet these people had ever heard before—His message pricked the conscience and warmed the heart.

Getting a Workout . . . (Word study)

Using the resources you have on hand, research and write a definition for the word **prophet**.

3. Jesus was not the only prophet to be rejected by the members of his own family.
 - a. What did the Lord himself say about the prophet Jeremiah? See Jeremiah 12:5-6
 - b. Recall the earlier remarks by Jesus' family in Mark 3:21. What does John 7:5 have to say about them?
 - c. When did they finally believe in Him? John 7:5; Acts 1:14
4. *Personal:* Who is Jesus to *you*? Do you think of Him as holy man, a great teacher, or is He merely a carpenter's son? The Lord's own family did not initially perceive who He was. It wasn't until after His death, resurrection, and ascension that they believed. To *believe in* Jesus—to place your faith in Him as your personal Savior—is a deliberate choice each person must make. Have you made it?

Heartbeat . . . (Memory verse) “Jesus said to them, ‘A prophet is not without honor except in his own country, among his own relatives, and in his own house.’” Mark 6:4

Day Two: Blinding Unbelief

What to look for . . .

“He could do no mighty work there, except that He laid His hands on a few sick people and healed them” (v. 5). On rare occasions Jesus performed miracles in the midst of unbelief, but most of the time His power was evident in conjunction with the people's faith.

Read Mark 6:1-6 for review.

1. What affect did the *unbelief* of the people in Nazareth have on Jesus' ministry? v. 5
2. Did the negative response of the people mean that Jesus was *unable* to perform miracles in Nazareth? What did it mean?

The miracles of Jesus were not for entertainment or drawing a crowd, they were tied to His message of salvation. Those who were not open to hearing His message prevented any opportunity of seeing a miracle.

3. Being God in human form, there wasn't much that could amaze Jesus. According to verse 6, what did amaze Him?

4. *Personal:* As Jesus looks at your life today, does He see any lack of faith that prevents Him from working? If you don't see evidence of Him working in your life right now, perhaps it is because of unbelief. Ask Him to show you.

Unbelief as we see it in the Bible is not merely the refusal to believe a logical conclusion, but rather it has to do with a hardness of the heart, a stubborn refusal to accept our true condition. Remember, Jesus taught in the Parable of the Sower that hearing His message does not necessarily guarantee that it has been received. He must be believed in order for His transforming power to be released.

Jesus did few miracles in His hometown of Nazareth because the people did not believe in Him. As a result, those who rejected Him also missed their Messiah!

Selah . . . Give some careful thought today to the following:

- Does a person have to be popular or respected in order to be useful to God?

- Do *you* become discouraged when people reject you or your words about Christ?

- What advice can you offer someone else to keep them from becoming discouraged when dealing with rejection?

Review this week's memory verse.

Day Three: Traveling Light

What to look for . . .

Mark's Gospel is the only record that mentions Jesus sending out the twelve disciples in groups of two. Mark states that Jesus *began* to send them out; meaning it was the first of many times He would do so. Being rejected at home meant that Jesus and the disciples would go elsewhere, concentrating more on teaching than on performing miracles. His hometown rejected Him, but there were other places that needed Him.

Read Mark 6:7-13 along with Matthew 10:1-8 and Luke 9:1-6.

1. Before sending the disciples out, what important thing did Jesus do? v. 7

It would be interesting to know how Jesus made His choice in pairing these men together. Did He match them according to their strengths and weaknesses or by their temperaments and giftedness? Whatever criteria He used, His choice was perfect.

2. Jesus sent them out in *teams* to witness and heal. What did He give them? v. 7
 - What would be the advantage of sending out teams of two?

In order to cure diseases, Mark emphasizes that the disciples were given authority over evil. Not only would this authority allow for healings, it would also authenticate their message.

3. Emphasizing the urgency of their training mission, Jesus issued specific instructions. What were they?
 - a. v. 8:
 - b. v. 9:

Most people taking a trip would be sure they took along the bare necessities such as a suitcase with several changes of clothes, money to cover expenses, shoes to protect the feet, and a jacket for warmth at night. Jesus allowed only the minimum. Although the specific articles mentioned in the three Gospel accounts varied somewhat, the main point was very clear: the disciples were to leave immediately, to travel light, and to trust in God rather than in themselves. The only provision they were allowed was their faith in Him. They had to depend on Him for everything!

4. What was Jesus' instruction concerning housing? v. 10
 - a. If the townspeople didn't receive them and didn't want to hear them, what were they instructed to do? v. 11
 - b. What was the message the disciples took to give out? v. 12

Shaking the dust off one's feet was the equivalent of showing contempt for a town and its people. It meant separation—not having anything further to do with them because they had rejected Jesus and His message. The disciples were not responsible for the decision of the people; those who refused would be left to answer to God.

5. In your own words, what was the result of the mission? v. 13

Looking ahead to verse 30 we see the final report the disciples brought back to Jesus: “*The apostles gathered to Jesus and told Him all things, both what they had done and what they had taught.*” What stories they would have to share about the victories and the power over the enemy!

Selah...

Put yourself in the place of the disciples. Having been with Jesus for a time, you've heard Him teach, you've seen Him heal. You've witnessed His power and authority over evil. Now, suddenly, that authority is being conferred upon *you!* Imagine for a moment how startling it would be to hear that you had to leave immediately for an unfamiliar place that was not of your own choosing. You couldn't pack a bag or shop for necessities, and you were not allowed to phone ahead and make hotel reservations. You would simply have to trust in God to receive an invitation from a stranger who would shelter and feed you. And, you would have to face rejection! How would *you* respond in these circumstances—what would be your next step? Please share your thoughts.

Review this week's memory verse.

Day Four: No Happy Ending

What to look for...

Commentators have speculated as to why Mark picked up the story of John the Baptist at this particular point in his writing. It may be because the increased preaching of the Twelve had come to King Herod's attention. Mark mentions that Herod *heard of Him, for His name had become well known* (v. 14). Herod knew little about Jesus but he was well acquainted with John and even enjoyed listening to John's preaching. Here in chapter 6, Mark presents a historical flashback to explain what had happened to John several months before.

Read Mark 6:14-29

Mark's account of John's death is very similar but somewhat greater in detail than Matthew's (Matthew 14:1-12). The narrative of Jesus' ministry has taken place during the time of John's imprisonment (see Mark 1:14 and Matthew 11:2-6).

1. What was Herod's speculation about Jesus? v. 14, 16
 - a. Who did some others believe Him to be? v. 15

2. Who was responsible for arresting John and sending him to prison? Why? vv. 17-18

- a. Who wanted John dead? v. 19

- b. Why did King Herod fear John? v. 20

King Herod was the son of Herod the Great, and though not officially a king (his title was more of a courtesy), he was a *tetrarch* (ruler) over the region of Galilee. Descended from a very evil family, Herod's father was famous for slaughtering the male babies in Bethlehem shortly after the birth of Christ (Matthew 2:16). Mark's audience at the time knew enough about Herod's family to need no further explanation.

3. Describe the occasion that presented an opportunity for the downfall of John?
vv. 21-28

- a. Who was really behind the plot to behead John? v. 24

- b. Why did Herod feel that he had to comply with the request? v. 26

Herod actually had no kingdom to give, but his offer was a way of saying he would give Herodias' daughter practically anything she requested. His rash promise brought him great grief. There was no happy ending to the story. Herod fulfilled his promise and saved himself from becoming embarrassed in front of his guests, but his actions resulted in the brutal killing of a just and holy man. Thus, there was no relief for his guilt or his grief.

4. After John's death, what were his disciples allowed to do? v. 29
5. Some of John's disciples had earlier left to follow Jesus, but those remaining wished to give him an honorable burial. Matthew's account adds a few touching words to the story, what were they? See Matthew 14:12.

- ❖ Take a moment to reflect on the impact those words would have had upon the person hearing them.

Review this week's memory verse.

Day Five:

Praying God's Purpose

It's time to do some *prayer walking*—not in the literal, but the *spiritual* sense. The Holy Spirit will lead you today as you consider three points from your lesson, write them in the form of a prayer, and lift them to the Lord. If practicing the presence of God is new to you—be patient—it will come, and you will be blessed!

"... We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will." Romans 8:26-27 NLT

A prayer for drawing near...

Before God is able to use you, He must spend some time alone with you. As you sit in His presence, make a prayer out of what He ministers to your heart.

A prayer for strong faith...

Has God revealed an area this week where you lack faith? Commit that area to Him today and then trust Him for the answer.

A prayer for a word fitly spoken...

Are you dealing with rejection—or do you know someone who is? Ask God for His word of encouragement and then pass that word along to someone else who needs to hear it.

Write out this week's verse from memory:

Notes