

We have been going through Mark's Gospel which is mostly in chronological order. Today's passage has Jesus preaching in Nazareth, the town where He grew up. In that time, it was a town of about 300 people. Excavations have found remains of grape press, tombs, and even what is believed to be the house of Joseph and Mary. Our passage today tells us about most of the town rejecting Jesus as the Messiah. Some people believe it is the same story as described in Luke 4, when the town attempted to stone him, but I agree with theologian and historian A.T. Robertson that this is a second rejection perhaps a year or more after the first.

¹ He went away from there and came to his hometown, and his disciples followed him. Mark 6:1 The town attempted to stone Jesus because He predicted how they would reject Him and that He would take the good news to the Gentiles (Luke 4:24-29ⁱ). Nazareth was a town of Davidic descendants. The name of the town comes from the Hebrew word *netzor* meaning a branch, meaning the family lineage. The Messiah was to come from the branch of Jesse, father of King David (Isaiah 11:1,2ⁱⁱ). They were waiting for the Messiah to come from among their clan. Selfishly the town desired that this coming One would be a king and as family of the king they would have abundance. It is no wonder then that they were upset at Jesus' initial teaching. It was so contrary to what they expected. Instead of conquering the nations, He was going to bless the nations (Genesis 12:3ⁱⁱⁱ; Isaiah 49:6^{iv}). That was clearly in the prophecies, but they preferred to emphasize how He will one day reign on David's throne over all the earth (Isaiah 9:7^v).

Now, sometime later, He returned to give them another chance to hear His teaching. They had heard the news of the miracles He had performed, the healing of the sick and deliverance from demons. Did they reconsider their judgment of Him?

I imagine Jesus asking the disciples if they wanted to see where He grew up. Jesus could have showed them the school and synagogue he attended, his family home, the places He played. But it is more likely that Jesus was on a mission. He surely loved the people of Nazareth despite their rejection of Him. He wanted them to receive the truth He was proclaiming. He was probably hoping for at least a few to come to faith so His mother would not feel so alone in her convictions.

² 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?" Mark 6:2 There are some books written centuries after Jesus' earthly ministry in which it is claimed that the child Jesus did miracles such as making clay pigeons and causing them to come to life and fly away. This verse indicates that was not what happened. If Jesus had been doing miracles before He began His ministry the people would not be astonished at His wisdom and wondering about His mighty works. Jesus first miracle was turning water into wine at the wedding in Cana (John 2:9^{vi}). Prior to that He told Nathaniel the He saw him under the fig tree, what some people today call remote viewing. John 2:11^{vii} calls the water to wine Jesus' first miraculous sign.

Jesus was given the opportunity to teach in the synagogue. That is probably because they had heard of His miracles and were wondering if His message was still the

same as they heard when they attempted to stone Him (Luke 4:29^{viii}). His preaching demonstrated the wisdom they had not heard before. They knew the rabbi that taught Jesus when He was a child. They know what He taught was beyond that rabbi's wisdom, so they asked what the source was. You and I know the source. It is the Holy Spirit to whom His ear was always open (Isaiah 50:5^{ix}).

Jesus had shown this wisdom at His bar-mitzvah in Jerusalem when He was 12 (Luke 3:46,47^x). Apparently He did not display it in Nazareth. When Jesus' mother asked Him to deal with the wine shortage at the wedding in Cana, His first response was, "*My time has not yet come.*" John 2:4 I take this to indicate that He knew that the Holy Spirit would show Him when it was time to begin to show signs of who He is. Luke tells us He was about 30-years-old (Luke 3:23^{xi}). He patiently waited on the Holy Spirit knowing He had the authority and power but was submitted to His Father's will.

Understanding this adds to the power of the temptation in the wilderness. Satan kept tempting Him to do a miracle before He was directed to. Think of what it must have been like to know you have the power and yet seeing need all around you and not acting. That is why Satan's temptation, "If you are the Son of God then do so and so..." was one last great attempt to get Him to act on His own (Luke 4:3^{xii}).

When Mary told the servants at the wedding to do whatever He tells you, She knew who He is and had faith that He had the power to resolve the problem. He had the Scripture's instruction to honor His mother (Exodus 20:12^{xiii}). The Holy Spirit must have at that moment informed Him that it was time. The miracle of changing all that water into wine was a sign of the abundance of joy available for those who enter the Kingdom of God through the door of Jesus (Genesis 49:11,12^{xiv}).

Their second question was how are such mighty works done by His hands? They probably heard from the disciples and travelers of all the miraculous healings taking place in Capernaum and other cities of the Galilee region. They acknowledge it was happening. Jesus had told them the last time He preached there that no prophet is accepted in his own country (Luke 4:24^{xv}). Sadly, this passage is the fulfillment of that prediction. In another place Jesus would preach the need to put Him above our relationship with our own family (Matthew 10:37^{xvi}). **Jesus must be our first love.** Which is a way of repeating the first commandment to love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength (Deuteronomy 6:5^{xvii}).

The answer as to how those mighty works were done through Jesus should have been obvious. The Spirit of Almighty God was at work in Him to show who He is. His healing miracles showed that He is YHWH Rapha, the Lord who heals you (Exodus 15:26^{xviii}). He is the Great Physician, the maker of DNA.

Some authors claim that miracles were not unusual in that age. Then they provide some account of a man whose prayer for rain was often answered or one who prayed for several people who were restored to health. There are no accounts that I can find of anyone who performed a tiny fraction of the healings and miracles recorded in the Gospels. **Jesus alone fulfilled the predictions of causing the lame to walk, the blind to see, and the dead being raised to life** (Isaiah 35:5,6^{xix}). They read of those predictions from Isaiah in the synagogue and yet because He was not what they wanted Him to be, they would reject Him. This tells us they were looking for a Messiah for their own physical

benefit, not a Savior of their sin-sick souls. God help us all to seek the latter and over the former. If you come to Christ just for health or wealth or comfort or fame, you will be sadly disappointed. If you come to Him to know the truth and surrender your life to your Maker and know forgiveness of your sins, you will be more than satisfied; your joy will overflow(John 15:11^{xx})!

³ 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.

Mark 6:3 Their third question was about Jesus' former trade and family. They knew Him, and this preacher had seemed to be an ordinary person in the past. Our translation of the Greek word *tekton* as carpenter is unfortunate. The word means *craftsman from the root timoria - vindication, penalty, punishment from the root timorio - to protect one's honor; to inflict a penalty from the root time - value, something paid, precious price from the root tino - to pay a price, as a penalty.*

Carpenter was his mission to vindicate us, our penalty was inflicted on Him at the precious cost of His life! And consider that this builder is seen in John 1:1-5^{xxi} for He built the world in which we live and the invisible realm as well. (Sorry I do not know the source of this note I had copied years ago.) Jesus' main working material in Galilee would have been stone. Only a few miles from Nazareth was the capital of the region in that day, Sepphoris. It was a large Roman city and has one of the most beautiful mosaic floors in an opulent home overlooking the city. It is called the Mona Lisa of Galilee. Next to it was the Jewish section of the city. We can be sure that was the case because of the Jewish ritual baths (*mikvah*) that were discovered there. That is where Jesus must have worked. It was a four-mile hike from Nazareth. The structures are all made of stone. There were probably wooden beams supporting the roofs, but the bulk of construction was stonework. Jesus would have worked more with stone than wood. His hands would have been rough and well calloused.

From the time His step-father Joseph died, probably in his early teens, He was responsible to support the family. He would have left at the crack of dawn with His tools on that four-mile hike to Sepphoris and come home to Mary and His siblings when it was dark. The only time the town's people could get to know Him was on the Sabbath. He must have quietly listened each Sabbath and not demonstrated His wisdom, waiting patiently for the Spirit's call (John 12:49^{xxii}).

He is referred to as the son of Mary. This was not because Joseph had died, for even when a father died a son was identified by his father's name. This was implying that Jesus was an illegitimate child. His four brothers are named here. James became the leader of the early church. Judas was known as the writer of the book of Jude. Jesus had at least two sisters, for the word is plural. It was a family of at least seven children. Catholics claim these were either Joseph's children from a previous marriage or that brothers and sisters is a way to say cousins. They use this strange reasoning to maintain that the idea of Mary's perpetual virginity, as if sex within marriage was sinful. If Joseph died when Jesus was fourteen, Mary could have had a child every two years after Jesus was born. The Scripture tell us Joseph knew her not until Jesus was born (Matthew 1:25^{xxiii}). This was a Jewish way of saying He did not have intercourse with her until after

Jesus was born. The Catholic doctrine of her perpetual virginity contrasts with the Scriptures.

They took offense at Him. To take offense, *skandalizo*, means to stumble or cause to sin. It is to trip over something. The thing that offends is the *skandalon* and is sometimes translated as the stumbling stone, something you trip over. **They were tripped up by their expectations of what they thought the Messiah should be.** That is why we should hold loosely our interpretations of the end time lest we be tripped up by things not happening according to our interpretations. Remember that like these people of Nazareth, human nature tends to interpret things in a way that is pleasing to us. To their disappointment, Jesus had not changed His message. He does not promise us a bed of roses. In fact, He told the disciples to expect persecution (John 16:2^{xxiv}; 2 Timothy 3:12^{xxv}).

⁴ And Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not without honor, except in his hometown and among his relatives and in his own household." Mark 6:4 The first time Jesus was rejected in Nazareth He told them, *"No prophet is acceptable in his hometown."* Luke 4:24 This second rejection has Him expanding that to add His relatives and even His own household did not honor Him. I used to see Jesus saying that with a bold forcefulness, but now I see Him saying that with tears. I am certain that He longed to bring the same healing to the afflicted in Nazareth that He brought to Capernaum. Was it the uncertainty of who His father was? Or was it His declaration that He would be a light to the Gentiles? Or was it simply that they refused to see Him as anything more than a builder. He was indeed building, but not of limestone. He was building the kingdom of God with living stones (1 Peter 2:5^{xxvi}). They acknowledged His wisdom and miracles, but familiarity bred contempt. He was not acting according to their expectations of the Messiah.

We do have a hint that the entire family may have come around later. In Acts 1:14^{xxvii} we are told that Mary and His brothers were in the upper room at Pentecost. The word for brothers, *adelphoi*, means siblings. In other words, a better translation is Mary and Jesus' siblings. The whole family was in the upper room when the Spirit was poured out. So, while it was a very sad thing to see His siblings reject Him, He probably could foresee the day when after the resurrection they would all believe. James as the oldest was blessed with a post-resurrection encounter with his half-brother Jesus (1 Corinthians 15:7^{xxviii}). As the oldest, he must have influenced the rest of the siblings to believe Jesus had indeed conquered death and was the Messiah.

⁵ And he could do no mighty work there, except that he laid his hands on a few sick people and healed them. Mark 6:5 Though His hometown as a whole rejected Him, there were a few people of faith who received healing. These would testify to the rest of the town that He was indeed the God who heals. Notice that **unbelief can hinder what the Lord desires to do in our lives.** This shows us that we are the ones who keep Him from doing a greater work in us because of our lack of faith. It is not that Jesus could not heal, but rather that He held back due to their unbelief. How is our faith for the salvation of family members, for ministries of the church, for God to move in our midst? Faith draws the power of God and acts like that grounding rod we witnessed when the woman with the issue of blood reached out and touched Jesus. May we never become familiar with God's Word like the people of Nazareth were with Jesus. God help us to always be in awe of God's great grace and love. May our faith continue to grow and deepen.

These few who were healed were a remnant to remind the town of Jesus. There is nothing quite like a personal testimony to get a person to consider the reality of who Jesus is. Recently someone told me about a heavy metal band called Suicide Boys. Their music was filled with vulgarity, the praise of drugs, and very anti-Christian. The leader of the band had a near death experience. He came to faith in Christ and started writing praise to Jesus instead of blaspheming Him. This gave hope to a lot of young people lost to the drug culture that they too could change. Though the leader of the band had made a pact with the devil for fame and fortune, Jesus set him free and is using his witness to set others bound by drugs to be freed.

⁶ And he marveled because of their unbelief. And he went about among the villages teaching. Mark 6:6 Jesus marveled at the unbelief despite all the evidence, His holy life, the testimony of His disciples and the few people who were healed, but perhaps even more importantly, at their failure to hear the Scriptures He preached to them. In Capernaum Jesus marveled at the faith of the Gentile Centurion who asked Jesus to just say the word so his servant could be healed. Jesus said He had not seen such faith in all of Israel (Matthew 8:10^{xxix}). Here was this hardened soldier who had greater faith than the people in covenant with God who had the Scriptures that foretold the details of Jesus' life. *Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God.* Romans 10:17 But hearing is more than the Word falling on our ears. It means to listen and act on what we hear. When we live out what we hear our faith grows. Only a few in Nazareth were doing that. They were counting on their heritage and not on the power of the Word as God's instructions for life. They were leaning on their misinterpretations of the Word rather than Jesus' clear teaching of what the Word is actually telling us.

When the Word is not received, the Teacher moved on to other towns looking for receptive hearts. Today the Holy Spirit is still searching for receptive hearts. He not only lingers with those who are hungry for more, He indwells us and becomes the very life within us. The more we hear and allow the Spirit to conform our lives to Jesus' life, the more our faith grows. The more we grow the more we reflect His likeness to those we meet, and the more the Kingdom of God grows. The builder is still building today. We join Him in His work as we allow His Word and Spirit to have His way in us.

Questions:

- 1 Why was Nazareth conflicted about Jesus?
- 2 What was Jesus' first miraculous sign?
- 3 Why did Jesus wait to show His power?
- 4 Who did all His healings show Him to be?
- 5 What question did they ask to try to discredit Him?
- 6 What was Jesus' occupation before 30 years of age?
- 7 How does "carpenter" relate to what He would do?
- 8 Why do we know Mary was not a perpetual virgin?
- 9 Why did the town take offense?
- 10 Why could Jesus only heal a few people in Nazareth?

ⁱ **Luke 4:24-29 (ESV)**

²⁴ And he said, "Truly, I say to you, no prophet is acceptable in his hometown."²⁵ But in truth, I tell you, there

were many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the heavens were shut up three years and six months, and a great famine came over all the land, ²⁶ and Elijah was sent to none of them but only to Zarephath, in the land of Sidon, to a woman who was a widow. ²⁷ And there were many lepers in Israel in the time of the prophet Elisha, and none of them was cleansed, but only Naaman the Syrian.” ²⁸ When they heard these things, all in the synagogue were filled with wrath. ²⁹ And they rose up and drove him out of the town and brought him to the brow of the hill on which their town was built, so that they could throw him down the cliff.

ⁱⁱ **Isaiah 11:1-2 (ESV)**

¹ There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit. ² And the Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD.

ⁱⁱⁱ **Genesis 12:3 (ESV)**

³ I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”

^{iv} **Isaiah 49:6 (ESV)**

⁶ he says: “It is too light a thing that you should be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to bring back the preserved of Israel; I will make you as a light for the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth.”

^v **Isaiah 9:7 (ESV)**

⁷ Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.

^{vi} **John 2:9 (ESV)**

⁹ When the master of the feast tasted the water now become wine, and did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), the master of the feast called the bridegroom

^{vii} **John 2:11 (ESV)**

¹¹ This, the first of his signs, Jesus did at Cana in Galilee, and manifested his glory. And his disciples believed in him.

^{viii} **Luke 4:29 (ESV)**

²⁹ And they rose up and drove him out of the town and brought him to the brow of the hill on which their town was built, so that they could throw him down the cliff.

^{ix} **Isaiah 50:5 (ESV)**

⁵ The Lord GOD has opened my ear, and I was not rebellious; I turned not backward.

^x **Luke 2:46-47 (ESV)**

⁴⁶ After three days they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. ⁴⁷ And all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers.

^{xi} **Luke 3:23 (ESV)**

²³ Jesus, when he began his ministry, was about thirty years of age, being the son (as was supposed) of Joseph, the son of Heli,

^{xii} **Luke 4:3 (ESV)**

³ The devil said to him, “If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread.”

^{xiii} **Exodus 20:12 (ESV)**

¹² “Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land that the LORD your God is giving you.

^{xiv} **Genesis 49:11-12 (ESV)**

¹¹ Binding his foal to the vine and his donkey’s colt to the choice vine, he has washed his garments in wine and his vesture in the blood of grapes. ¹² His eyes are darker than wine, and his teeth whiter than milk.

^{xv} **Luke 4:24 (ESV)**

²⁴ And he said, “Truly, I say to you, no prophet is acceptable in his hometown.

^{xvi} **Matthew 10:37 (ESV)**

³⁷ Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.

^{xvii} **Deuteronomy 6:5 (ESV)**

⁵ You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.

^{xviii} **Exodus 15:26 (NIV)**

²⁶ He said, "If you listen carefully to the voice of the LORD your God and do what is right in his eyes, if you pay attention to his commands and keep all his decrees, I will not bring on you any of the diseases I brought on the Egyptians, for I am the LORD, who heals you."

^{xix} **Isaiah 35:5-6 (ESV)**

⁵ Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; ⁶ then shall the lame man leap like a deer, and the tongue of the mute sing for joy. For waters break forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert;

^{xx} **John 15:11 (ESV)**

¹¹ These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.

^{xxi} **John 1:1-5 (ESV)**

¹ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was in the beginning with God. ³ All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. ⁴ In him was life, and the life was the light of men. ⁵ The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

^{xxii} **John 12:49 (ESV)**

⁴⁹ For I have not spoken on my own authority, but the Father who sent me has himself given me a commandment—what to say and what to speak.

^{xxiii} **Matthew 1:25 (ESV)**

²⁵ but knew her not until she had given birth to a son. And he called his name Jesus.

^{xxiv} **John 16:2 (ESV)**

² They will put you out of the synagogues. Indeed, the hour is coming when whoever kills you will think he is offering service to God.

^{xxv} **2 Timothy 3:12 (ESV)**

¹² Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted,

^{xxvi} **1 Peter 2:5 (ESV)**

⁵ you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

^{xxvii} **Acts 1:14 (ESV)**

¹⁴ All these with one accord were devoting themselves to prayer, together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers.

^{xxviii} **1 Corinthians 15:7 (ESV)**

⁷ Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles.

^{xxix} **Matthew 8:10 (ESV)**

¹⁰ When Jesus heard this, he marveled and said to those who followed him, "Truly, I tell you, with no one in Israel have I found such faith."