

Gospel of Mark Chapter 6A

My first job, at the age of 12: delivering prescriptions for the local Pharmacy and stocking shelves, .50 hour 10 hours a week. (drug mule)

- Imagine today a 12 year boy old carrying Oxycodon through the streets of Philadelphia?
- Looking back I realize I was carrying valuable commodity in a dangerous environment.

Well the Gospel that we carry is of infinite value and worth and the world into which we carry this treasure is a world of dangerous unbelief and yet the Lord Jesus calls us to go.

As we move on in our Study of the Gospel of Mark the Lord Jesus is preparing to send his disciples out into the unbelieving world carrying the treasure of the Gospel.

- Before sending them out he gives them a taste of what they can expect:
- Some of you had college courses that included a “Practicum” Practicum is a supervised hands on experience wherein a student learns to apply the theory he has learned in a real life job situation. In Ch 6 the Disciples experience a practicum.
- For this practicum, Jesus takes his disciples to his home town of Nazareth.

Nazareth was an obscure little village carved into a rocky hillside about 25 miles southwest of Capernaum housing approximately 4 -500 people. Nazareth is not mentioned in the O.T. not mentioned in the Mishna or the Talmud. It is not mentioned in the writings of Josephus.

- It was really an insignificant little town.

Four Points Sending disciples into a world of unbelief.

1. The Problem of Unbelief (They see it firsthand @ Nazareth)
2. God’s Plan to Confront Unbelief. (He sends his Disciples out)
3. The Persecution of the Unbelieving (living as a sheep among wolves)
4. God’s Provision for the Believer as they carry the Gospel

1 The Problem of Unbelief:

UNBELIEF: Observes the glories of God, (The heavens declare the glory of God) It then contemplates those things it has observed, (think about where the stars and planets came from) Unbelief comes up with a (foolish) conclusion. (Evolved starting with a big bang)

- Let’s look at the problem of unbelief in Jesus’ hometown of Nazareth.

1 Observes the glories of God:

Mark 6: 1 **He went away from there (Capernaum) and came to his hometown, (Nazareth) and his disciples followed him. 2 And on the Sabbath he began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard him were astonished,**

- They were astonished at Jesus’ teaching. (EKSTASIS - we get the word Ecstasy, the word describes an experience that alters the mind, LIT, beside oneself)
- Certainly the people of Nazareth had heard all about the mighty works, healings, wonders and miracles that Jesus had been doing.
- AS he taught, the content, the depth and the spirit of his teaching literally blew their minds. (he had no formal education, never sat under a prominent rabbi)

This is not the first occasion where Jesus' words astonished the community at Nazareth. Take a look at Luke Chapter 4:

Luke 4: 17 And the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written, 18 "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, 19 to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." 20 And he rolled up the scroll and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him.

21 And he began to say to them, "Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing."

- WHAT? Is he saying that HE IS the "Anointed one? The Christ? He just said that HE is the one that Isaiah wrote about!
- They debated among themselves: and look at how they respond to Jesus' words:

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.

Unbelief observes the glories of God and contemplates what it has observed: (Back to Mark)

Mark 6:2b "Where did this man get these things? What is the wisdom given to him? How are such mighty works done by his hands? 3a 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?"

- The unbelieving mind is set on the flesh.

1 Corinthians 2: 14 The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him,

- They ask some good questions, but they always come up with the wrong answer.
- After pondering Jesus' words they reason among themselves: We know him, we know his family, This is the same guy who built the yoke for my oxen.
- "*The Son of Mary*" - is most likely an allusion to his perceived illegitimate birth.
- And the final response of the unbelieving is this:

Unbelief comes to a foolish conclusion: Mark 6: 3b, **And they took offense at him.**

- Offense - (skandalizen - a stumbling block) He is that a bump in the carpet that you keep tripping over. His words are offensive to the unbelieving.
- The Prophet Isaiah foretold the fact that Jesus would be a rock of offense for the people of Israel.

Isaiah 8: 13 Sanctify the LORD of hosts himself; and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread. 14 And he shall be for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel, for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

15 And many among them shall stumble, and fall, and be broken, and be snared, and be taken.

- To the unbelieving mind, Jesus Christ is a stumbling block, the Gospel is foolishness.

HOW did their unbelief effect Jesus?

Mark 6: 6a **And he marveled because of their unbelief.**

- Only 2 places in the Bible where Jesus “Marvels” at something: HERE in Nazareth He marvels at their unbelief. BUT in Matthew 8:10, Jesus marvels at the faith of the Centurion – “I have not seen such great faith in all of Israel!”

In Mark 6:1-6 we see the problem of unbelief, moving on we find God’s plan to confront the unbelieving;

After discipling and mentoring the Twelve and after the practicum at Nazareth, Jesus sends them out to proclaim the Gospel of the Kingdom.

Mark 6:7, **And he called the twelve and began to send them out two by two, and gave them authority over the unclean spirits.**

- Jesus gives His disciples authority. They were His authorized and appointed representatives. You could rightly say that they were emissaries of King Jesus. Commissioned by him possessing spiritual power to fulfill his command.
- SO the Lord sends disciples out into the world to confront unbelief: (not just them)

2 Corinthians 5: 20 **Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.**

- As they GO, The disciples are commanded to travel light: They were not to be encumbered by excess baggage but remain lean and mean.

Mark 6: 8 **He charged them to take nothing for their journey except a staff—no bread, no bag, no money in their belts** 9 **but to wear sandals and not put on two tunics.**

- They were to be simple and focused on the priority of the mission, unencumbered by worldly cares.
- The urgency of their undertaking is reminiscent of the Israelite’s departure from Egypt. They are instructed to take the same four items. Cloak, belt, sandals and staff.
- God is our provider and there is a Promised Land awaiting. Don’t get encumbered by the things of this world. (The passing pleasures and consuming cares)
- Because they are going into an unbelieving world, He has a few words of warning.

3. The Persecution of the Unbelieving

Matthew’s record of this conversation includes more serious warnings:

Matthew 10:16 **“Behold, I am sending you out as sheep in the midst of wolves, so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves.”**

- I would feel a whole lot better if he would have said he was sending us as lions into a herd of deer. Instead, we’re a flock of sheep sent into a pack of wolves.
- When Jesus uses this analogy he clearly portrays the hostile nature of the unbelieving world into which the Disciples of Christ are being sent.
- BUT...Under the sovereign hand of God the persecution they face will provide greater opportunities to share the Gospel with governing authorities

Matthew 10: 17 **Beware of men, for they will deliver you over to courts and flog you in their synagogues,** 18 **and you will be dragged before governors and kings for my sake, to bear witness before them and the Gentiles.**

- We see this take place in the book of Acts. (Paul taken in chains to Agrippa, Nero)

Today: The Stukenberg family in China:

- The family went into Beijing where they boarded busses 2x2 and handed out Gospel tracts all day for 3 days. Toward the end of the third day with one swift movement the entire family was picked up and taken to the Police station. As they were interrogated they shared the Gospel with every one of the officials. Tom spoke of the great love that the Lord gave him for those men and the clarity in which he was able to speak.
- At the end of the day the family was commanded to leave China for 7 years.

How do we respond when our message is rejected?

Mark 6:11 “**And if any place will not receive you and they will not listen to you, when you leave, shake off the dust that is on your feet as a testimony against them.**” (what does this mean?)

- I think that Jesus makes it clear that some people are going to reject our message.
 - If you go back to the parable of the soils... 75% of the seed that is sown never produces fruit.

Matthew 7:13 **the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many.**

- We are to shake off the rejection like the dust from our shoes and faithfully move on to the next field.
 - We are simply the sowers of good seed it is God who gives life.
 - The Lord may send someone else to water the seed and bring in the harvest.
- Two men were discussing the wonderful ministry of an old Puritan preacher William Perkins..(1558 - 1602) An elderly man, in his 90's overheard their conversation and joined in. He told of his personal experience when he heard Perkins preach while he was but a youth. But he was not converted. The older man who had rejected the Gospel more than 60 years ago went home and pondered the words that Perkins preached and was saved. (the seed took more than 60 years to germinate)

4 God's Provision for the Believer

Matthew 10:19 **When they deliver you over, do not be anxious how you are to speak or what you are to say, for what you are to say will be given to you in that hour. 20 For it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you.**

26 **“So have no fear of them, for nothing is covered that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known. 27 What I tell you in the dark, say in the light, and what you hear whispered, proclaim on the housetops. 28 And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell.**

We need not be fearful in our witness for the Lord.

- Many people tell me, “I don't know how to speak.” I am not good with words; I don't know the Bible well enough.
 - The Gaderine Demoniac, was sent into the Decapolis. What did he know?
- Let me ask you this: When you first fell in love with your mate, when your eyes were starry and your heart was smitten, was it difficult to talk about the object of your affections?
- So is it really a knowledge issue or a heart issue???

I have never met a young man or young woman who had a hard time talking about the love of their life.

I never met a Grandmother who had a hard time talking about her Grandchildren.

- (how amazing, how beautiful, how smart, and the joy of being with them)
- When we love the Lord with all of our heart and His Word becomes our meditation, worship becomes a delight to our soul,
- In time of need, HE will give us the words to speak as we open our mouths.

12 ordinary men heard God calling through the proclamation of the Gospel,

They repented of their sins and believed on the Lord Jesus Christ.

12 ordinary men empowered by the Holy Spirit, sent out by the Lord Jesus turned the world upside down!

Mark 6:12 **So they went out and proclaimed that people should repent.**

13 **And they cast out many demons and anointed with oil many who were sick and healed them.**

Today WE carry the treasure of the Gospel into a dangerous and unbelieving world.

- We go because the Lord has sent us
- We go empowered by the Holy Spirit
- We carry the same message: *The Kingdom of God is at hand:*
- REPENT - your sin has separated you from God and you are subject to God's holy wrath.
- BELIEVE - on the Lord Jesus Christ, (God in human flesh) who lived a perfect life and was offered up as the only atoning sacrifice for our sins.
- If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and Believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead you will be saved!