

Mark 6: 1-13 Discussion Guide

TEXT - Read Mark 6:1-13

¹He went away from there and came to his hometown, and his disciples followed him. ²And on the Sabbath he began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard him were astonished, saying, "Where did this man get these things? What is the wisdom given to him? How are such mighty works done by his hands?" ³Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary and brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon? And are not his sisters here with us?" And they took offense at him. ⁴And Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not without honor, except in his hometown and among his relatives and in his own household." ⁵And he could do no mighty work there, except that he laid his hands on a few sick people and healed them. ⁶And he marveled because of their unbelief. And he went about among the villages teaching. ⁷And he called the twelve and began to send them out two by two, and gave them authority over the unclean spirits. ⁸He charged them to take nothing for their journey except a staff—no bread, no bag, no money in their belts— ⁹but to wear sandals and not put on two tunics.^[a] ¹⁰And he said to them, "Whenever you enter a house, stay there until you depart from there. ¹¹And if any place will not receive you and they will not listen to you, when you leave, shake off the dust that is on your feet as a testimony against them." ¹²So they went out and proclaimed that people should repent. ¹³And they cast out many demons and anointed with oil many who were sick and healed them.

What sticks out to you in this text? Any questions that come up?

- What is going on in this text (summarize the main points)? What is the context for the text?
- How does this text connect with the Gospel? What Gospel themes do you see in the text?

THEOLOGY - What do we learn about God from this text?

- What attributes or aspects of the character and nature of God do you see in these passages? What else can we learn about God from the text? Take a moment to list these out together.

LIFE

- The unbelief of the people of Nazareth stemmed from their *over* familiarity of Jesus. When was the last time you marveled at who Jesus truly is and what He has done for you?
- Familiarity breeds complacency. Where do you see complacency which leads to unbelief in society, the church or in yourself that only Jesus can remove?
- Jesus is preparing His disciples to deal with rejection. How can Jesus bring you joy when you are confronted with rejection due to His Namesake?

PRAYER

- Pray in response to what God revealed to you in this text. If there is sin, confess it to him in prayer. If there is a need, petition God in prayer. If there is encouragement, praise God and share with others.
- What is one personal need you have that we can pray for you as a group?
- Pray for one friend, family member, or coworker with whom you want to share the love of Jesus with.

Commentary on Mark 6:1-13

v. 1-2 Where did this Man get these things? In His hometown, Jesus faced a crowd that wondered how He became so powerful in both word and works. Jesus left Nazareth as a carpenter. He came back as a rabbi, complete with a group of disciples. It isn't hard to see how the Nazareth locals would wonder, "What happened to Jesus?"

v. 3 Is this not the carpenter: This was not a compliment. 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.

Throughout the centuries, some people have thought that Jesus' employment as a carpenter somehow discredited His message. In ancient Rome, there was a terrible persecution under the Emperor Julian. At that time, a philosopher mocked a Christian, asking him "What do you think the carpenter's son is doing now?" The Christian wisely answered, "He is building a coffin for Julian."

The carpenter: The word carpenter was actually much broader than just one who works with wood. It had the idea of "a builder." Jesus may have worked with stone as much as with wood, because stone was a much more common building material in that time and place.

It is wonderful to think that our Lord – of all the professions He could have been – chose to be a *carpenter*. God is a builder, and He knows how to build in our lives – and He knows how to finish the job.

ii. A few things Jesus learned as a carpenter:

- He learned that there is a lot of potential in a log.
- He learned it takes work and time to make something useable.
- He learned that the finest things are made from the hardest wood.

The Son of Mary: This also was not a compliment. "The additional phrase 'the son of Mary' is probably disparaging. 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 appear to have circulated in his own lifetime and may lie behind this reference as well." (Lane)

"How much of suspicion and contempt may have lurked behind that particular description of Him?"
(Morgan)

The lack of mention of Joseph perhaps implies that he died when Jesus was young; Jesus probably stayed at home to support His family until the youngest children were old enough to support the family.

His sisters: We know that Jesus had brothers ([Mark 3:31](#)), but now we also learn that He had sisters. Mary did not remain a virgin after she gave birth to Jesus.

And they were offended at Him: These neighbors of Jesus were "too familiar" with Jesus. They knew *little enough* about Him to think that they knew *everything* about Him.

v. 4 A prophet is not without honor, except in his own country: Jesus accepted rejection as price a faithful prophet must pay, though it must have hurt Him badly to be rejected by friends and neighbors.

v. 5 He could do no mighty work: His work was limited in this climate of unbelief. In this sense, Jesus' power was limited by the unbelief of His countrymen.

This was in respect to God's principle of partnership with man. God may work with *no* belief, but not with *unbelief*.

v. 6 He marveled because of their unbelief: Jesus was amazed at their unbelief. Our inability to believe God and trust Him is indeed amazing.

Jesus only **marveled** at Jewish unbelief and Gentile faith ([Luke 7:9](#)). Would Jesus marvel at your faith or your unbelief? “Unbelief must needs be a monstrous sin, that puts Christ to the marvel.” (Trapp)

We never read that Jesus marveled at art or architecture or even the wonders of creation. He never marveled at human ingenuity or invention. He didn’t marvel at the piety of the Jewish people or the military dominance of the Roman Empire. But Jesus did marvel at faith – when it was present in an unexpected place, and when it was absent where it should have been.

He went about the villages in a circuit, teaching: Jesus did not let this rejection by His countrymen debilitate Him. Jesus got on with the business of teaching and ministry.

v. 7 And began to send them out two by two: In the Gospel of John, Jesus said, *as the Father has sent Me, I also send you* ([John 20:21](#)). Here, Jesus sent out His disciples to do the same things that He did: preach, heal the sick, and free people from demonic possession.

v. 8-9 He commanded them to take nothing for the journey: The disciples didn’t need fancy equipment to preach a simple message. Too much stuff would get in the way of their urgent message.

There was a rule from the Jewish rabbis that you could not enter the temple area with a staff, shoes, or a moneybag, because you wanted to avoid even the appearance of being engaged in any other business than the service of the Lord. The disciples were engaged in such holy work (preaching the gospel and bringing God’s healing) that they could not give the impression that they have any other motive.

No bag, no bread, no copper in their money belts: Traveling light kept them dependent upon God. They had to trust the Lord for everything if they didn’t take much with them. If the preacher doesn’t trust God, how can he tell others to trust Him?

v. 10-11 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: Their job as preachers wasn’t to change people’s minds. They were to persuasively present the message; but if their audience didn’t receive it, they didn’t receive it – and they could leave, and **shake the very dust from your feet** as they left.

In that day, if Jewish people had to go in or through a Gentile city, as they left they would shake the dust off their feet. It was a gesture that said, “We don’t want to take anything from this Gentile city with us.” Essentially, Jesus told them to regard a Jewish city that rejects their message as if it were a Gentile city.

It will be more tolerable for Sodom and Gommorah in the day of judgment: The implication is that some will be judged more severely than others **in the day of judgment**. Of course, none will have it good in hell; but perhaps some will have it worse than others will.

v. 12 They went out: They actually did it. We can hear Jesus’ word to us all day long, but something is missing until we *do* it.

They went out and preached: To preach simply means to *proclaim*, to tell others in the sense of announcing news to them. Some of the best and most effective preaching never happens inside a church. It happens when followers of Jesus are one-on-one with others, telling about what Jesus did for them.

Morgan on **preached that people should repent:** “First they preached that men should repent. That is a declaration that needs careful consideration. It does not mean that they told men to repent, but that they preached in such a way as to produce repentance.”

“When the apostles went out to preach to men, they did not *create* a message; they *brought* a message.” (Barclay)

v. 13 And anointed with oil many who were sick, and healed them: The other reference to anointing with oil for healing is in [James 5:14-15](#). We know that anointing with oil was a picture of an outpouring of the Holy Spirit, but it may also have had a medicinal purpose in that day.-

“It is possible that the use of oil (olive oil) as a medicine is the basis of the practice... It was the best medicine of the ancients and was used internally and externally... The very word *aleipho* can be translated rub or anoint without any ceremony.” (Robertson)