

6:1 ¶ Jesus went out from there and *came into His hometown; and His disciples followed Him.² When the Sabbath came, He began to teach in the synagogue; and the many listeners were astonished, saying, "Where did this man *get* these things, and what is *this* wisdom given to Him, and such miracles as these performed by His hands?³ Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, and brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon? Are not His sisters here with us?" And they took offense at Him.⁴ Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not without honor except in his hometown and among his *own* relatives and in his *own* household."⁵ And He could do no miracle there except that He laid His hands on a few sick people and healed them.⁶ And He wondered at their unbelief. And He was going around the villages teaching.

What we have studied about the purpose of this Gospel is that it records the coming of the kingdom and its accompanying works and powers.

Last week, our text showed us many details of the culture of Judaism. These details are very significant to the purpose of the Gospel which is to tell us of the advancement of the kingdom- "repent and believe for the kingdom of God is at hand."

We saw individuals doing things that are not acceptable or unusual by the standards of the day. This is significant in the context of the kingdom advancing and being revealed.

Things will be different in Jesus kingdom.

Let's look at this from three points of view.

First, the kingdom of God will be on earth and it will be a visible kingdom in the sense of it will have kingdom dwellers around the globe who will be Christ's.

Secondly, the kingdom will be an eschatological, final end time event established for all eternity at the 2nd coming of Christ

Thirdly, Christ, once established at the throne of God after His ascension is the king of the whole earth, King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

Let me note here that God has always been king over His creation, "5 The mountains melted like wax at the presence of the LORD, At the presence of the Lord of the whole earth." Psalms 97:5, NAS95.

However, with Christ's ascension all understanding relationally with God comes to us through Jesus Christ. He is our relational priority to the triune God. To know God the

But there is more. If Jesus is a king and there is a kingdom that will be new then there must be a way for people to live in the kingdom. All kingdoms have laws that are to be obeyed. As Jesus is the king He is also the Lawgiver and the Law of the New Covenant. As the Covenant, He rules the kingdom and the law of the New Covenant is written on the hearts of its kingdom dwellers and we have laws that we are commanded to obey. Even those who do not know the Living Word as Covenant, as Lord and Savior are still held accountable by this king.

His law is now the standard by which all men are judged at the final judgment and He is the judge.

Things will be different in Christ's kingdom. Does that mean that Christians will be left alone by human kings to live according to the kingdom standards of Christ. No. But it does mean that Christians under any earthly rulers will act in the kingdom manner as they interact with one another and how they respond to the earthly rulers.

So if one is shunned by the earthly for whatever reason that is directly related to their being a Christian, Christians will respond to the Christian by Christ's standard not the worlds.

As we approach today's text of the Gospel it will show us that even the demonstrations of the power of the kingdom do not in and of themselves bring faith yet faith in one way is important and it is not necessarily a saving faith.

But in light of what has been presented through the narrative so far and the demonstration of Jesus' power over disease, demons, death and creation we must remember that they were to show that Jesus is the one who was declared to be "my Son" at the river Jordan.

Jesus was baptized and went into the wilderness to identify with His people, those who will become His kingdom dwellers. He preached repent and believe for the kingdom of God is near, near in person as well as in time. His powers are demonstrating that the

kingdom of the New Covenant is very different from the understanding that many thought would be the Messianic kingdom.

All of these things are establishing the fact that the New Covenant is something different. The New Covenant kingdom is structured differently than the nation of Israel under the Old Covenant. The New Covenant kingdom has a king like no other king Israel ever witnessed. The New Covenant kingdom brings deliverance and rescue and freedom to the oppressed in a way the Old could not. The New Covenant kingdom will consist of only true disciples of Christ and only those who are genuine will receive the benefits.

Grace will overcome law at every obstacle although some may try to hold on to more law than they should.

Everything Jesus is doing is in one way another for the new and final age of redemptive history. It is historical, it has to do with salvation and it has to do with the end of all things and eternal things when the age comes to its close.

Jesus' call to discipleship is radical and is demanding yet it is accomplished not by the work of men laboring under Law but by men gifted by grace and supernaturally empowered to live for the glory of Christ and His kingdom and to labor out of love for the King, not to earn the king's favor in any way.

Our text begins:

"1 Jesus went out from there and *came into His hometown; and His disciples *followed Him. 2 When the Sabbath came, He began to teach in the synagogue; and the many listeners were astonished, saying, "Where did this man get these things, and what is this wisdom given to Him, and such miracles as these performed by His hands?" Mark 6:1, 2, NAS95.

What a great way to begin your ministry in your home town with such enthusiasm and praise. However, we must not accept praise or astonishment too easily concerning anything we do and this applied as well to Jesus.

"3 "Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, and brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon? Are not His sisters here with us?" And they took offense at Him. 4 Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not without honor except in his hometown and among his own relatives and in his own household.'" Mark 6:3, 4, NAS95.

From astonishment to resentment. Who is this commoner, this carpenter?

1-6 Limits of power (see Mt. 13:53-58; cf. Lk. 4:16-30).

Our text very explicitly shows us that these powers of the kingdom, the power over creation, demons, disease and death seem to have had very little impact is very on some of those who saw them or heard of them, to judge from this text. It is very important for us to understand Mark's purpose here.

This shows that signs in themselves will never produce faith, for faith is a personal commitment and choice. Perhaps that is why Jesus gave signs so sparingly, and only in answer to faith. He was not trying to convince the unbelieving, for that would be impossible.

When Jesus came to his home town (probably meaning Nazareth, though he had actually moved to Capernaum, beside the lake, before this) those who heard him were amazed at his teaching and miracles, but this did not lead to faith in him. They repeated in puzzlement the names of his family members: had he not even worked there himself as a carpenter once? How could such a familiar figure do and say such things? The trouble was that they were too busy arguing about him to listen to his words. So even the Son of God could do no miracles there, apart from healing a few sick folk, humble enough and needy enough to believe in him. That does not mean that God's power is absolutely limited, but that God has chosen here, to act only in response to faith. Usually, Mark says that people were amazed at Jesus; here, he says that Jesus was amazed at them. The people of Nazareth were so familiar with Jesus that they enjoyed no blessing: a danger perhaps facing some of our churches today? Familiarity, the proverb says, breeds contempt.

The Old Testament often reiterates the principle of the prophet without honor: Jeremiah, Moses, Joseph and so forth; subsequent Jewish tradition emphasized this concept even more. That Jesus is "unable" to do works because of their unbelief presumes a limitation not of his power but of his mission because to heal without a

directed faith would be to act like the pagan magicians of antiquity. Magic for magic sakes.

In 6:3, Jesus is called a “carpenter.” Early in Jesus’ childhood, Sepphoris, then capital of Galilee, had been destroyed by the Romans, and rebuilding had begun immediately. Thus carpenters were no doubt in demand in Nazareth, a village four miles from the ruins of Sepphoris; and Joseph, Jesus’ father, probably taught his son his own trade, as was common for fathers to do in those days. After Sepphoris had been rebuilt, they probably did most carpentry work from their home, as most Galilean carpenters did. The observation that Jesus is a carpenter is meant to identify him, not to suggest the unlikelihood of a carpenter being a teacher, for we also know of other carpenters who became famous teachers including Shimmai who was a famous Jewish teacher contemporary with Hillel and with Jesus’ early childhood; usually stricter than Hillel’s, his school’s opinions generally prevailed in the time of Jesus.

“Brothers” and “sisters” are the usual terms for siblings; a different term for more general “kinfolk” (e.g., Rom 16:11) is not used with regard to Jesus’ siblings. This text undoubtedly refers to children born to Mary after Jesus which of course has given some throughout the course of church history a serious problem if you believe in the perpetual virginity of Mary.

This rejection of Jesus reminds us the same attitude in another gospel,

"46 Nathanael said to him,

"Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see." John 1:46, NAS95.

The interesting thing about this statement is that they had forgotten about the Old Testament prophets as it is recorded in John,

"52 They answered him, "You are not also from Galilee, are you? Search, and see that no prophet arises out of Galilee." John 7:52, NAS95.

How wrong they were: they forgot Jonah and Elijah and both are important as types concerning Jesus ministry. How do we relate to this?

There is a reality that as head of the church He represents in Him all that the church

will accomplish and not accomplish. There have been and always will be those who seem to have nothing but scorn and mockery for the work of Christ, whether in person as He walked among them or through His true church since the day of Pentecost.

Sometimes, we as the church can be effective in our community doing the kingdom work by the power of the Holy Spirit because people have faith - they believe that what we are doing is good and right and that we at least seem to do it better than other organizations or even the government can.

This is what Mark is revealing in this text. Faith did not have to be salvific - in other words people were not believing in Christ for salvation, but they had to believe that Christ could do the work and show the power of the kingdom He taught.

This does not exempt God from being merciful and bringing help and even healing to the nations, but the fact is where there is no faith there is no work of the kingdom.

This also proves that the attendant miracles and works of power do not guarantee that anyone's heart will be changed. These works of the kingdom do not change the heart they merely point to the one who can change the heart.

So let's review what occurred here in Jesus hometown,

Their perplexity wasn't linked to God. There was, of course, Jehovah, the God of their fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God whose word was the Scriptures, the God who had promised one day to send the Messiah. They believed in God. He was that Lord who in the beginning made the heavens and the earth, the God who maintains summer and winter, seed-time and harvest. They were Jews, not Gentile unbelievers, and they were in the synagogue every Sabbath because of Jehovah their God. But then there was this fellow, and he was speaking to them in an amazing way. They saw two different entities: one was Jehovah the God of heaven, and the other was this fellow from round the corner, and the congregation saw no link between the two. It wasn't at all, "Amazing Grace has sent the Messiah even to us in Nazareth." It was bewildering for them that a Nazareth boy could talk in this way. Where had he got his wisdom? It was a mystery, and they didn't like it. But it was unthinkable that it had come from Jehovah

God. Then, where else could it have come from? That was their confusion that this previously silent man suddenly spoke up in his own synagogue and taught them with such authority. People can get frustrated by mysteries, and their perplexity quickly changes to scorn. You see it in Nazareth in a number of ways. Notice how they refuse to refer to him as 'Jesus'. They couldn't bear to mention him by name. They will name all his brothers, but they will dismiss him as 'this man' (v.2), that is, 'this fellow', or they refer to him as 'the carpenter' (v.3), or as 'Mary's son'. So there was contempt here in Nazareth with the Lord Jesus.

Notice they call him "the carpenter" (v.3). This is the only place in the New Testament where this word is found. The word means a man who makes things. Usually it is of wood, but it can also be of stone. There was nothing demeaning in Jewish society in manual labour. God himself worked in creation. But in the Gentile world (and Mark is conscious of them while he writes the gospel), it wouldn't have been a complimentary reference. This fellow was a mere artisan.

Then they also refer to Jesus as "Mary's son" (v.3), and again this is the only place in the Bible where you can find this phrase. In Jewish society it was the name of the father which was attached to the male child - 'Simon son of Jonah: James and John the sons of Zebedee'. Jesus is called the son of Mary. Maybe it means Joseph was already dead. It is clearly abnormal, and disrespectful, and may even insinuate illegitimacy.

"Who did he think he was, sitting in the synagogue and speaking like that, pretending to be someone, turning up with 12 yes-men, none of them coming from Nazareth. We know where you live! We know your family! We know the odd thing that happened at your conception - Mary's boy!"

So they heard this wonderful teaching and they were amazed at it, but quickly their perplexity turned to cynicism. "They took offence at him," (v.3) Mark tells us. That is, they were repelled by him. The Word of God was preached to them with all its warnings and promises of eternal life; the beautiful Savior was there in front of them, but sinners deplored it all. They dismissed him. The presence of the Lord Jesus in a meeting

doesn't guarantee saving faith. We may hear the gospel preached in the power of the Spirit, and perish in our sins. We may die under the activity of a living blessed Spirit. We may taste the Word of God, and see something of the world to come, and yet be lost. Don't let this happen to you. The Lord Jesus said of the places where his mightiest works were done and where yet the people didn't believe that it would be more blessed for them to have lived in Nineveh in the Day of Judgment than to have had the privileges of the living Christ preaching to them and to remain hardened against him. The people of Nineveh repented in sackcloth and ashes when a reluctant prophet gave a monotonous message of judgment, but they had had the Christ in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, yet they refused to change their ways.

When people find your new faith in Jesus Christ, and your enthusiasm for religion ridiculous there is nothing 21st century in this at all. Such coolness is so old-fashioned. People treated Jesus just as suspiciously. The world is always scornful of real faith because light shows up darkness. They are saying that 'nobody can know', while you are saying to them the very opposite, "I know! I know whom I have believed. Jesus Christ is my Lord and my God."

"He could not do any miracles there, except lay his hands on a few sick people and heal them" (v.5).

God's power is not limited by man's unbelief. We were dead in trespasses and sins, our hearts at enmity with God and yet the Spirit came upon us and made us alive and gave us repentance and saving faith and made us new creations.

This is the greatest work of all. And no matter how men respond to it in their natural condition and self ascribed beliefs, it will continue until Jesus comes, not just to Nazareth, but to the earth to claim His bride His church forevermore.