

# REJECTED

Mark 6:1-13

In this study we discover that Jesus traveled to His hometown of Nazareth, a tiny village in the hills west of the Sea of Galilee. This was His second ministry trip. Luke recorded the first – it did not go well (Luke 4:16-30). His boyhood friends, the neighbors He grew up with and worked for as a carpenter, the elders of the synagogue were so infuriated by His teaching they attempted to murder Him by throwing Him off a cliff!

Perhaps the rejection of His people in Nazareth contributed to Jesus' decision to set up His base of operations on the north shore of the Sea of Galilee at Capernaum. While in Capernaum we discovered that Jesus' own family came from Nazareth determined to take control of Him because they were convinced He was out of His mind (Mark 3:21, 31-34).

Perhaps a year after His first ministry visit, Jesus returned a second time to try and reach His people.

## JESUS REJECTED BY HIS HOMETOWN (6:1-6)

### The citizens of Nazareth reacted negatively to Jesus (6:1-3)

Accompanied by His disciples, Jesus came to Nazareth in the traditional manner of a rabbi. As before, when Sabbath came, Jesus was invited to read and expound the Old Testament scriptures in the synagogue meeting. Verses 1-3 describe His people's reaction.

Mark 6:1-3 (ESV)

<sup>1</sup> He went away from there and came to his hometown, and his disciples followed him. <sup>2</sup> And 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? <sup>3</sup> Is 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.

They were astonished by His teaching. But the connotation of this "astonished" is not necessarily positive; it's from a word that means to strike out, to astonish someone by knocking the wind out of them. Further, the Greek terms they used for "this man" and "him" are less than respectful. They knew he was not a schooled rabbi and yet He taught with authority (1:22). Undoubtedly they had heard reports of His many miracles.

Instead of being proud of Him and drawn to Him, they were offended! Why? Because He, an uneducated laborer and commoner, was asserting Himself as some kind of authoritative spiritual leader. He was living far above His station. He was "gettin' too big for his britches"; thinking more highly of Himself than He ought.

They knew who He really was. He was an uneducated carpenter, the village handyman. Not only that, but He was a bastard, the product of Mary's immorality

despite what she claimed.<sup>1</sup> He was common folk just like His brothers and sisters who continued to live in Nazareth with the rest of them. He had no business elevating Himself above others.

How did Jesus respond?

### **Jesus marveled at their unbelief (6:4-6)**

**Mark 6:4-6 (ESV)**

<sup>4</sup> And Jesus said to them, “A prophet is not without honor, except in his hometown and among his relatives and in his own household.” <sup>5</sup> And he could do no mighty work there, except that he laid his hands on a few sick people and healed them. <sup>6</sup> And he marveled because of their unbelief. And he went about among the villages teaching.

The Scriptures reveal that Jesus marveled at both faith and unbelief. In one case He marveled at the great faith of the Roman centurion (Matt. 8:10). But here Jesus marveled at His own people’s *lack* of faith.

Jesus was unable to do any mighty works there because, except for a few, the majority of the people did not come to Him. He marveled at their hard-hearted, closed-minded unbelief in the face of all they had heard and experienced of Him.

If Jesus, the Son of God, full of grace and truth, was rejected by His own people, we shouldn’t be surprised or overly devastated when we are rejected by our own people for following Christ. Even when they see your life genuinely change because of Jesus, don’t be surprised if they criticize or try to tear you down. They may interpret your transformation/fait as a criticism of their lifestyle. The Apostle Peter wrote:

**1 Peter 4:1-5 (ESV)**

<sup>1</sup> Since therefore Christ suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves with the same way of thinking, for whoever has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, <sup>2</sup> so as to live for the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for human passions but for the will of God. <sup>3</sup> For the time that is past suffices for doing what the Gentiles want to do, living in sensuality, passions, drunkenness, orgies, drinking parties, and lawless idolatry. <sup>4</sup> With respect to this they are surprised when you do not join them in the same flood of debauchery, and they malign you; <sup>5</sup> but they will give account to him who is ready to judge the living and the dead.

Therefore, if you, like the Lord Jesus, are being rejected by your people for following Christ, count it a privilege and blessing to suffer in a manner similar to your Savior.

Can you imagine the affect of this experience on the disciples? If Jesus Himself found it difficult to convince people of the truth, how much more would they? With this big dose of reality, Jesus sent the disciples out to spread the Word.

## **JESUS TRAINED HIS DISCIPLES IN THE REALITY OF MINISTRY (6:7-13)**

### **Jesus sent the disciples out (6:7)**

**Mark 6:7 (ESV)**

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<sup>1</sup> In calling Him “Mary’s son”, they most likely were insulting Him as a bastard because in their culture a son was always identified by his father, not his mother, even after the father was dead.

<sup>7</sup> And he called the twelve and began to send them out two by two, and gave them authority over the unclean spirits.

Jesus sent the disciples out in pairs. This may have been to satisfy the legal requirement that there be at least two witnesses to establish authentic testimony (Deut. 17:6; 19:15). Practically, partners provided mutual encouragement and sharing of the load.

The disciples went out as Jesus' representatives. He gave them authority in the spiritual realm over demons and He gave them power to heal. To accept the disciples was to accept Jesus.

### **They traveled light and depended upon God to provide (6:8-10)**

**Mark 6:8-10 (ESV)**

<sup>8</sup> He charged them to take nothing for their journey except a staff—no bread, no bag, no money in their belts—<sup>9</sup> but to wear sandals and not put on two tunics. <sup>10</sup> And he said to them, “Whenever you enter a house, stay there until you depart from there.

Traveling light forced the disciples to trust God to provide. They were to remain in the first home that welcomed them; they were not to “trade up” if nicer accommodations were offered and so offend.

### **Jesus prepared them for rejection (6:11)**

**Mark 6:11 (ESV)**

<sup>11</sup> And 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.”

They were not to be surprised by rejection; they witnessed first hand the rejection of Jesus by His own people. “Shaking the dust off” was a cultural custom that would have been understood by the rejecting communities. It was customary for pious Jews who had traveled abroad to carefully shake the dust of alien lands from their feet and clothing. This act dissociated them from the pollution of those pagan lands and the judgment which was to come upon them. The same action by the apostles symbolically declared a hostile village pagan. It was a dramatic act intended to provoke the people to rethink their response to Jesus.

### **The disciples were obedient and effective (6:12-13)**

**Mark 6:12-13 (ESV)**

<sup>12</sup> So they went out and proclaimed that people should repent. <sup>13</sup> And they cast out many demons and anointed with oil many who were sick and healed them.

God used them and they were effective.

This included Judas Iscariot. All the disciples were still pretty “raw”; they had a lot of growing to do. Their faith was not fully formed. In fact, later in this same chapter, the disciples will fail in a big way at the feeding of the five thousand (6:35-44). Jesus didn't require sinless perfection or an exceptionally sophisticated faith. They were to minister according to the training they had received up to that time in their discipleship. And God blessed their service and used them to spread the Word and heal people's lives.

## THINGS TO PONDER

Are you holding back from service because you lack confidence? Absolutely one of the essential means of spiritual growth is service; if we don't serve, we won't grow.

You don't have to have all the answers. You don't even need to be skilled; you'll learn along the way. There is no "proper" time to start serving; we all should be serving from spiritual infancy to spiritual grandparents.

### You are gifted and called to serve (1 Cor. 12:4-11)

1 Corinthians 12:4-11 (ESV)

<sup>4</sup> Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; <sup>5</sup> and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; <sup>6</sup> and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone. <sup>7</sup> To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. <sup>8</sup> For to one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, <sup>9</sup> to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, <sup>10</sup> to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the ability to distinguish between spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. <sup>11</sup> All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills.

The Holy Spirit has given you a spiritual gift by which to build up your church family. You discover your gift by serving. You will find purpose and joy when you minister according to your spiritual gift and you will bless your Christian brothers and sisters.

### Jesus makes you sufficient for your ministry (2 Cor. 3:4-6)

The great Apostle Paul did not find his confidence to minister in himself, but in Christ.

2 Corinthians 3:4-6 (ESV)

<sup>4</sup> Such is the confidence that we have through Christ toward God. <sup>5</sup> Not that we are sufficient in ourselves to claim anything as coming from us, but our sufficiency is from God, <sup>6</sup> who has made us sufficient to be ministers of a new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit. For the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

If you will be obedient to serve, Jesus will make you sufficient to accomplish what He wants to accomplish through you.

### Do not let rejection discourage you from ministry (1 Cor. 15:58)

1 Corinthians 15:58 (ESV)

<sup>58</sup> Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.

Jesus, the perfect Son of God, was rejected.

Do not let rejection discourage you from ministry. If Jesus was rejected, we will be rejected. But there will also be those who believe. Therefore let us not grow weary in doing good.