

We studied the previous passage, Mark 5:21-43, back in March, 43 Sundays ago, before coronavirus interrupted us, and then we studied other things.

Let me give a quick review as we jump back in.

The main question of the previous passage carries over into our passage for tonight in chapter 6. Do we see Jesus for who he really is?

We looked at the mistake of viewing Jesus incorrectly, done by one of the religious rulers named Jairus, compared to the correct way to view Jesus, done by an unnamed woman with a medical problem of bleeding.

Jesus healed the woman.

While Jesus was doing that, the daughter of Jairus died.

Jesus raised to life again the daughter of Jairus.

Mark ended chapter five with the people being overcome with amazement at the power of Jesus to raise the dead.

Mark pushes us to advance beyond amazement.

We must place our faith in Jesus.

Not just a conversion. Placing our faith in Jesus every day for everything.

**Learning from the mistakes of the hometown of Jesus, we must consider Jesus for who He truly is, and place our faith in Him.**

**1. When we consider Jesus, we must go farther than being astonished by Jesus. (v. 1-2)**

After the chapter 5 miracles and teaching to the amazement of everyone, here in chapter 6, verse 1, Jesus went to his hometown. We know from Mark 1:9 that "*Jesus came from Nazareth.*" His disciples came along. So, the setting of our study tonight is Nazareth, the hometown of Jesus.

Jesus returned to the place where He grew up as a boy. The location where his mother lived, and His father's family and His siblings and His extended family. His teachers, his neighbors, the fellow townspeople. No one well-known or memorable had come from there, until Jesus. The population was estimated to be 150-200 people. The Old Testament never mentioned the town of Nazareth. None of the writings of the Rabbis mention Nazareth. Not even the non-Scriptural writings of those times - the books we call the Apocrypha - have any mention of Nazareth. Not even the New Testament books, with four Gospels about the life of Jesus, say much of anything about Nazareth. Nathanael summarized the views of most people when he said in John 1:46, "*Can anything good come out of Nazareth?*"

Yet everyone knows Jesus. And everyone knows that He is Jesus of Nazareth.

So, when Jesus returned to his boyhood home of Nazareth, what would you expect to happen? Maybe a welcoming party or something? No.

Well...to be fair, in verse 2, when the Sabbath came, Jesus taught in the synagogue. Not a big surprise there, right? Jesus was a rabbi. He would be asked to speak. At least they did not keep him from doing what a rabbi would be expected to do. However, in Nazareth, Jesus was known as a carpenter. So for them, it was a stretch to have Jesus arrive as a rabbi and teach. Maybe they were curious what He would say!

What was the reaction of the hometown crowd? Mark reported to us that many who heard Jesus "*were astonished.*" Astonished at the teaching of Jesus. Now that does not surprise us. We have had that reaction quite a bit in the first five chapters of the Gospel of Mark. Everyone is astonished at the teaching of Jesus.

What is going on here in the minds of the people of Nazareth?

They could get out of their minds their previous assumptions of who Jesus is.

All the reports of the miracles didn't square with their thoughts of Jesus as just a young man who worked as a carpenter from good ol' Nazareth. They all knew his street, his house, his siblings and his parents. Small town.

Back to His teaching - why did the teaching of Jesus not bring them to faith? Because they just could not reconcile what Jesus was saying with who they believed that He must be.

Don't conclude that it is just an unfair mental block for them.

Think deeper.

They rejected the Holy One of Israel.

It is as if they were saying, "This is the Christ?"

This is the Messiah long-promised to come to Israel?

This one that we have known all of his life is the Son of God? Are you kidding?

The people of the hometown of Jesus, could not see Jesus for who He is.

Can you?

Mark says this is an important story to tell, because this issue is a huge issue for all people. No one can see Jesus for who he truly is without faith.

The miracles are not enough, by themselves. Faith is necessary.

The teaching of Jesus Himself is not enough. Faith is indispensable.

The miracles and the teaching point to Jesus with capital letters and scream out to us who He is - that He is the Christ, the Son of God. We are being shown the true Jesus in His mighty works and in His mighty words, and we are being urged to believe in Jesus and follow Jesus.

We have to go beyond than being astonished by His words and works, we need to trust Him and we need to honor Him for who He is.

## **2. When we consider Jesus, we must not be offended, and reject Him despite clear evidence and close proximity. (v. 3-4)**

At first, back in verse 2, it seemed like there was a good reaction in the people of the hometown of Jesus, but Mark wants us to notice something important. Mark wants us to observe WHY the people were astonished. The people were astonished upon hearing Jesus teaching, because Jesus was from there. Listen to their questions that Mark captured on this occasion and wrote down for us in verses 2 and 3, in order that you would observe their mindset.

*Where did this man get these things?*

*What is the wisdom given to Him?*

*How are such mighty works done by His hands?*

*Isn't this the carpenter?*

*Isn't this the son of Mary?*

*Isn't this the brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon?*

*Are not his sisters here with us?*

These are not questions of faith. These are negative questions. These are disparaging questions.

Their long-standing knowledge of Jesus makes their rejection of Jesus all the more disappointing, and all the more deserving of blame.

They heard his teachings and asked – where did this man get these things?

The carpenter! Isn't this the carpenter? Jesus is nothing more than a commoner who works with His hands. The word here is actually builder. He builds things. He repairs things made of wood. He is a handyman, a construction worker! He is strong, sure. Early 30s in age, and could do his job well. But his occupation is nothing impressive, certainly not the stuff of an esteemed rabbi with followers, destined for international attention. Nope. He is blue-collar through and through. He is just a local boy, and that is all He will ever be. He simply cannot amount to anything.

Besides that, he is the son of Mary. Now I want you to erase for a moment all of your knowledge of Christmas carols and the grand meaning of the phrase son of Mary, okay? What child Is This. 2<sup>nd</sup> Stanza, Joy, oh joy for Christ is born. The Babe, the son of Mary. Put that out of your mind for a moment. What if I told you that the only time in the Bible that the term son of Mary appears is right here, and you might not understand it correctly?

Think what these people mean when they bring up that He is the son of Mary! Maybe it just means that Joseph had died. However, what it could be is a cheap insult at the claim of Mary that this local boy Jesus was born without her being with a man. That whole issue would have been the biggest scandal that

Nazareth had ever known, and it happened right about 30 years ago. And it was never really resolved in their minds, since they could not get Mary to fess up and tell who the father really was. Do you realize how loaded their words were – they were taunting Jesus Himself, with things that they had probably said to him before – that he was an illegitimate child born to a fornicator, and the whole family were liars involved in a cover-up of epic proportions. How did all of his siblings get conceived – James, Joses, Judas, and Simon? Any other miracles to report from that family? And the brothers of Jesus were named after patriarchs. James is the word for Jacob, and Joses is for holy Old Testament Joseph. Judah and Simon were named for famous Jewish revolutionaries. This family of Joseph and Mary from Nazareth was hoping for the rescue and redemption of Israel. The Redeemer Himself was indeed right there in their home with them for his boyhood years, and they missed him.

But the townspeople were insistent. They were communicating something to Jesus. Listen, Jesus, you are a nobody, and of all your siblings, you are the only one with a phony birth story. Everyone knows that Joseph is the father of all of your siblings, but your story is bogus.

You know the phrase “familiarity breeds contempt”? The town of Nazareth was familiar with Jesus their homeboy. No evidence presented will convince them otherwise.

Mark summarized the disposition of Jesus’ hometown people at the end of verse 3, and it reads like an indictment of them. We can hardly believe their reaction when the Savior of the World came home and preached. They got themselves so worked up that they concluded wrongly, and Mark writes “*And they took offense at Him.*” !! All of the people who knew Jesus and the family of Jesus, should have been the early adopters of Christianity. They should have been those who were the first to trust in Jesus for salvation. They should have been His biggest supporters...His most loyal followers...the ones with the deepest faith in Jesus. But instead, their questions revealed their suspicions in their settled and hardened hearts. How could a local carpenter have things to say from God? And if it is not from God, then where is it from? They did not know, so they did not say. They simply asked the question of offense. Where did this man get these things?

People who changed the diapers of Jesus were offended by Jesus’ teachings. Those who as children were schooled with him and even in the synagogue learned Torah with him and enjoyed meals with him in homes and in the community, all those who at one time had given the young boy Jesus hugs and kisses, now were very cold toward Jesus, and disdainfully suspicious. The word Mark gives us is scandalized. They were scandalized by Jesus. All this talk about Rabbi Jesus, and these following disciples coming around Nazareth, were too much for them.

They cannot handle the teaching of Jesus, and they don't have an answer, and they don't care. The evidence is overwhelming, but they refuse to believe that He is the Christ, the Son of God.

What about after the crucifixion of Jesus? Later, do you think those from Nazareth would change? No, this is what they would say, "A Jew from nowhere is executed unjustly and He is the Savior, and the ONLY Savior of the whole world? Impossible. No way. I do not buy it, and on top of that, I am deeply repelled by Him."

Verse 4, Jesus spoke up. Jesus spoke to them about the questions that they posed, and about the disrespect inherent in their questions. Jesus responded with a phrase that Jesus made famous. Jesus was heartbroken, but not for himself in feeling lonely and rejected, but rather he was burdened for their souls.

Basically the statement was that no prophets are accepted in their hometown.

Jesus said this on more than one occasion. The previous time that Jesus returned to his hometown was recorded in Luke 4. They were initially impressed with His preaching, but then they turned on him and attempted to murder Him. In spite of such treatment the previous time, here in Mark 6, we get the report of the 2<sup>nd</sup> time that Jesus returned. This second time, Jesus brought the disciples along. Wow, how Jesus must have preached that day! It would be an important time of training His disciples, and that will make an impression. Sure enough, when Mark writes his short gospel, this event is included. But more than that – the fact that the disciples were along, and the fact that Jesus preached in the synagogue show that for his visit to Nazareth, Jesus was officially engaged in His Kingdom work. He had come to Nazareth as their one and only Savior.

Mark saw it as needful for his readers to consider how Jesus was treated by His own hometown, how Jesus was treated by His family, and how Jesus was treated by His hometown friends.

The reason is Mark's goal in the gospel is to get us to consider our own relationship to Jesus. How do we treat the King? Those who were certain that they knew Jesus best, rejected Him. Why? Because they did not know Jesus as well as they thought that they knew Jesus. Could that be happening to you right now?

And there is another reason that Mark is writing – it is the importance of this issue for your spiritual health.

What is the impact on you, if you have an inaccurate assessment of Jesus?

Consider the impact on these people of Jesus hometown. Will they ever get another Savior later to come to Nazareth teaching them where to place their faith? No. This is their one Savior, and since they reject him, what does it mean for their souls?

But because it is Jesus who is the One being rejected by His own townspeople, it uncovers tragic consequences for eternity for them.

The apostle Paul later wrote in 1 Corinthians 1, that the death of Jesus on the cross as our substitute is a stumbling block to Jews and it is silliness to Gentiles.

But long before Paul could write that observation, there were people who know Jesus well, who found His ministry to be a ridiculous sham.

### **3. When we consider Jesus, we must not be guilty of unbelief. (v. 5-6a)**

Verse 5 – Jesus could not do miracles there, except healing a few sick people. It seems that Jesus moved on to teach in other villages and to our knowledge Jesus never returned home to Nazareth again. Why? The unbelief there limited Jesus. Of course there is nothing that can stop Jesus, but He would not reveal His power in such a place of rejection. Imagine what Jesus would have done if they believed in Him in Nazareth! Jesus could in the previous place in chapter 5, raise from the dead the daughter of Jairus, and heal the woman suffering for 12 years. Anyone suffering and those grieving and in turmoil could have received blessings. But reject Jesus and Jesus will not do for you what Jesus does for others. Reject His message, and Jesus will move on to those who will listen to His message and His Word. Jesus is approaching those who call Him Lord.

The mighty works or miracles were signs of the kingdom, to show how His redemptive power operates. The miracles healed and restored people in ways that show how we can find Him by faith and have our whole lives transformed by Him. Jesus was not going to give those transformative blessings to people in Nazareth whose who would not trust in Him.

Hebrews 11:6, “...*whoever would draw near to [God] must believe that [God] exists, and that [God] rewards those who seek [God].*”

Verse 6 of Mark 6, our last verse. Only twice in the Bible does it say that Jesus was amazed. In Luke 7:9, Jesus was amazed at the faith of the army soldier who believed that Jesus could heal from a distance with just a command. And the second place is here in Mark 6:6, where Jesus was amazed because of the unbelief of the people of His hometown.

The people are amazed at Jesus, and Jesus is amazed at the people.

The people could not get past the humble beginnings and familiar feel of Jesus, and now He is teaching that He is God.

Jesus was astounded at their unbelief in light of their knowledge of what he taught and what He did years ago as a boy who never sinned and more recently as a miracle worker.

The relationship between Jesus and His hometown is an early indication of the relationship between Jesus and his home country of Israel. The unbelief of the nation of Israel as a whole is the next level of amazing unbelief. Beyond that, many nations in our world, and many people even in our churches show an unbelief that amazes us.

It is a shock to our systems that Jesus would come from such a town and family. It is also a shock to our systems that the people would not believe in Him.

What about us? Do we want to re-shape the Bible's teachings before we can accept Jesus and trust Jesus for ourselves?

Do the words of Jesus convict us anymore, or are they too familiar? Do His miracles astonish us? Does His death on the cross still cause our hearts to sing the chords of amazing grace?

Be careful. Familiarity with God and the things of God, familiarity with Christmas truth, can blind us to the greatness and glory of our Savior, if we are not careful. We could get immune to the real thing. Haven't we seen children growing up in Christian homes and churches who become bored with the truth because of their familiarity with it, and start to dishonor Christ Himself? Church folks can become like the hometown folks – an amazing unbelief after all that we have known and seen and heard about Jesus. I plead with you - Please don't make that mistake in your heart.

#### **Concluding Application:**

1. Let Jesus set the agenda for your life and for your death. Nazareth is a warning to us. It is a miniature of world history. So many have rejected Jesus. In Mark 8, you can read the words of Jesus how wanting to save your life will make you lose it, but losing your life for Jesus and for the gospel, is how you save it. Let Jesus set the agenda for your life and for your death.
2. Remember that rejection is common for the Lord and for his missionaries and His church.
3. Hang on to Jesus by faith, even when others let go. Across your family, across your town, your workplace, and across your nation, people are refusing to trust in Christ Jesus. Jesus knows how it feels. Jesus Himself was surprised and astonished at the lack of faith around Him. Unbelief is an ancient sin, filled with damages. Because of unbelief, people refuse Christ despite mounds of evidence. Unbelief is common. It is dreadfully common. Thousands and thousands of people all around us are committing the sin of unbelief. If you ask them, they might say that they are Christians, but in practice of faith, they are unbelievers. They do not believe the Bible, and the words of Jesus, and they do not embrace Christ as their Savior with gratitude. You already believe, and that is wonderful gift from God. Now, keep watch over your heart and stir up your faith in Christ. The root of the sin of unbelief still lives in your flesh. Hang on to Your faithful Savior, even as others around you are loosening their grip on faith.
4. Never get too comfortable with Jesus. If you are familiar with Jesus, the Bible, the hymnal, worship, Bible study, and Christian service, then you are at

high risk to undervalue Jesus. He is so familiar! It is fearing Christ that draws us near to Him, and comforts us. You are in the church, and it gives you the advantage of being near Jesus, much like those in Nazareth had advantage of proximity to Jesus. The Christian author of children's stories tries to make this point to the children in a book called *The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe*. The Author's name is C.S. Lewis. In the story, the children can talk with the animals and the animals can talk with the children. So, here is the quote of a discussion between a child named Susan and a Beaver, about the close proximity that children can enjoy with Jesus, when they grow up in Christian homes and churches and schools and youth groups, always talking about Jesus. Listen to the quote, "'Aslan is a lion- the Lion, the great Lion.'" "Ooh" said Susan. "I'd thought he was a man. Is he quite safe? I shall feel rather nervous about meeting a lion"..."Safe?" said Mr Beaver..."Who said anything about safe? 'Course he isn't safe. But he's good. He's the King, I tell you.'" If anyone should have know the fear of God, it was the people who grew up with him in Nazareth. If anyone should know the fear, respect, reverence, and awe of the Lord Christ Jesus, it is those who have had the privilege of growing up in Christian homes and churches. Never get comfortable with Jesus. He is not a toy, to which you can make adjustments. He is not a blanket whose only purpose is to console you and make you feel better. He is the King of Kings. Perhaps the most important place to remember that is in our praying. Jesus is not our butler whose job it is to rush through the fulfillment center of heaven and get the things we are asking faster than Amazon. Jesus is not our homeboy, He is not our buddy. Jesus Christ is not our soul mate and his is not our genie in a bottle. He is not some ordinary guy who lived 2000 years ago. He was not a fake with a scandal and a cover-up and he was not just a carpenter with grandiose thoughts, who stirred things up and then got literally nailed to a cross for it.

He is the Power of God and the Wisdom of God.

Jesus was born of a virgin.

Jesus is the first and the Last, the beginning and the end, the Alpha and the Omega.

Jesus is the prince of Peace.

Never get too comfortable with Jesus.

You can worship Him, and He will comfort You better than anyone else.

But you can do all that with the highest reverence and respect in your heart.

Jesus was a prophet without honor in his hometown of Nazareth and among his relatives and his own household.

But at your suppertable, and in your worship services and meetings, in your marriage, your home and churchwork and schoolwork, in your career, and in your



retirement and to your dying day, let the Lord Jesus Christ receive the highest honor.

It won't be long now before you get to see with your own eyes the honor coming due to the Lord Jesus. All of our lives is really just practice for honoring Him then.

What do we say about Him being a nobody from nowhere? It was intentional. Philippians 2:8-11, "...being found in human form, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted Him and bestowed on Him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

Everyone will honor Jesus.

Never get comfortable with Jesus. It is fearing Christ that draws us near to Him, and comforts us.