

Now think about the possible objections you might have had (or maybe still do have) to Jesus. What objections to Jesus would you expect someone to have today?

Part of the road of discipleship includes sharing in Jesus's mission. That means we're going to be taking his gospel to other people. We'll face the same rejections or acceptance that Jesus did.

What sort of opposition to Christ have you observed personally? Share your stories.

Now consider those opposed to Christ, or at least uninterested in him. In what ways does your relationship with him give you empathy and compassion for the lost?

Read Mark 6:7–13, and as you read, look for details that mirror the way Jesus has already shown his disciples how to spread the message of the coming kingdom.

Jesus sends the disciples out two by two on a mission to spread the same message of repentance that John the Baptist did. The word "repent" (*metanoeo*) means to change your mind or purpose. The disciples were going out to exhort people to change their minds about God and their relationship to him.

What reactions does he prepare his disciples to face while they are out on the road? How are they to respond?

[Note: For further study on metanoeo, see Go Deeper section 2 at the end of this session.]

The disciples' message is the same one we hear. **What role does repentance play in your life? How did you "change your mind" about Jesus when you first believed?**

In what ways do you continue to repent in order to remain close to your savior?

What does Mark 6:7–13 say to modern disciples? How would you incorporate the message of this passage into your faith conversations?

Jesus doesn't wait until the end of Mark to send the disciples out to spread the message of the kingdom of God. Regardless of where your relationship is with Jesus, you have a part to play in his mission in the world.

How can you practically live like the disciples did here? How would you engage someone in conversation about the picture of Jesus you've seen here?

Repentance can be a hard pill to swallow.

It requires humility to change, to admit you were wrong. Our next passage reflects this through a flashback to King Herod who had heard John the Baptist's call to repent. Let's just say that he didn't respond well.

Read Mark 6:14–20.

[Note: For further study on King Herod, see Go Deeper section 3 at the end of this session.]

What got John in trouble with Herod in the first place? Why, despite the trouble, did Herod keep John around?

We've seen some poor reactions to those who shared the message of Jesus, but none so bad as Herod and his wife. When John declared their marriage a violation of God's law, it got him thrown in prison. Herodias even wanted him executed. Herod kept John around, though, because of the message he preached. It intrigued him.

Now read Mark 6:21–29.

What choice does John have in the matter of his life or death? Why does he die?

Most of us won't face an angry queen or a militant machete because of our faith in Jesus. But the question we have to answer with each moment of our lives is

Greek word is *skandalizo*, from which we get the English term "scandal."

Throughout the New Testament, *skandalizo* often shows up to describe Jewish reactions to Jesus. Sometimes it takes the form of a noun and gets translated "stumbling block" (See Rom 9:33; 1 Cor. 1:23; Gal 5:11; 1 Pet. 2:8). Like Francis pointed out in the video session, the problem with the people of Nazareth was their unbelief in the face of Jesus's teachings.

In a day and age where we're very hesitant to offend anyone, the true gospel is provocative—it always has been. That doesn't mean we should be divisive or impolite when we tell people about Jesus. But we *should* expect the message itself to come across like a scandal.

Reflect on occasions when you have talked about Jesus and faced resistance. What sort of setting were you in—with folks you knew, with strangers, in person or online, etc.? What objections did your listeners bring up?

Why are we to persist in sharing the gospel despite opposition? What's the point?

In what ways is your faith strengthened through uncomfortable

faith conversations?

2. Peek at the Greek: metanoeo

One of the biggest reasons (if not *the* biggest reason) that the message of Jesus is off-putting to some is the issue of repentance. In 6:12, Mark says the disciples proclaimed that people should *repent*.

The word translated "repent" is *metanoeo*, which literally means to change one's mind. In the Old Testament Hebrew, the word is *shub*, which means to physically turn around or turn back. If we take both together, repentance involves both our mind and our behavior. It involves turning our backs on all that is ungodly and turning to face what is pleasing to God—both literally in how we behave but also in how we think.

Mark makes repentance the hallmark requirement for salvation. No one can be saved without acknowledging their sin and clinging to Jesus.

What do we do with this information?

The reason the gospel is so provocative is precisely because it demands change. Think about it—people might turn to God when it would mean a change from bad circumstances. But if life's good, why change at all?

become ruler of a large portion of Judea, Galilee, and surrounding territories. He persecuted Christians, ordering the execution of the apostle James (Acts 12:1–3), and the imprisonment of the apostle Peter (Acts 12:3–19), after which Agrippa died directly as a judgment of God.

The contrast between the Herodian family and that of Jesus and John is stark. One dysfunctional family hungry for glory, the other—cousins—hungry for the glory of God. Every royal political machination was motivated by a self-centered pursuit of self-aggrandizement. John the Baptist and Jesus preached the Word of God, repentance, and holiness.

We may not be royals, but often we often seek fame and glory. **What does that look like in your life?**

Have accolades and praise filled you up emotionally? Made you think better of yourself? Or have they exposed an emptiness in your life? How?

How can the contrast between the Herods and John and Jesus help you reflect on your own motivations? How can you move from seeking your own glory to seeking God's instead?
