

# THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

JULY 12TH–13TH, 2025 // GOSPEL OF MARK

## REJECTION (MARK 6:1–6)

### BORN IN A SMALL TOWN (V. 1)

Jesus' hometown of Nazareth was only about 10 acres in size with a population of around 200.

- When you are from a small town, everybody knows everybody. At least, they THINK they do.
- Jesus returns with His disciples to His hometown to continue the ministry that He had been doing in Galilee.

### ASTONISHED BY HIS TEACHING (V. 2)

When Jesus taught in the synagogue on the Sabbath, those who heard Him were absolutely astonished.

- The questions on their minds were, "How can He teach and perform miracles like this?" and "What is the source of His power and wisdom?"
- This was perplexing to them for many reasons.

### "ISN'T THIS THE CARPENTER...?"

A tekton (carpenter) was anyone with technical skills who worked with wood or stone—someone who built things.

- Before His ministry, Jesus had no formal theological training: He never went to seminary, was never the formal disciple of a rabbi, and was a carpenter. Surely, someone with no formal educational training could not speak this way!

### "ISN'T THIS...THE SON OF MARY?"

It was Jewish custom to identify a man by calling him the son of his father, not his mother.

- Perhaps this was an indication that Joseph had died. But this was probably a cheap shot aimed at the scandal of His birth, suggesting Jesus was the illegitimate child of an immoral teen mother.

### DON'T WE KNOW HIS BROTHERS AND SISTERS?

Being from a small town where everybody knows you and your family has its benefits. But sometimes people think they know you simply because they are familiar with your family.

- When we have preconceived notions or expectations of someone just because we recognize their family name, we are missing the opportunity to really know them.

### "SO THEY WERE OFFENDED BY HIM."

They were *skandalizo* by Him—scandalized and stumbling over Jesus and His ministry.

- They were not just irritated or annoyed by Him; they found His teachings and claims of divinity deeply troubling and offensive.
- Why? Because of their familiarity with Jesus. They thought they knew Him, but when they heard His teaching and saw His power, it did not fit.
- Most likely, the Jews in Nazareth had their own preconceived expectations of the Messiah that Jesus simply did not meet.
- To them, the Messiah was supposed to arrive in power and military might, not as a humble carpenter from a small town.
- To them, Jesus was completely disqualified because He didn't look like what they expected.

### OFFENDED BY JESUS

In our day and age, many think they know Jesus, yet they are often simply familiar with some ideas they like about Jesus.

- There are often expectations about which version of Jesus you're allowed to follow and believe in.
- Helping the poor, loving the needy, and teaching love fit well in our modern expectations of Jesus, but judgment and repentance do not.

### NOT ABLE TO DO MIRACLES?

Though this rejection was undoubtedly painful, Jesus accepted it as the price a faithful prophet of God must pay (v. 4).

- The spiritual climate of Nazareth amazed Jesus: their unbelief was astounding to Him (v. 6).
- It was not "no belief" (a state of ignorance or lack of knowledge), it was "unbelief" (a deliberate refusal to believe despite evidence).
- This hardened spiritual state and deliberate rejection of Jesus' identity led to a lack of miracles and healings in Nazareth (v. 5).
- Jesus did not perform miracles in Nazareth, not because He lacked power, but because the spiritual climate of unbelief made miracles unfruitful. If He had performed miracles there, no one would have received them as legitimate.

### UNBELIEVING, HARDENED HEARTS

Hardened hearts can hinder our experience of God's power.

- This isn't because God is weak, but because He does not force Himself on those who reject Him.
- At the same time, God still may act in mercy towards the few who are open to Him, even in a place of widespread skepticism and unbelief ("...a few sick people").

### COMMISSIONING (MARK 6:7–13)

At this point in the narrative, Jesus' disciples have had significant on-the-job ministry training.

- They have seen Jesus cast out demons, heal the sick, teach in parables, deal with criticism and rejection, and handle large crowds.
- Now it is their turn to be sent out on their own mission.
- Jesus' disciples are called to advance the Kingdom wherever we are sent!

### GO WITH AUTHORITY AND COMMUNITY (V. 7)

These 12 were Jesus' authorized and appointed representatives.

- Jesus gave them authority over unclean spirits and demons. As His disciples, we also have authority over demons.
- Nobody got sent out as a lone ranger (Deut. 17:6). Each disciple was given a ministry partner.
- Community offers sustaining power for ministry.

### PACK LIGHT (VS. 8–9)

On their ministry trip, Jesus' disciples were allowed only a staff, the clothes on their backs, and the shoes on their feet.

- They were to take no money to provide them with food or shelter. They would be completely dependent on God's provision through Jewish hospitality. When we find our security in what we own, we risk not trusting God to provide.

### GO WHERE YOU ARE WELCOMED (V. 10)

Jesus instructed His disciples to find a receptive home and stay there until the ministry work in that area was done.

- They should not impose on multiple homes or seek out nicer accommodations, but accept what is offered, be grateful, and see it as God's provision and an opportunity to minister.
- Do we accept the doors God opens for us?

### MOVE ON WHEN YOU ARE REJECTED (V. 11)

Jesus basically said to these apostles, "if a home won't receive or listen to you, move on."

- "Shake the dust off your feet as a testimony against them"—a symbolic declaration that a person or town has heard the truth and rejected it.
- A disciples' job is to proclaim faithfully, not to force a conversion upon unwilling, unreceptive hearts.
- We are not called to be pushy, just faithful.

As the disciples went out preaching repentance, driving out demons, and healing the sick, the power of Jesus flowed through them (vs. 12–13).

- As disciples, we go out in service to and as representatives of Christ through His authority.
- It is never to be about us. If we are making it all about Jesus, when we are rejected, we can remember who they are truly rejecting.

### A HEAD ON A PLATTER (MARK 6:14–29)

At this point in Mark's narrative, Jesus had been traveling, teaching, preaching, and performing miracles in the region of Galilee.

- Apparently, His fame had spread so that King Herod (Herod Antipas) concluded Jesus was "John the Baptist...raised from the dead" (vs. 14–16).
- Apparently, Herod and John had a history, so Mark explained the backstory (vs. 17–29).

Herod Antipas was a regional ruler (tetrarch) who governed Galilee and Perea under Rome from 4 B.C. to A.D. 39.

- He was not technically a king, but he was commonly referred to as one by the people (sometimes in an almost mocking or ironic tone).
- Herod was an embodiment of political corruption, moral compromise, and worldly power.

John had been put in prison by Herod because he had publicly denounced Herod's adulterous relationship with his brother Phillip's wife, Herodias.

- At Herod's birthday party, his stepdaughter/niece pleased him with a questionable and most likely seductive dance.

- In a drunken stupor, he foolishly promised her more than he had the authority to give.

Through her mother's influence and manipulation, all she asked for was John the Baptist's "head on a platter" (vs. 24–25).

- Normally a trial would have been required to put someone to death, but oaths were legally binding and could not be broken.
- To avoid being humiliated in front of his guests, Herod reluctantly conceded (v. 26)

John was beheaded, and his severed head was ceremoniously presented on a platter to Herodias and her daughter (vs. 27–28).

- John's disciples claimed his body and reported the news to Jesus, who retreated to a lonely place to mourn (v. 29; Mt. 14:13).
- The application here is noteworthy for anyone who lives out and speaks the truth of God's Word: it will always be costly.

The rage and anger many people feel towards those who stand and speak for Christ, His Kingdom, and His truth are nothing new.

- If we choose to stand for what God says is truth and against what God says is sin, there will always be a price to pay.
- The persecution John and Jesus endured came from BOTH the religious and the unbelieving.

If we live out our faith as disciples of Jesus and live for His Kingdom (not the kings or kingdoms of this world), we can expect criticism, mockery, rejection, and possibly violence.

- If our response is fleshly rage, unkindness, and disagreeableness, it may be proof that the persecution bothers us not because of Christ, but simply because it is an assault to our pride.

### PAYING THE PRICE

- We will be misunderstood, criticized, and rejected.
- It hurts to be rejected, but when we are, we do not respond with anger, hatred, or ungodliness. We turn them over to God through prayer, show love, then move on.
- We cannot bow down to the kings and kingdoms of this world. We must live out and speak the truth of God, no matter what it may cost us.

### OFFENDED BY JESUS?

- Jesus confronts human pride. We are sinners under God's judgment who need salvation.
- Jesus claims exclusive salvation. This clashes with the cultural ethic of inclusion and relativism.
- Jesus challenges moral autonomy. God sets the standard for moral behavior, not us.
- Jesus invites us to costly discipleship—not comfort and self-fulfillment but sacrifice.

### THE HARDNESS OF THE HUMAN HEART

- Some of us have a version of Jesus and expectations of what Jesus is allowed to do/say that look nothing like the biblical Jesus.

- When we reject the biblical Jesus and His truth, our hardened hearts hinder an authentic experience of God's power in our lives.

- Genuine submission to Jesus' lordship and truth is the response of faith. Faith moves mountains.

### ADVANCING THE KINGDOM

- As a disciple, you have an assignment to advance the Kingdom wherever you are sent.
- Go in Christ's authority and with community!
- Pack light. The stuff of this world should not weigh you down.
- Stay where you are welcomed and move on when you are rejected. We are called to be faithful, not pushy.