

Intro: The negative ‘foil’ Mark is using as a teaching tool. This is the ‘how not to respond to Jesus in unbelief’ counterpart to the last chapter’s supplicants. Last week, Jesus encouraged Jairus to see things w/ a divine perspective, not an earthly one. Today, we see what it looks like to see Jesus w/o faith (cf. 2 Cor. 5:16). Today we see not only how ugly, but also how powerful unbelief is (note 4 > miracles before).

Again, Mark mentions that Jesus’ disciples “followed Him” (3:14). Today’s lesson in discipleship: **Rejection** (John 15:18-20; 1 Jn. 4:6). Lightfoot rightly notes that this is the beginning of the process of rejection that leads to the death of Jesus in Jerusalem. The last few narratives have almost made us forget that a large part of Jesus’ ministry is opposition (2:7, 18, 24; 3:6, 21) & rejection (parable of the soils), which in God’s sovereign plan are necessary, since they will ultimately lead to His death.

Context (6:1) – Nazareth (1:9) about 30 km SW of Capernaum (a couple of days journey). Where Jesus spent His boyhood.

1. Jesus’ Actions (6:2a)

- “He began teaching” – reiterates Mark’s focus on proclamation (10:1)
 - a. The Time: “When the Sabbath came”
 - b. The Place: At the Synagogue (cf. 1:21)
 - c. The Content: The gospel of the kingdom of God (cf. 1:14-15; Luke 4:16-21)
 - In Jesus’ time, OT was read & discussed in the synagogue by the men who were present. First came the Law, then the prophets, then someone was asked to speak on the texts. Jesus undoubtedly took such an opportunity to teach about His person & mission, w/ the relationship of both to OT fulfillment.

Principle: Jesus takes advantage of a large gathering to preach the gospel of the kingdom to the people (cf. by the sea) – “many heard”

2. The Crowds’ Astonishment (6:2b)

- Same Greek word as 1:22
- They are besides themselves b/c of His **Words, Wisdom & Works**
- This verse testifies to the genuine humanity of Jesus. Until He began his ministry, his deity was so hidden that even people in his hometown, who had known him well since childhood, had no idea that He was also fully God.

3. The Crowds’ Assessment (6:3)

- In Jesus’ childhood, Sepphoris, then capital of Galilee, had been destroyed by the Romans, & rebuilding began immediately. Thus carpenters were no doubt in demand in Nazareth, a village 4 mi. from the ruins. Joseph, Jesus’ father (now likely dead), probably taught his son his own trade, as was common in that day. After Sepphoris had been rebuilt, they probably did most carpentry work from their home.

- The question is derogatory. The latter comment (“the son of Mary”) may hint that Jesus was rumored to be an illegitimate child (Note: this destroys the Catholic teaching of Mary’s perpetual virginity. The text definitely refers to the children born to her after Jesus).

- The negative answer to the disciples’ question, “Who is this one?” Mark is *again* showing us how those who *should have* (here, those closest to Him) believed in Jesus failed to see Him as He really was, namely the Messiah, the Son of God. Familiarity breeds contempt!
- Cf. those who experience great things in Heb. 6:4-8 & yet reject Christ.

4. Jesus’ Answer (6:4)

- Like other prophets before him (2 Chr. 36:16; Jer. 11:21), Jesus is not honored by his own family and his **hometown**. This rejection foreshadows Jesus’ ultimate rejection in Jerusalem. Jesus indirectly acknowledges that he sees Himself at least as a **prophet** of God.

5. Jesus’ Authority (6:5)

- That Jesus is “unable” to do works b/c of their unbelief presumes a limitation not of His power but of His *mission*: to heal w/o morally directed faith would be to act like the pagan magicians of antiquity. To have healed them would have contradicted His whole mission & ministry (2:17) & even encouraged further unbelief!
- Jesus will not force his miracles on a hostile, skeptical audience. It stands in contradiction to the character and will of Jesus to heal where there is fundamental rejection of him (**unbelief**); Hard-heartedness and rejection of Jesus prevent the Spirit’s healing ministry, just as they prevent forgiveness of sin (cf. 3:28-29). The Holy Spirit does not force his miracles on a hostile, skeptical audience.
- Jesus is not obligated to heal anyone! How He chooses to dispense His authority on earth is His own sovereign prerogative.

6. Jesus’ Amazement (6:6a)

- At their **unbelief** (cf. His amazement [positively] in Matt. 8:10; 15:28).
- He follows their lead → Amazement followed by Abandonment.

7. Jesus’ Abandonment (6:5)

- The Danger: presuming we will always have an opportunity to hear & respond! 6:11; Acts 13:51
- The Solution: Heb. 3:15; 2 Cor. 6:1
- Jesus’ Assignment (6:6b) – Cf. 1:38
 - Whether we are accepted or rejected, also our commission (2 Tim. 4:2).

Conclusion: In 2:20, Jesus announced of the coming days when the bridegroom would be rejected & taken away. In 3:6, a plot is being concocted by the Pharisees & Herodians to destroy Him. In ch.4, 3 of the 4 soils reject the seed in some way. In 5:17, the townspeople beg Jesus to depart from their region. Here, in His hometown, the vast majority scornfully rejects him. Indeed, in the background of almost every narrative is the looming shadow of the cross that awaits the bridegroom, where He will be violently taken away for the sins of His people.