

Mark 6:1-6
A Prophet without Honor

In 1940 A novel by Thomas Wolfe was published entitled, "YOU Can't Go Home Again."
Jesus could have written that book circa 31 AD

When you think of Jesus are you: Astonished; offended, guilty of unbelief, or OTHER?
In today's passage we see the first three – Amazed, offended and guilty of unbelief.
When Jesus looks at you He is?
Listen for how Jesus evaluates the people of his own home town.

Cf: Matt 13:53

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.

In his own hometown, Jesus encounters some astonished and offended, unbelievers.

This passage is short, but it packs a theological and anthropological punch i.e. it teaches us about God, but it teaches us even more about the nature of Mankind.
It teaches us why some people you know, or maybe even some of you, can be interested in church, religion, spiritual things, and even Jesus yet be dominated by unbelief.

**v. 1-2 The people in Nazareth were astonished by Jesus' teaching, but that isn't enough
You can be astonished and impressed with Jesus and still be an unbeliever.**

** You would think that ALL of their memories of Jesus would be good. HE NEVER SINNED. They should have been astonished before he started his public ministry.

Get the picture:

After some travels around the Sea of Galilee doing miracles, healing the sick, casting out demons, and teaching the gospel of the kingdom, Jesus comes home.

At this point he should be seen as a religious and spiritual expert.

"An expert is someone 50 miles from home who carries a briefcase. "

In his case he isn't or hasn't been 50 miles from home and he doesn't carry a briefcase, but when he shows up at the synagogue, he does get to teach. We don't know his message, but the people were astonished and unbelieving.

A word about Nazareth...

Jesus leaves the area around the Sea of Galilee and heads to His hometown of Nazareth (cf. 1:9,24). Nazareth was a nowhere town made up of nobodies. The population is estimated to have been between 150 and 200. It is never mentioned in the Old Testament, Apocrypha, or rabbinic literature. It only receives scant attention in the New Testament. Little wonder that Nathanael said in John 1:46, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?"

We might expect a big welcome for the 'hometown boy who made good.' But WAIT
In spite of their astonishment, they were skeptical.

Where did he get this teaching? Isn't he the carpenter? Isn't this Mary's boy and the brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon? Are not His sisters here with us?"

Jesus was a tradesman i.e. carpenter/ stonemason/ builder- "lunch bucket Jesus". He was all too common for them to believe in him despite the teaching and miracles. He had no formal training, no rabbinical school degree.

**(He could parlay that image into a political career in USA, but for a teacher in the synagogue it didn't fly.)

"Can this tradesman be the Messiah? We remember him when..."

It can be hard to forget our earliest memories or impressions of someone or for them to forget their memories of you.

EX: Bill Andrews re: me as candidate for his church in Deland, FL circa 1999

Note - "The son of Mary". Typically, a Jewish child would be described as being of the father, so Jesus would be 'son of Joseph.'

The reference to Mary could mean one of two things:

Joseph was dead - even so, Jesus would be known as Jesus bar Joseph.

Option two: the only parent they were sure of was Mary.

Remember that Christmas narrative about Mary being pregnant before she and Joseph had been together? It was a scandal then and it may have remained a scandal all his life, until the resurrection. The rumors of his suspicious conception would linger in a small town like Nazareth.

Isn't he the brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon? Are not His sisters here with us?"

For the hometown folks, Jesus was too much of a local. "How could he be special; we know his family."

SIDE ROAD: ***

The teaching of the Roman Church about the Perpetual Virginity of Mary doesn't hold up in light of this passage. They may argue that those mentioned are Jesus' cousins, but there is a more common word for cousin, and it is not used here. ***

This is Jesus' second, and his last, recorded visit to His hometown of Nazareth. His previous homecoming did not go well at all (Luke 4:16-30). Initially impressed by His preaching (Luke 4:22), the hometown crowd turned on Him and attempted to murder Him. He read a prophecy from Isaiah and said, "Today this passage is fulfilled". The people understood that He was referring to himself and the people were shocked and furious. (Luke 4:28-30). In spite of such treatment, Jesus returns, this time with His 12 disciples/apostles.

When he returned home there was no sign at the city limits that said, "Jesus was from here."

Jesus did miracles, he taught with authority, etc and the people of his hometown took offense.

They took offense = scandalized by him.

There is an offense that comes with Unbelief.

When someone contradicts your belief system or any presupposed viewpoint, it is easy to get 'offended'.

When it comes to Christ it is hard to understand what they would be offended by - his teaching of the kingdom, healing the sick, or delivering from demons?

OR was it the offense that these things meant that Jesus was someone special and unique. He stood out as genuinely good, righteous, and just. His life and teachings pointed to our need for God as Savior.

EX: Jesus broke the curve. WE always hate the kid in the class who breaks the curve because he/she shows us up.

After the death and resurrection of Christ, Paul points out that Jesus is offensive to the Greeks and the Jews. Paul says His death on the cross as our substitute is a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles (1 Cor 1:23). The Jews stumbled over the idea of God becoming a man and dying. The Greeks/Gentiles thought the whole thing was foolish... a man dying for sin and being raised from the dead.

** Does Jesus represent a scandal for you?

Does the story seem too bizarre to believe? Is it offensive to think that you can't be good enough to get to God?

If that's where you are, then you're not alone. People have thought that for 2000 years, and everyone who is a believer has had to get past the offense of the Gospel.

Are you ever embarrassed to be identified with him? Do you keep quiet and keep your faith hidden so as not to draw ridicule from others?

These folks were captured by confirmation bias. They had a certain view of their town and of the coming Messiah.

"Nazareth is a nothing town. Jesus is from Nazareth. So, Jesus is nothing special. He can't be the Christ. We grew up with Him. We can't explain the miracles, but He's not the Messiah."

His brothers James (Jacob) and Joseph were named after the patriarchs. Judah and Simon were named for famous Jewish revolutionaries. Here is a family hoping for the rescue and redemption of Israel. The Redeemer was indeed right there with them, but they missed it. It's as if they were saying, "If anyone should know who you are, we should! You are nothing special. You are just one of us. You are a nobody, and you were an illegitimate child to top it off!"

The Questions in their inquiry had a negative slant...

1. Where did this man get these things?
2. What is the wisdom given to Him?
3. How are these miracles performed by His hands?
4. Isn't this the carpenter, the son of Mary, and the brother of James, Joses, Judas, and Simon?
5. And are not His sisters here with us?

They weren't denying that his teaching was good or that he did miracles. They simply didn't make the effort to think it through all the way.

Wise teaching + Miracles = Someone special, probably sent from God

For them Wise teaching + Miracles = someone scandalous who offends us.

Another famous saying might fit this passage...

Publius the Syrian (c. 2 BC) said, "Familiarity breeds contempt."

"Familiarity breeds contempt" doesn't just happen in families or among friends. It can happen to those who are around Jesus and the church for a long time.

Danny Akin...

For those of us raised in a Christian environment, this is certainly an ever-present danger we must guard against. In a sense we should *never* get comfortable with Jesus. His goal is not to make us comfortable. His goal is to bring us to repentance and faith, humbly falling at His feet confessing Him as Lord and God. He is not your homeboy, your buddy, or your soul mate. He is not your genie in a bottle obligated to grant your every wish.

UNBELIEF...

The people were astonished, offended and UNBELIEVING.

ANTHROPOLOGY 101

People simply don't want to take the effort to explore the reality of God.

No one seeks God Rom 3:9 – Ps 10; 14; 53

Ps 14:1 The fool has said in his heart, "There is no God."

What then? Are we better than they? Not at all; for we have already charged that both Jews and Greeks are all under sin; 10 as it is written, "There is none righteous, not even one;

11 There is none who understands, There is none who seeks for God;

12 All have turned aside, together they have become useless;

There is none who does good, There is not even one."

When people do explore the reality of God, they often want to avoid Jesus. God in the abstract is okay. But Jesus in particular is too confining.

If they consider Jesus, the implications are too broad and deep, so don't dwell on it.

EX: A Skeptic doesn't want to believe, so he/she throws up questions..."If I could answer your questions would you then bow to Jesus as your savior and Lord?" NO

EX: Pascal's wager can be helpful to motivate a sincere inquiry about Christ, but it is not a proof.

"If God doesn't exist and you believe in Him, you've lost nothing. But if He does exist and you don't believe in Him, you risk everything."

We've heard and would like to believe that "people are hungry for God." NOT True.

WONDERMENT AT UNBELIEF

. 6 And Jesus wondered at their unbelief.

Jesus was amazed / wondered at their unbelief is a verse that should catch our attention.

Not many things would amaze Jesus or leave him wondering. But the people of Nazareth did. Why? Because of their unbelief.

If any group of people should have believed in Him, it should have been those who knew him the best.

Rayburn <https://www.faithtacoma.org/mark/2007-09-02-am>

But here in Nazareth he met with outright rejection and hostility. Few miracles could be expected in such an environment. His miracles were not entertainment; in the main they were not even for the benefit of those who profited from them – the sick and the demon-possessed – they were his messianic credentials. And to perform them in front of people already hardened in their unbelief served no purpose and, indeed, only increased the guilt and stiffened the penalty that Nazareth would one day pay for the rejection of her greatest son.

APPLICATION...

** There's a lesson here for us. If we think that we can influence people for Jesus simply by our lives, then we need to think again. Jesus Himself couldn't influence these people by His life, His teaching, and His miracles. Why would we think that our lives alone would convince people of the truth of Christ?

Preach the Gospel at all times; use words when necessary.....

Words ARE necessary because the Gospel is GOOD NEWS.

"Speak the gospel always, use love when necessary" – It's ALWAYS necessary

People need the MESSAGE i.e. the Good News . As believers, we still need it.

If you're here and you know ABOUT Jesus but don't KNOW HIM, then you DEFINITELY need the GOOD NEWS.

It is a tragedy to be one of whom it would be said, "Jesus wondered at their unbelief."

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Discussion Questions:

Has someone from your past become famous or very successful and you found it hard to believe?

Are there people who have been surprised at the direction of your life?

Were you astonished or impressed by Jesus but remained in unbelief? If so, why?

How did the offense of Jesus show itself in your life?

Why do we get offended when people disagree with our worldview or ideas?

If people are offended at xr, how does faith happen?

What do you think of Pascal's Wager?

"If God doesn't exist and you believe in Him, you've lost nothing. But if He does exist and you don't believe in Him, you risk everything."

Do you know someone who needs to consider that?

Agree -Disagree- Why?

Preach the Gospel at all times; use words when necessary.....