



Mark 6

An OCF Bible Study

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What was Jesus' hometown? Nazareth. He was born in Bethlehem but raised in Nazareth.

How did the people in his hometown describe/label Him (v. 3)? *Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary and brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon?* This was not a compliment; it was an insult. It was a way of pointing out that Jesus had no formal theological training. He was never a formal disciple of a rabbi, much less a prominent rabbi. He didn't make the religious cut.

Why was Jesus not accepted in his hometown? The town folks' neighborly relationship with Jesus and His family as well as His occupation as a carpenter made it hard for them to think of Him as anything more than a mere man. He was just a common worker in their eyes, as most of them were.

What was the significance of their question: *Is not this... the son of Mary (v. 3)*? This also was not a compliment. It was contrary to Jewish usage to describe a man as the son of his mother, even when she was a widow, except in insulting terms. Rumors to the effect that Jesus was illegitimate (born out of wedlock—someone other than Joseph was the father) appear to have circulated in his own lifetime and was likely behind this reference as well.

What was the result of the people's refusal to believe in Jesus (v. 5)? The Nazarenes' refusal to believe in Jesus resulted in His not being able to do miracles among them—no one came bringing the sick and lame. This is the only time Mark said that Jesus was amazed. He marveled that the unbelief of the Nazarenes was as strong as it was.¹

Jesus also knew that He could not “wow” them into believing with miracles. Jesus refused to “perform” miracles in order to gain acceptance. He was willing to be rejected of men—both here in Nazareth and at the Cross.

Application: Have you ever encountered similar difficulty trying to share the gospel with family or old friends when going back to where you grew up? Have you ever faced that same rejection and ridicule?

The twelve are sent out. Why did Jesus tell them not to take anything with them (vv. 7-13)? Traveling light kept them dependent upon God and helped to prevent any potential sense of self-sufficiency. This was designed to be a faith testing experience. He has three years with these men and will then turn over the ministry to them. He was ratcheting up the training. He was in essence saying, “The training wheels are coming off men. I'm sending you out to do some of the same things you've seen me doing.”

What was the main objective in sending them out (v. 12)? They went out and preached. Some of the best, most effective proclaiming of the truth never happens inside a church. It happens when followers of Jesus are one-on-one with others, telling about what Jesus has done.

In the same sense we are sent out, each with a unique story to tell, which is perhaps our most powerful witnessing tool. The common denominator of our stories is, “I once was blind but now I see.” Most unbelievers don't really care about the parable of sower, feeding of 5,000, etc. They want to hear that God is real and has done incredible, life-changing things in your life and He loves you! God has to be an experiential God, not merely a philosophical God.

Application: Jesus sent the Twelve out on a specific mission. Do you sense God directing you to a specific ministry? Is God placing a particular passion in your heart?

Mark reviewed the events leading up to the death of John the Baptist (vv.17-29). There is some confusion about Jesus. **Who do they think He is?** Everything except that He's the Messiah.

Who does Herod think Jesus is? (v. 16) John the Baptist. **Why?** Herod was haunted by the memory and the guilt of having John beheaded.

Herod had John the Baptist imprisoned because of Herodias. Why did Herodias hate John (vv. 17-19)? John called out Herod for being married to her—his own brother’s wife. John was a man of character. He was not concerned with political correctness. When he preached repentance, John did not spare the rich and powerful. We behold in John an illustrious example of moral courage. And ultimately he paid the consequence of his moral courage with his life.

Why would Herod agree to the demand of Herodias’ daughter (v. 26)? Because Herod was afraid to cross his wife or lose face before his friends, he did something he knew to be wrong. What a contrast with John. We see here the antithesis of moral courage—cowardice.

Herod’s pride got him in trouble, as Pilate’s did later. Both of these rulers sacrificed a righteous and holy man on the altar of their personal popularity.²

How did Jesus see the crowds (v. 34)? He saw them as sheep without a shepherd and He was moved with compassion. Jesus knew that without a shepherd, sheep are in a lot of trouble. They can’t fend for themselves against predators, and they have a hard time finding the food and water they need. ~~(v. 34)~~ **How did Jesus respond to those He felt compassion toward?** He taught them many things. Their greatest need was to understand. Even though healing was what they really wanted.

How would you describe the disciples’ attitude toward the crowd (v. 36)? The disciples often saw the crowds as *work*, constantly demanding, getting in the way of their well-deserved rest. They wanted to send them away.

He gathered the fish and loaves.....Why did Jesus give the bread to the disciples to distribute (v. 41)? As an attitude check and/or teaching lesson. To give them firsthand experience in performing the miracle.

What is the significance of twelve basketfuls left over (v. 43)? Abundance and no waste. One basketful per disciple.

A long difficult day spent ministering to the spiritual and physical needs of the multitude left Jesus exhausted. What did He do next (vv. 45-46)? That hard day drove Jesus *to* prayer, not *from* prayer.

What was the disciples’ reaction to seeing Jesus walking on the water (vv. 49-50)? Cool?” They thought He was a ghost and they were terrified. And completely amazed.

To what does Mark attribute the fact that they were completely amazed (v. 52) ? Their hearts were hard. The disciples had not gained any understanding from the feeding of the 5,000 that Jesus was God. Their collective mind was not open to this possibility.³

Application: Do you ever feel like you’re rowing/straining against the wind in life? That life is an ordeal? Unbeknown to the disciples, Jesus saw their difficulty and took care of them. He rescued His disciples from working in futility. In doing so He assured them that He was in fact in control, and that He would always lovingly be there to help them fulfill what He commanded.

(vv. 54-56) How did the people of Gennesaret respond to Jesus’ arrival? With eager, welcoming hearts.

What did Jesus have to offer the masses like these people? Hope!

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¹ Dr. Thomas L. Constable, *Notes on Mark, 2014 Edition* (published by Sonic Light, www.soniclight.com), pp. 83

² *Ibid*, pp. 90

³ *Ibid*, pp. 97