

**MORE THAN A CARPENTER**  
**Mark 6:1-13**

One of the things we often do, is we find encouragement through others who have gone through some negative or undesirable situation. By observing how someone else handled well, an undesirable situation in their life, it encourages us in our own situation. Sometimes, even just knowing that someone else is in a greater undesirable situation than us, helps us appreciate how good we really have it. For example, if you just meditate for a moment on the thought that right now there is someone out there somewhere enduring painful cancer treatments this morning, it makes your morning seem a little less difficult and you a little more grateful, doesn't it? When we hear the stories of Christians who have remained faithful despite severe persecution, we are encouraged by their faithfulness. When churches in California stood strong recently in silent protest, we were encouraged. **There can be great encouragement in the negatives.**

That's something to keep in mind as we go through the gospel of Mark. I think Mark knows personally from Peter's testimony that when we reflect on Christ's servant and sacrificial life, we ourselves are encouraged to do the same. **Christ's servant and sacrificial life is the "look-to" for our own life.** We look to Him who endured such hostility from sinners (Heb. 12:3). And remember, Mark is writing in such a way so as to specifically encourage fellow Christians in Rome who are enduring some intense persecution for their faith – experiencing rejected by friends, family & nation. To accurately and fully feel the full effect of this book, we've got to learn to take in that thought of the **original audience**. Imagine being in a Roman believers' shoes who have experienced this painful rejection... how encouraging would it be to know that Jesus Himself faced rejection on all sorts of levels? And the apostles as well? That's what we're going to take a look at today: **two negative accounts of rejection. Jesus' rejection prepares the apostles for their rejection. Both accounts then, become encouragement for us.**

If you have a Bible, please turn with me to Mark 6:1-13.

“Jesus went out from there and came into His hometown; and His disciples followed Him. When the Sabbath came, He began to teach in the synagogue; and 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? 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. Jesus said to them, “A prophet is not without honor except in his hometown and among his own relatives and in his own household.” And He could do no miracle there except that He laid His hands on a few sick people and healed them. And He wondered at their unbelief.”

And He was going around the villages teaching. And He summoned the twelve and began to send them out in pairs, and gave them authority over the unclean spirits; and He instructed them that they should take nothing for their journey, except a mere staff – no bread, no bag, no money in their belt – but to wear sandals; and He added, “Do not put on two tunics.” And He said to them, “Wherever you enter a house, stay there until you leave town. Any place that does not receive you or listen to you, as you go out from there shake the dust off the soles of your feet for a testimony against them.” They went out and preached that men should repent. And they were casting out many demons and were anointing with oil many sick people and healing them.”

So as we've noticed, this book of Mark is always on the move it seems, from one scene to the next. In a short time we've travelled from the eastern shore of Galilee to Capernaum, to now **Nazareth**, which is approximately 26 miles southwest of Capernaum. And it's here we find that they rejected Christ.

### I. **THE REJECTION OF CHRIST AT NAZARETH. (VV. 1-6)**

Nazareth, we know, was Jesus' hometown. It's the small community where He grew up. After being born in Bethlehem while travelling for a census, He and His parents returned to Nazareth and shortly after fled to Egypt when Herod (Satanically inspired according Rev. 12) tried to take His life. Not long after that, Herod died and they returned to Nazareth. **He is a Nazarene.**

**As for His home life**, Jesus was supernaturally conceived by the Holy Spirit in the virgin Mary before her and Joseph came together but after Jesus was born, it is clear they had other natural children that would be Jesus' half-brothers and half-sisters like James, Joseph (Joses) and Judas (Jude) and Simon. He at least 4 brothers and 2 sisters. Matthew adds the phrase "all of His sisters" suggesting maybe more than 2 sisters. So **He grew up in a full home**. Mary was not a perpetual virgin the rest of her life like the Roman Catholic Church claims. That doctrine has no biblical foundation and does nothing but lead men and women away from undistracted devotion to Christ.<sup>i</sup>

We also know that according to verse 3, **Jesus was some type of carpenter or craftsman** (Greek, *tekton*). It's a fairly broad term that denotes any craftsman but especially a worker in wood.<sup>ii</sup> Earliest traditions suggest a carpenter as well. Matthew adds that He's the son of a carpenter, which makes sense because like today, fathers would often teach their children their trade. But it's amazing to think that Jesus lived the most influential life this world has ever seen and for the first thirty years of it, it was a fairly normal life like this as a craftsman. And actually that thought, the averageness of His life before ministry, is what becomes the stumbling block for His hometown and relatives and household. They didn't understand that before He died for man, He had to live as a man. No years of His life were ever wasted. His life is as important as His death because **the satisfactory worth of His death for our man's sins depends on whether or not He lived a perfect & sinless life as a man**. He had to live for us before He could die for us.

**Initially, the people were astonished at Jesus in a curious sense.** They are astonished at His **wise teaching** and **miracles** it says (v. 2). "What is this wisdom given to Him, and such miracles as these performed by His hands?" They were struck to the core as if lightning hit them. What He was saying and doing they recognized as from God but in their ultimate wrestling with His identity, when they go to answer their own questions, they shift from the miraculous and supernatural side of Him and begin to only focus on the superficial and natural. Rather than coming to the logical conclusion that only God could be behind Jesus's miraculous power and righteous teaching, they focus in on the superficial – surface level stuff.

In a derogatory way, they ask, "*Isn't this just the carpenter? A common worker as the rest of us? It's like saying, "He's never been educated under Gamaliel or any other high-ranking Pharisees in Jerusalem. Why He's just a blue-collar construction worker... and by the way, isn't he the son of Mary who was pregnant before her and Joseph were official?"* That might be what they're really saying by recognizing him by his mother's name than his fathers. And they add, "*And aren't his brothers and sisters here?"* After narrowing their mindset to only the natural, **they take offense at Him**. And this is exactly what unbelief does. As one man said, unbelief avoids the supernatural,

focuses on what's irrelevant, and then attacks the messenger.<sup>iii</sup> Usually people are amazed at Jesus but now Jesus is amazed at their unbelief despite all the revelation before them.

This episode is a chilling reminder of the course of history. I want to do a bit of a history lesson to help us understand the times in which we live. For the longest time, during the earliest days of the Christendom to the 1400's (**the Byzantine era**), believers often had to defend the natural. There was so much emphasis on the spiritual (higher plane) that the natural (lower plane) almost became unrealistic. You see this in the **Gnostic** (*mystical knowledge*) teachings that 1 John corrects. The gnostic mentality was that anything in the material, created world was evil and the spiritual, unseen world was good. Because of this, there was false teachings going around that Christ didn't have had a real body (Docetism – it only looked like it) and therefore didn't suffer and as a result taught that any resurrection couldn't really be a real body. So like John, Christians had to defend the real, bodily resurrection. For the longest time, man erred on the side on the higher plane of **universal, spiritual truths often referred to as GRACE** plane and ignored the **particular truths often referred to as NATURE**.

**GRACE (higher plane) – universals & absolute truth/Holy Creator God/heavenly/man's soul**

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**NATURE (lower plane) – particulars/created/earthly/man's body**

So there's an old battle for truth about how we should interpret the world – through the GRACE plane or the NATURE plane? You see in the painting called "**The School of Athens**" (1509-1511) where the philosopher, **Plato, is pointing up vertically**, saying answers are in absolutes/universals – and if you want meaning for particulars (earthly grid) it's found in the universals through a heavenly grid. But **Aristotle, another philosopher, is pointing straight or horizontally** – saying the answer to life are found in the particulars/nature/man's mind.

During the **Renaissance** era from the 14<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> century a shift began. Right in the middle the **Reformation** took place and with the Sola Scriptura teaching, nature began to find its proper place. There was balance on both levels. It was understood that truth is gleaned from Special Revelation (Scripture) and seen in General Revelation (Creation). Special Revelation obviously being the higher plane.

However, man, in his zeal to get on the horse of NATURE and emphasis the earthly, fell off the other side of the horse. We see this in the "**Enlightenment**" period of the 17<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> where NATURE began to eat up GRACE.<sup>iv</sup> In fact, they totally threw the upper level of GRACE out and man began trying to interpret reality without the absolute, heavenly truths. This is where we're at today with the theory of Evolution and modern secular science – they have rejected the spiritual and are looking through microscopes and telescopes trying to find the answer for life through them, hoping that science will save them. A pastoral acquaintance of mine even said this week that one of his friends, the son of an evangelist, when asked about his commitment to Jesus, denied it and said, "I'm committed to naturalism and the scientific method. In order to understand human existence, we don't need to resort to supernatural beings or forces. Nature is all there is, and a careful, experimental approach can help us understand its mysteries and that includes human nature." This man is a perfect example of our times, trying to interpret Nature without Grace, and he is severely limited. It's like having both eyes impaired but only wearing one lens in your glasses.

When you look at history, it's like man was falling off one side of the horse (heavenly grid only), corrected it for a brief moment (with a unified field of knowledge during the Reformation), and then fell off the other side (earthly grid only). If you throw out the absolute truth that there is a holy Creator God, then morals don't exist anymore – there's no right or wrong because there's no Moral Law Giver – and then everyone can do what is right in their own eyes, which is exactly what we see today. Everything is relative and subject to change. However, it's funny that because God has so instilled in our human nature a demands for some sort of right and wrong structure, man will still try to make morals out of social ethics. These are things that aren't morally right or wrong and have no influence on your standing before God, but they become a big deal. This is what is occurring with the mask situation today – you will never stand before God and receive a reprimand for wearing a mask or not but many in our culture have basically made it their moral to hold onto. Social ethics replace morals.

And this is where unbelieving man must end up with a limited view. We end up defining life by manmade rules, numbers and mathematics instead of absolute truths. Modern man's problem, however, is that the longer he looks through his telescopes and microscopes, the more complex he realizes it is. We don't see evidence of mindless evolutionary process but order and intelligent design. In the words of Del Tacket from the Truth Project, "Random, purposeless, mindless forces should produce a random, purposeless, mindless cosmos." But we don't see that. We see order & design. **Throwing out GRACE and trying to interpret life through only the lens of NATURE is like throwing out the obvious and it has severely limited modern man, even modern science.**

It's the same thing in Nazareth. These men and women recognize something about Jesus is out of this world and heavenly, but then limit themselves by focusing on what is only natural about Him. It's an error that people need to learn from because most have a totally misunderstood Jesus as only a good teacher. They ignore His supernatural characteristics. And because of that, their lives are severely limited. **Limited views of Jesus produce limited lives.**

❖ **Limited views of Jesus means limited lives.**<sup>v</sup>

Last week, we saw that Jesus is not limited – He's limitless – His power is limitless (infinite). But **our own limited views of Him can keep us from knowing His limitless power.**

How many of His townspeople missed out on great things He could've done for them if they'd just have had the faith to simply ask Him for it? Or asked Him believingly? At the same time, how many peoples and villages throughout history have missed out on the mighty work of Christ transforming their lives personally or their community because they rejected one of His messengers sent to them? How many are living in bondage to sin because they rejected the One who could set them free from it? And even as believers, how many of us have missed out on serious blessings and seeing God work because we doubted His ability to do through us what we can't do on our own? We should ask and expect *God to do great things* through our lives and church *that we can't*.

But all of this brings us to another rich & eternal implication. We should...

❖ **Make much of Jesus to those with limited view of Him.**

...so they can know Him too! Make sure that when you ask them about who they think Jesus is, they can't say good or moral teacher because if His teaching is good, then He is God because that's what He taught! **The reality about Jesus is that He is God.**

Jesus made Himself out to be God and the only way to God. He made exclusive claims like, “I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life. No one comes to the Father but through Me.” He forgave sin, which God alone can do (Mk. 2:5). When they asked about His relation to Abraham, He said “Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am.” He knows Abraham personally and pre-existed Abraham from Genesis and acknowledged He’s the great “I AM” – the covenant-keeping God of Abraham. This is why they sought to stone Him to death (John 10:31-33) for blasphemy – making Himself out to be God and equal with God. He taught that one should worship God alone but received honor and worship.<sup>vi</sup>

Outside of Jesus’ own statements, the NT presents Jesus as the **self-existent** Creator & Sustainer of the entire universe (Jn. 1:4; Col. 1:15-20; Rev. 1:8). He’s the Alpha and the Omega, beginning & end. He is **omnipresent**/all-present – when He told the disciples He’d be with them always, He really would be (Mt. 28:20). He’s **omniscient** or all-knowing, knowing from the beginning who would believe in Him and who wouldn’t (Jn. 1:49; 4:16; 6:64; Mt. 11:20-24; 17:22-27). One time when He had Peter throw a hook into the sea and pull up a fish with a shekel in His mouth to pay taxes. That’s a good example of omniscience and **omnipotent providence** – this all-powerful ability to provide (Mk. 5:21-43; Lk. 7:14-15; Mt. 8:26-27). He calmed the raging storm/seas. He made a little boy rise up out of his coffin and Lazarus take off his own grave clothes. He raised from the dead and offers us eternal life to those who believe in Him (1 John 5:11-12).

His message and the entire NT’s message is that He is God and that’s why, when someone really understand the biblical claims about Him, they’re often offended. The names of Buddha, Mohammed, Confucious, or any other religious leaders’ names won’t bring much conflict. Anyone is fine talking about them, but they didn’t claim to be God and Jesus did.

Now I want to move on to commissioning of the disciples, the next portion we read. And we won’t spend as much time on them as we did on Jesus, nor look at every detail.

## II. **THE REJECTION OF THE DISCIPLES BY ISRAEL. (VV. 7-13)**

And I’ll just tell you the main point right off the bat: **when Jesus sent them out to preach, Jesus gave them instruction that anticipates rejection. So Jesus’ rejection prepared the disciples for their own rejection.** And both prepare us for ours.

❖ **We learn to live above rejection by reflecting on Christ and the apostles’ experience.**

And I’ll say this, one of things I love is that by the power of the Holy Spirit, we can face rejection without being stoic about it – as if it’s by our own sheer grit and denying emotions. When we’re walking by the Spirit, focused on Christ, we can rejoice like the apostles who were ecstatic they were considered worthy to be persecuted for the sake of Christ.

But these disciples are a really refreshing contrast to the text. While Nazareth rejects Christ, the follow Him. Jesus sends them and they go. He commands them and they obey. **However, the refreshment is short lived** because He gives them instructions on what to do when people reject them – they are to shake the dust off their feet. He said go into all the villages in Israel and with My power and teaching, cast out demons, heal the sick, and preach that men should turn back to God but “any place does not receive you or listen to you, as you go out from there, shake the dust off the soles of your feet for a testimony against them.” That was like saying have nothing to do with them because they are judged by God. Don’t even let the dust they walk on be on you because they’re outside the covenant. This is how the Judeans treated Samaritans and now the disciples are

treating all Israel who rejects the Messiah this way. It's a graphic warning against their own self-righteousness and the coming judgment on them for rejecting Christ.

And I've already taught on this commissioning in Mark so I won't harp on it much but remember, this is not the Great Commission to go to the whole world and preach the good news that Christ has died for sins and rose from the grave... I heard a man in Argentina preach that this was our commission. It's not. The disciples still don't understand the gospel and the instructions for the Great Commission in many ways were almost opposite this. This is the disciples' **commission to Israel** with the Gospel of the Kingdom. It was only for "the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Mt. 10:5-6). And I believe that if national Israel were to repent and receive Jesus as Messiah, He would have ushered in the promised kingdom of God they were all waiting for as it is described in the OT. But He also knew that He would be rejected and was planning on the cross. So there's a lot going on here. Part of it though is their **preparation** for the Great Commission later on.

#### What the disciples take:

1. Number one is pretty much **take nothing**. Take nothing but a staff, no bread, no bag, no money, one tunic... the question is why? Why take virtually nothing? **Jesus wants them to see God provide for them**. They were to expect God to supply all their needs... and He did! Just before His arrest in Luke 22:35 Jesus said, "When I sent you out without money belt and bag and sandals, you did not lack anything did you?" **They said, "No, nothing."** And He said to them, "But now, whoever has a money belt is to take it along, likewise also a bag, and whoever has no sword is to sell his coat and buy one." Before He ascended He also said don't just go to Israel but to the whole world.
2. What they are to **take is someone by their side**. He sends them out in two's for **mutual encouragement**. Iron sharpens iron. Went one is down, the other can lift him up. Even the Marines know that – they're taught to dig a hole big enough for two people to fight from. Ecclesiastes 4:9 says, "Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labor; if either of them falls down, one can help the other up. But pity anyone who falls and has no one to help them up."

Maybe the biggest thing to take home though is that this reminds us of our own commission to make it our aim to **make disciples of all nations**. This world is like a giant Nazareth where Jesus isn't honored. It has so many misconceptions about Christ and limited view of Him and what it needs is believers who really know Jesus and make Him a big deal because He is a big deal. **Make much of Jesus Christ because you never know who's going to believe.** We know that out of Jesus' family, who initially thought He'd lost His senses (3:21), became convinced after the resurrection. **James** went on to be a leader in the Jerusalem church and wrote the book of James that we love. And **Jude** later wrote the book of Jude that tells us to contend for the faith. So let's remember this:

- ❖ **An initial rejection is not always a final rejection.**

Such was the case with Josh McDowell who wrote the book *More Than a Carpenter*. In describing his life as a college student, he said he was basically on a search for true freedom. And he's an intellectual guy so to him freedom was more than going out and doing whatever you want to do. He said anybody can do that. True freedom to him, was "to have the power to do what you know you ought to do. Most people know what they ought to do but they don't have the power to do it.

They're in bondage." So **he tried religion** and religious works. **He tried prestige** – accepting some cause and giving yourself to it and being known. He even became class president and there was a slogan going around that "Happiness is Josh". Only thing was, it didn't matter how prestigious he was, it didn't give him power over his circumstances. His circumstances directed his attitude.

Then he began to notice something different about a small group of born again believers: 8 students and 2 faculty members who seemed to know what they believed and why they believed it and he admired that about them. He said **they didn't just talk about their convictions, they lived them out [like our roots and fruit logo suggests]**. "They didn't just talk about love. They got involved." And one day he so he asked one of the girls, "What changed your lives? Why are you guys so different from the other students, the leaders on campus, the professors?" And he said **she looked him straight in the eye and said: "Jesus Christ."** He said, "Don't give me that garbage about religion." And she shot back, "Mister, I didn't say religion, I said Jesus Christ." He went away from there challenged by them that simply believing Jesus Christ is God who took on flesh, died for man's sins, was buried and rose again 3 days later could change a person's life right here and right now. He took on their truth claims as a challenge to refute and started to write 2 books on disproving Christianity... but he couldn't, and he too, became a Christian. Now he spends all his time documenting why he believes that faith in Jesus Christ is intellectually feasible.

Josh had a limited view of Jesus Christ. This group of believers made much of Him. May we make much of Jesus Christ to those around us. He is the answer they need.

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<sup>i</sup> James McCarthy, *The Gospel According to Rome* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 1995), 198.

<sup>ii</sup> W. E. Vine, *Vines Expository Dictionary* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1992), 162.

<sup>iii</sup> John MacArthur, *Amazing Unbelief*, [www.gracetoyou.org](http://www.gracetoyou.org), accessed 20 August 2020.

<sup>iv</sup> Francis Schaeffer, *Escape From Reason* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Books, 1968).

<sup>v</sup> Ray Stedman, *The Power of His Presence*, (Grand Rapids: Discovery House Publishers, 2006), 22.

<sup>vi</sup> Josh McDowell, *More Than a Carpenter* (Wheaton, Illinois: Tyndale House Publishers, Living Books, 1977), 12.