

Mark 6:1-31

Teaching Notes

Chapter 6

Verses 6:1-6

(Mark 6:1 Then He went out from there and came to His own country, and His disciples followed Him.

Mark 6:2 And when the Sabbath had come, He began to teach in the synagogue. And many hearing Him were astonished, saying, "Where did this Man get these things? And what wisdom is this which is given to Him, that such mighty works are performed by His hands!

Mark 6:3 Is this not the carpenter, the Son of Mary, and brother of James, Joses, Judas, and Simon? And are not His sisters here with us?" So they were offended at Him.

Mark 6:4 But 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 6:5 Now He could do no mighty work there, except that He laid His hands on a few sick people and healed them.

Mark 6:6 And He marveled because of their unbelief. Then He went about the villages in a circuit, teaching.)

Verse 1: God's Heart

In God's heart, there was a special desire to see the people of Nazareth believe in Christ.

- It causes me to think of the numerous stories of Christians who are from other countries or states or cities who get saved. And as a result, they go back home to share the good news with their families and friends.
- So we see God's heart in a personal way. The Lord Jesus yearned to see the Nazarenes saved.

Verses 2-4: The Offense

The preaching of the word and the signs and wonders accomplished by Jesus Christ were visible to all; yet for the majority of the Nazarenes, it was offensive.

The Reason for the Offense:

The Lord Jesus reveals why the Nazarenes **found an excuse** to reject Jesus and His message. The thing about excuses is this: People can find many excuses to reject Jesus Christ. And none of them are valid. They are only excuses.

What was the excuse? The excuse of familiarity:

- Because Jesus came from that area. People knew of him. People knew his profession. People knew his family. Therefore, they found an excuse to discredit and reject Jesus Christ. **The excuse of familiarity.**

Application:

You might find this in your life. You can be sharing with family and friends the gospel, hoping they get saved; yet they reject you and your message. Then, a co-worker shares with them the gospel and through the coworker they believe.

- This is not always the case. We have biblical examples where families come to the faith through relatives that come to the faith.

Just like Jesus, some of you, your family and friends will reject the gospel you preach using the excuse of familiarity.

Don't be discouraged that your relatives, friends, and loved ones still reject Christ. I'm sure it saddens you and discourages you when they make fun of you, discredit you, use the excuse of familiarity against you. Know that you are in good company. Keep praying for them.

Verses 5-6: Unbelief

That word *marveled* is a word worth highlighting because it is only used speaking of Jesus twice. The other time: When Jesus marveled at the great faith of the Centurion in Matthew 8:5-13. It was so great, no one's faith in Israel at the time could compare.

And equally so, in the negative sense of the word, the Lord Jesus marveled at their unbelief.

Were They Doomed Before They Had A Chance?

Some of you might be thinking: Because Jesus came from Nazareth and because a prophet is not honored in his own country,

Were the Nazarenes doomed to reject Christ before they had a chance to choose?

To answer, consider the response of Jesus, “He marveled at their unbelief.” In other words, **unbelief was certainly their choice made by their free will.**

We know that all of God’s ways are perfect. Therefore, in this context, the perfect time to come and share the good news with the people of Nazareth was this **moment**. The perfect person to come and share with the Nazarenes was God Himself in the Flesh, Jesus Christ. Again, to reject Jesus Christ is a choice.

What Was The Real Issue?

Success So Far: Recall that up until this point, Jesus’ ministry was so effective that to avoid physical injury and death, Jesus had to use a boat. To minister to all the people, he had to minister outside the city. To spend time with His Father, he had to leave the crowds. To avoid exhaustion, he had to leave with his disciples by boat. To simply eat, they had to leave.

Lives were healed physically and spiritually. Signs and wonders were happening constantly. Demon-exorcisms. Physical Healing. And one very startling in chapter 5, Jesus resurrected a dead 12 year old girl back to life! Jesus was having incredible success among the people, except when he came to Nazareth:

So then, **what was the real issue?**

The unbelief of the people. Jesus could have done more there, but their unbelief limited all that Jesus could have and would have done. The issue was the issue of the heart. Yet, to masquerade the issue of the heart, what was the reason for their offense? An excuse of familiarity.

Application: Is Your Faith Growing?

When I consider a text like this, I want to consider this question: Years after my conversion, am I emulating these non-believers by limiting what God can do because I’m not believing? The last people I want to imitate are the Nazarenes? What is the lesson to be learned for the Christian?

Are you limiting what God wants to do because you are not exercising your faith like you once did?

Foundational Verse:

(2 Corinthians 5:7 *For we walk by faith, not by sight.*)

Romans 12:3 reveals that each one of us has a measure of faith.

Romans 12:6 instructs us to use our God-given gifts in proportion to our faith.

Romans 4:20 reveals concerning the promises of God to Abraham that Abraham was strengthened in faith to receive the promises.

2 Corinthians 10:15 reveals that faith should increase, for oneself and the benefit of others.

1 Thessalonians 1:3 reveals that the Christian's service unto Christ should be a work of faith.

1 Timothy 1:5 reveals that we should have sincere faith.

1 Timothy 6:21 warns that we should not stray from the faith.

2 Timothy 4:7 reveals the grace to continue and keep the faith to the very end.

From the book of James, regarding faith,

Faith → Action.

- The book of James is a book that clearly reveals to us that you cannot separate faith from works (faith from action). If one is exercising faith (something supernatural), he will obey God and take steps of faith to please God (something natural).

Here's a valuable verse to meditate upon:

(1 Thessalonians 3:10 *night and day praying exceedingly that we may see your face and perfect what is **lacking in your faith**?*)

This implies to the Christian that the Christian is still growing in faith. And I am so thankful for God's grace in my life that He is still perfecting me, He is still transforming me to be the faith-filled believer He desires me to be.

The exhortation is again,

Are you limiting what God wants to do because you are not exercising your faith?

God wants to do so much, but how many of us even after becoming His children, use excuses why God won't or can't do something?

For the believer, He is perfecting what is lacking in your faith.

Don't reject His transformation. Don't avoid His discipline. Receive His correction and move forward. Receive His forgiveness and walk more by faith. And when you fail to walk by faith, get back up and walk by faith.

Personal Examples:

(1). *Not giving (tithing) so I can pay for school; to walking by faith in the Lord and paying off school even before I graduated.*

- CSB: (**Malachi 3:10** *Bring the full tenth into the storehouse so that there may be food in my house. Test me in this way," says the Lord of Armies. "See if I will not open the floodgates of heaven and pour out a blessing for you without measure.)*)

(2). *Not stepping out to preach because of previous examples where it was not effective. Basically, not preaching because you assume they will reject.*

- (**1 Corinthians 3:7** *So then neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase. 1 Corinthians 3:8* *Now he who plants and he who waters are one, and each one will receive his own reward according to his own labor.)*
- As Christians, as evangelists, we simply take opportunities to share the gospel leaving the results up to God. In the ministry of Jesus, there were people who believed and there were people who rejected.
- Why is that encouraging? Because I should not think that every time I share it's going to be successful every time. I should have a balanced viewpoint that some will accept and some will reject. While I may feel sorry for the people who reject me, I don't have to beat myself up thinking that I'm the one who is ineffective. **I am effective for God simply because I preach the gospel.**

Verses 7-13: Sent Out

(**Mark 6:7** *And He called the twelve to Himself, and began to send them out two by two, and gave them power over unclean spirits.*)

Mark 6:8 *He commanded them to take nothing for the journey except a staff—no bag, no bread, no copper in their money belts—*

Mark 6:9 *but to wear sandals, and not to put on two tunics.*

Mark 6:10 *Also He said to them, “In whatever place you enter a house, stay there till you depart from that place.*

Mark 6:11 *And whoever will not receive you nor hear you, when you depart from there, shake off the dust under your feet as a testimony against them. Assuredly, I say to you, it will be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for that city!”*

Mark 6:12 *So they went out and preached that people should repent.*

Mark 6:13 *And they cast out many demons, and anointed with oil many who were sick, and healed them.)*

Verse 7: The Power

Did the apostles have inherent power, built up over time? Were they like batteries that were charged until released? No. What does it tell us?

The apostles were given power by Jesus.

This will become a foundational principle throughout the New Testament. Because Jesus ascended after His resurrection, He told His disciples that they won't receive power from Him any longer, they will receive power from... the Holy Spirit:

(Acts 1:8 But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.)

The power to serve Christ,

The power to be used by God to impact others with the gospel, through love, through service,

The power to be an effective Christian,

Is all a gift, given by God through His Holy Spirit and His power.

Any time you see the supernatural work of God of effective preaching; the supernatural work of God in miracles, in the apostles from what we read or from visibly seeing it from believers, **know that it is only made possible by the power of God.**

Verses 8-11: The Instructions for the Short-Term Mission Trip

The Lord Jesus gave the apostles instructions for this short-term mission trip.

The instructions were simple: If the people repent, stay in town. If the people reject, leave town.

A common question regarding these verses is, Is the Lord Jesus establishing a ministry precedent for all future disciples, such as you and I?

The answer is **NO**. Let's develop this:

Today, does the Lord Jesus only send out 12 people at a time for short-term mission trips? Or send them out by twos? Or take no money whatsoever? Or leave a city if the city rejects Christ? The answer is no: simply for the reason that there are many other scriptures that reveal that the Holy Spirit led God's servants in smaller groups, sometimes alone, sometimes carrying money, and sometimes staying in a hostile area.

There are way too many scriptures that contradict that Jesus was teaching a precedent here.

Before we continue, understand this: Jesus' method here was God's perfect way to reach the people the apostles went to preach to. While it is not a precedent for us to imitate, we can take away good lessons:

Example: Paul At Ephesus

When the Apostle Paul went to Ephesus, he followed a method. This is found in Acts 19:8-10,

(Acts 19:8 And he went into the synagogue and spoke boldly for three months, reasoning and persuading concerning the things of the kingdom of God.

Acts 19:9 But when some were hardened and did not believe, but spoke evil of the Way before the multitude, he departed from them and withdrew the disciples, reasoning daily in the school of Tyrannus.

Acts 19:10 And this continued for two years, so that all who dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks.)

The Apostle Paul's method in Ephesus was:

(1). Go to the Synagogue and preach there to the Jews. After a few believe and others reject,

(2). Go to the Gentiles. After the conversion of those initial converts, start a church.

(3). In the unique case of Ephesus, he started a daily bible college 3 months after he got there.

For the most part, this was Paul's method of ministry as a missionary.

Now, while that method might have been effective then, it is not necessarily effective now. The closest synagogue in Whittier would not just allow any of us to randomly start preaching. What Paul did, by first going to the synagogue, is not possible or effective in our context.

The Differences:

There are methods to be effective for a geographic area, for the times, for the culture, to reach others with the gospel.

- In other words, the methods of ministry might look a little different in the United States compared to that in Brazil, Morocco, Russia, or Indonesia.

For example, there are certain countries that ban gospel tracts, little books that preach the gospel. In the United States, we can pass out tracts all day; but in other countries, you can't do that.

For example, there are certain countries that can't meet in a building for church like here in the United States; rather, because they are underground, they must meet secretly in homes.

Now, these unique methods are never contradictory to God's word; in other words, methods should never be forms of compromise. It is simply **wisdom**.

The Similarities: (vv12-13)

What makes us uniquely similar to the Algerian Christian, the Iranian Christian, and the Chinese Christian? What makes us Americans in a land of religious freedom the same as those in lands of religious persecution?

Verse 12: We go out and we preach the gospel of repentance before God and faith in Christ.

Verse 13: We have God's power to do signs and wonders for God's glory, and to be instruments in the hands of God to heal the sick.

We preach the same gospel; and we have the same Holy Spirit who empowers us to be effective in the places we live.

Application (vv7-13): Led by the Spirit

Jesus led His apostles to be effective for that people in that time, but what about our time?

Does God still give instructions on how to be most effective to reach a certain group of people with the gospel? The answer is **yes**.

It is crucial that we as ambassadors for Christ ask the Holy Spirit to lead each one of us to discover how we can consider new methods or change methods to effectively preach the gospel of Christ where He's called us.

Example: CC Caborca

As most of you know, we have a New Beginnings church in Caborca, Sonora, Mexico. What's really popular right now in Caborca with the children and families are parks.

Every weekend, there's vendors, jumpers, and activities for families and children, a real family-friendly environment. And besides those events, people are just really enjoying hanging out at the local parks.

The church is taking advantage of that right now. On different days in different parks, the church is holding, pop-up church in the park, hosting various activities for the children. As a result, families are hearing the gospel and coming to faith.

May the Holy Spirit guide us to people to simply share with them the loving gospel of Jesus Christ 😊.

Verse 13: People Hurting

(Mark 6:13 And they cast out many demons, and anointed with oil many who were sick, and healed them.)

The devil wants all of us to forget that there are people hurting, destroying themselves because they are in bondage to sin; and others hurting others because they are in bondage to sin.

Again, the devil wants us to forget that there are people who will be saved if the gospel is preached to them. From a man's viewpoint, they are just waiting for you to come and share with them.

May God use each of us in our planning, opportunities, and interactions to pray and preach the gospel to those who will be saved.

Verses 14-29: The Death of John the Baptist

(Mark 6:14 Now King Herod heard of Him [**Jesus**], for His name had become well known. And he said, "John the Baptist is risen from the dead, and therefore these powers are at work in him."

Mark 6:15 Others said, "It is Elijah." And others said, "It is the Prophet, or like one of the prophets."

Mark 6:16 But when Herod heard, he said, "This is John, whom I beheaded; he has been raised from the dead!" [**Now, we will go back in time a little bit to read of John the Baptist's death**]

Mark 6:17 For Herod himself had sent and laid hold of John, and bound him in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife; for he had married her.

Mark 6:18 Because John had said to Herod, "It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife."

Mark 6:19 Therefore Herodias held it against him and wanted to kill him, but she could not;

Mark 6:20 for Herod feared John, knowing that he was a just and holy man, and he protected him. And when he heard him, he did many things, and heard him gladly.

Mark 6:21 Then an opportune day came when Herod on his birthday gave a feast for his nobles, the high officers, and the chief men of Galilee.

Mark 6:22 And when Herodias' daughter herself came in and danced, and pleased Herod and those who sat with him, the king said to the girl, "Ask me whatever you want, and I will give it to you."

Mark 6:23 He also swore to her, "Whatever you ask me, I will give you, up to half my kingdom."

Mark 6:24 So she went out and said to her mother, "What shall I ask?" And she said, "The head of John the Baptist!"

Mark 6:25 Immediately she came in with haste to the king and asked, saying, "I want you to give me at once the head of John the Baptist on a platter."

Mark 6:26 And the king was exceedingly sorry; yet, because of the oaths and because of those who sat with him, he did not want to refuse her.

Mark 6:27 Immediately the king sent an executioner and commanded his head to be brought. And he went and beheaded him in prison,

Mark 6:28 brought his head on a platter, and gave it to the girl; and the girl gave it to her mother.

Mark 6:29 When his disciples heard of it, they came and took away his corpse and laid it in a tomb.)

In comparing John the Baptist and Herod Antipas, what happened here?

(Ecclesiastes 7:15 I have seen everything in my days of vanity: There is a just man who perishes in his righteousness, And there is a wicked man who prolongs life in his wickedness.)

There are three characters in the story that I want to highlight. First, let's look at John the Baptist:

John the Baptist:

This is one of those dark accounts in the Bible that simply remind us how people respond to those who preach the gospel and those who preach the truth: Aren't you thankful for the John the Baptists in the world who do not shy back from preaching the truth? I know the Lord Jesus was pleased with John the Baptist.

Consider what Jesus said to his non-believing brothers:

(John 7:7 The world cannot hate you, but it hates Me because I testify of it that its works are evil.)
Jesus Christ was hated because he called out evil. John the Baptist, just like his Savior, preached the gospel and called out evil when it was right to do so.

One thing about John the Baptist: He had a massive platform. Recall that he was the "forerunner" to Jesus Christ. His fame spread far and wide, to the point that years later, people knew only of John the Baptist's baptism and not yet the baptism of the Holy Spirit that Christ brought. Regarding John the Baptist's platform, it was much larger than our minds can comprehend.

How many of us know that when individuals start to get a larger platform, they start to shrink back from calling evil, evil and start to stay silent, or start to avoid questions that would reveal what they truly believe? There is a tendency in the human heart to begin to adore fame, in that you try to keep the fame by avoiding controversy.

That wasn't John. At the zenith of John the Baptist's ministry, he remained true to God's word by calling out evil when it was necessary.

If God gives any of us a platform, may God have mercy on us to always remain true to God and His word. May we never be people-pleasers but God-pleasers.

Herod Antipas:

Herod shows himself to be a coward. First, to please Herodias, his ex-sister-in-law-now-wife, he locks up John the Baptist in prison when he did not want to do so. He knew he was wrong but he sought to please this woman, Herodias. Second, to honor his word and keep his pride, he orders the execution of John the Baptist.

Herodias:

For Herodias, she was not satisfied with John the Baptist in prison. She wanted him dead. So she took the opportunity to get her daughter to dance in front of her once-uncle-now-stepfather and in front of all the government leaders. The text does not say it was a sexual dance in nature, but many theologians and historians believe it was sexual in nature.

There will always be manipulators around; men and women like Herodias. Herodias knew her husband was a coward so she manipulated the situation again. To honor his word and protect his pride, Herod Antipas was trapped by Herodias to kill John the Baptist at the request of his niece.

Application:

In comparing John and Herod, John the Baptist was a God-pleaser. Herod was a man-pleaser. Consider what the Apostle Paul said,

(Galatians 1:10 For am I now seeking the approval of man, or of God? Or am I trying to please man? If I were still trying to please man, I would not be a servant of Christ.)

I don't know your circumstances or recent decisions today. Only God knows. But as believers, we are all going to,

(1). Leave a legacy.

- Ecc.7:8 says, "the end of a thing is better than its beginning."
- We all can start out well, but how we finish is what matters. If we are not pleasing God rather we are pleasing man, today is the day to repent.
- What type of legacy will you and I leave? Are you going to go down to the grave and up into glory as a God-pleaser or a man-pleaser?

(2). Stand before the judgment seat of Christ.

- **ESV (2 Corinthians 5:10** *For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil.*)
- Right now, I am so thankful that with some of you we can say with good conscience, that if I were to die today, I can stand before Jesus Christ as one who pleased God and only God. Can others say of you, that man/woman is a God-pleaser. Can God say of you, “you were faithful.”

I will be honest, there were times in the past where my allegiance was questionable. I was riding that fence. I was trying to please God and please man.

- You can't please both. You have to love one and hate the other.

If you have been compromised in this area. If you are allowing the Herodias-type people in your life to manipulate you. If you are wanting the praise of man and not the praise of God, today is the day to confess, repent, and move forward.

Verses 30-31: The Twelve Return

(Mark 6:30 Then the apostles gathered to Jesus and told Him all things, both what they had done and what they had taught.

Mark 6:31 *And He said to them, “Come aside by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while.” For there were many coming and going, and they did not even have time to eat.)*

In summary of our study, what can we say as a summarizing thought?

- **Mark records men of God obeying God by preaching the word of God, regardless of how people respond.**

This verse is motivating for one reason:

- **The apostles were able to bring back a report to Jesus of what God did through them.**

If I were to come up to you today, and ask, what God has been doing through and speaking through you recently, what would you say?

Do you have recent reports of what God is doing in your life, what you are learning in your personal Bible studies, who you are praying for, what ministry you are planning for, what you are doing to be more effective in this current season, what next spiritual objective you have in mind, what ideas you are considering for your ministry, what you have been sharing, what you are planning to share next?

If I can sum it up in one word:

Do you have spiritual goals? If you are walking by faith today, you will be developing spiritual spiritual goals.

This is an encouragement to us to focus our attention on things that matter so that like the apostles we can share what God is doing through us and what God is sharing through us.

(Colossians 3:2 Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.)

Are you distracted by worldly things? Are you prioritizing things that will only distract you from what is best? Don't be distracted by worldly things. Keep your focus on the spiritual things. Keep your focus on Christ and His will. God's plan is to rescue more sinners with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Renew your commitment to follow Jesus and His mission.

Word for the Pre-believer:

Some of you are here who are hurting and broken. And you need that touch of Jesus Christ, the touch of the power of God.

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