

July 19, 2020

“The Wisdom of Jesus”
Lesson 3 of Unit

Mark 6:1-6

Intro

Most of us are probably familiar with the saying, “Familiarity breeds contempt.” Over time, people can get so used to, so accustomed to, people or events that those people or events lose their specialness to us. The text uses the example of children of a great chef. “Do they realize how good their family meals are?” They might not. They might think, “This is what food is like at our house.” Without meaning to, they have become contemptuous, have no ability to see what makes that person/situation uniquely special.

Though Jesus was extraordinary in multiple ways, he also seemed ordinary in many ways. He was born into a poor family; he lived in an insignificant village. Most of his life was spent in relative obscurity, attracting and receiving no notice.

Today’s passage deals with people responding to Jesus out of their familiarity with his ordinariness, and not understanding his uniqueness. Before we wonder how they could have been so blind, it’s probably good to remind ourselves that we might also have a tendency to take Jesus for granted, because He has become so familiar to us.

Read Mark 6:1-6 (parallel texts in Matt. 13:53-58 and Luke 4:16-30)

1. Note on vs. 1 from our text. “Jesus...had (just) raised a girl from the dead (Mark 5:21, 35-43). He travels about 15 miles west toward his hometown. Nazareth was a small agricultural village in Jesus’ time, in now way famous or influential. Nearby was the prosperous city of Sepphoris, a booming market town. By comparison, Nazareth was a sleepy place with mostly poor farmers and tradespeople in residence.”
2. What preparations might a Christian (you and me!) make to ensure that interactions with hometown folks have the best chance of being taken in a positive way?
3. From vs. 1, who accompanies him to Nazareth? After reading and thinking about the entire passage, come back to this question. What impressions might this incident have made on them?

4. The Sabbath is mentioned in vs. 2. What was God's Commandment in Ex. 20:8-11 about the Sabbath? Where did the custom of meeting in a synagogue on the Sabbath come from? (Think about it first; the explanation follows below.)

Note on the Sabbath from our text: "During the Babylonian exile, when the people were far from their homeland and the (destroyed) temple, the custom of gathering on the Sabbath began. It became a day to hear the sacred books read aloud and to pray together. This practice developed and became commonplace over time. It eventually took root in Israel's homeland as the Jewish people returned from exile. Though formal training and expertise are available, such qualifications are not necessarily expected for a synagogue teacher. For this reason, Jesus is often able to enter a synagogue meeting on a Sabbath and offer an address to the people gathered."

5. From vs. 2, what are the people's reactions to Jesus' teaching? What is the reason for people's amazement at his teaching in Mark 1:21-22? What seems to be the reason from their amazement here?
6. According to vs. 3, what prior knowledge do people bring up about Jesus? Where are Jesus' brothers at this time (John 2:12)? What do the people of Nazareth know about the family's view of Jesus' ministry (Mark 3:21-35)?
7. In a spiritual sense, what does it mean to take "offense" with someone? What are some examples in the OT of God using seemingly insignificant people to do His work?
8. In vs. 4, what is suggested by Jesus saying "except in his own town"? Who from Nazareth follows and honors Jesus? Look at Mark 2:4, 2:13, 3:9, 3:20, 4:1, 4:36, 5:21, 5:24, 5:27. What do you notice about Jesus followers in those verses?

9. Why could Jesus “not do any miracles” in Nazareth in vs. 5? Consider vs. 2-3 and how what the people react to Jesus. How might Jesus’ actions be a choice rather than an inability? Why does he only heal a few sick people?

10. In vs. 6, what is Jesus amazed at? Look at Matt. 8:5-13. What is Jesus amazed at there? From these two passages, what concept seems to amaze Jesus? How should understanding this idea impact us?

Application: The essential question that today’s test raises is this: “Do we accept Jesus as He is? Or do we think he ought to be different?” It’s possible (likely?) that we may have viewed Jesus the same way the people of Nazareth did—as someone we know, and therefore not as special as He really is.

There is only one Jesus, one Son of God. He is unique and cannot be duplicated. But how he calls us and works in and through us can be duplicated, and has been throughout mankind’s history. The Bible is filled with examples of ordinary people (from Earth, not from heaven) that God has used and blessed. Our lives are also filled with ordinary people that God has used and blessed. We are part of that group. The work that we do through Him (like meeting together for worship or Bible study, acts of service done for members of the church or the unchurched of the community, the giving of our time or our talents or our resources to help others) are examples.

If we are seeking to follow God and honor Him, we can rely on the fact that His wisdom is still found in people who appear completely ordinary. God continues to do His work, as He has always done, in people just like us.

Prayer: Father God, we ask that you would open our eyes to see clearly the work you are doing around us, and in us, and through us. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

This week's lesson reminded me of a song I used to hear when in college from Pam Mark Hall. The song is called "Carpenter's Son". Here's the lyrics. I encourage you to listen to it on Youtube.

CARPENTER'S SON

Where did that man get such wisdom?
Where did he get all that power?
Isn't he just a carpenter's son?
Isn't his mother's name....Mary?
And don't we all know his brothers and his sisters
They don't seem unusual
So what's all this talk about coming down from heaven
I knew the boy when he was knee high
Yes I knew the man when he was a child

Where did that man get such wisdom?
Where did he get all that power?
Isn't he just a carpenter's son?
Isn't his mother's name....Mary?
But didn't they find him talking with the elders
His wisdom astounded them all
And what about the time we saw him make wine out of water
We wondered then who he really was
Yes we wondered then who he really was

Where did that man get such wisdom?
Where did he get all that power?
Isn't he just a carpenter's son?
Isn't his mother's name....Mary?
Our heads were spinning
When we heard him say
"The spirit of the Lord is on Me
I bring glad tidings to the meek and the lowly
I've come to set the prisoners free"
Who can this man really be?