

Mark 6:1-29 REJECTION, MISSION, PR BLOW

PRELIMS. We look at 29vv today in our **cursory** look at Mark. A ‘**bird’s eye**’ view of events can be helpful in seeing links and connections which we would not see otherwise. Jesus has healed a demoniac, Jairus’s daughter, and a women with a haemorrhage.

The scene now completely changes! From enjoying some positive responses to X’s ministry, we now have some **negatives**. One would have thought that with all the healings, and astounding preaching, local folk would be **proud** of their Son! But no! They **acknowledge** His uniqueness, but it seems as if something like a spirit of **jealousy** enters the local folk. There is a ‘**Where, What, How**’ about Him! “*Where did this Man get these things? What is the wisdom given to Him? How are such mighty works done by His hands?*” [2]!

How can their hostility be possible? What was the reason for it? When His miracles and wonders were so clearly testified, I think it can only be put down to the **natural hatred of the human heart towards God**. You see, despite what we may feel or think, the Bible does say there is such a **hostility** in the human heart. Unless we are **regenerate**, our natural inclination is to reject any thought of God! Paul said to the Col believers, “*you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, He has now reconciled*” [Col 1:21] Paul is saying the Cols **were hostile** to God, but reconciled now!

In fact, regarding this **natural hostility** to God, Paul goes further, he says mankind in his natural state **just cannot submit** to God’s **authority and laws**. “*the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God’s law; indeed, it cannot. Those who are in the flesh cannot please God*” [Rom 8:7,8] Paul is saying that there is a human **inability** in submitting to God’s **authority**!

We need **God’s Spirit** to **make** us love and serve God “*I thank Him who has given me strength, Christ Jesus our Lord....appointing me to His service*”[1Tim 1:12] “*Of this gospel I was made a minister according to the gift of God’s grace, which was given me by the working of His power*”[Eph 3:7] When Paul wrote his letters he was

conscious of God's grace/strength. Look:- *"I have written to you very **boldly**....because of the **grace given me by God**"*[Rom 15:15]

Friends - by **nature** you/I are **opposed** to God - but God in His grace has **come down to humanity** to dispense His grace amongst us!

So, these local Nazarites, still had that natural enmity toward God, so much so that God, 'manifest in the flesh' was not recognisable when He appeared to them! They **denied** that He was a Prophet!

The **result?** *"...He could **do no mighty work there**"*[5]! Jesus *"**marvelled because of their unbelief**"*[6] You know, we humans are **so accustomed** to humanity's hardness of heart toward God, that we 'take it for granted' and do not consider its **guilt/demerit!** **angels** are **curious** to find out more about it! **Angels** desire to *"look into"* the **fascinating subject** of humanity's **salvation** and Christ's **sufferings** regarding it. They *"searched and inquired carefully"* [1Pet 1:10-12]

MISSION

Nevertheless, despite being rejected in His own **home town**, Jesus **organised a mission outside** of His home town! You see, God **has** His chosen people who have yet **to be** brought into the kingdom through the preaching of the gospel! So if their is 'No response' from one group, we must move on - so that the elect may be saved. Jesus' death **accomplished salvation**, not just the possibility of salvation **if** people responded. Preaching has been appointed as the **means of bringing in** the lost! Preachers do **not** know who the 'Chosen' are, but God does and commands His servants to go spread the Word.

Just because one community say 'No', does not mean we must stop preaching the gospel. We must move on to those who **will respond!** God leads His preachers! When Paul went to **Asia** *"they went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia"* but *"having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word **in Asia**"* they *"attempted to go into Bythinia but the Spirit of Jesus did **not allow them**"*! And then what? A vision!! And *"when Paul had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go on into **Macedonia**, concluding that **God had called us to preach the gospel to them**"*[Acts 16:10]!

God has appointed, **predestined** a number no man can number, a **fixed** number to be saved! They **will** be saved. But they **will** hear **and respond** to the gospel! They will not reject it! They will receive it!

So Jesus **sends out** His disciples. I believe when the Church **plants** another Church, it **ought** to be with a **minimum** of **two families!!** **“two by two”**[7]! Every single believer **needs fellowship!** And every Church planter **needs encouragement!** *They have to go out in **faith!** **“no bread, no bag”**[8] Their confidence must be in the Lord, **not** in a stock of **financial resources!** No **expense account!** If they do not know **how to trust** in the Lord when there is no **visible** means of resources beyond what they already have, they won't make it!

The main message of the gospel: **“people should repent”**[12]! They must **not** be **upset** when **rejected!** **“if any place will not receive you...shake off the dust”** (nicely, but firmly)! Shaking the dust off dues **not mean** ‘making a **display**’ of your being removed!

PUBLIC RELATIONS ‘BLOW’

Being a true servant of God is **tough!** You need faith **and** a **thick skin!** Above all, you need to be able to **overcome discouragement!** Forget about being full time service to God if you cannot overcome discouragement! Ever since the Fall, life from beginning to end is full of discouragements - which are **designed** to **strengthen** us!

God's providences are for a **positive purpose.** **“we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope”!** The Holy Spirit inspired Luke to record **in sequence** the order we have here. Having sent out The twelve we now hear of this **most discouraging** news. The PR Officer, John Baptist to **prepare** and announce the arrival of the Messiah is **cruelly beheaded!**

What a **test** for the **faith** and **courage** of the disciples! Someone whom the **whole community accepted** as a prophet and a great man, and whom Jesus Himself said was the ‘greatest among those born of women’, John Baptist, is **removed** from the public scene, **never to return** [Mat 11:11] The **executioner** himself, Herod, **respected**

John, “*feared John knowing that he was a righteous and holy man*” He even “*kept him safe*” from the hands of Herodias, and yet he even “*heard him gladly*”[20]!! What **turmoil** is in the heart of those who **recognise** the truth but **hate** it!

Notice how **fickle** and **insecure** the ungodly are when it comes to the **unknown** world of the **spiritual** and the **afterlife**. “*He is Elijah...a prophet...John whom I beheaded*”[16]! No doubt but that a **guilty conscience** gets to work when extraordinary things happen! You know the ‘world’ can’t understand the **extra-ordinary** happening! They have no answer to it - therefore the mind **plays-up!**

Note how there is a **sorrow/grief** that is truly **genuine**, but is **not evangelical!** Herod was **really upset** at this beheading! “*the king was exceedingly sorrow*”[26] about the whole sordid affair, but it did not lead him to **repentance!** There is a sorrow for sin that is genuine, but does not lead to salvation. Listen to Paul: “*For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret, whereas worldly grief produces death*”[2 Cor 7:10]!!

Amazing how **enslaved** some children can be to their **cruel** parents! And wives to their **cruel** husbands! Stalin used it for **social engineering new** communists recruits. The communists would be cruel to them, feed them and brainwash them, and that treatment, for some reason, made them want to **cleave** to their persecutors!

Of course we see that every day in our own land. Drink and drugs have the **mastery over** many intelligent people. So many people who could be so useful in our society, are **enslaved** to drink/drugs!

We have a young beautiful woman, **enslaved** to her **cruel** mother! This mother “*wanted to put him (John) to death, but could not*”[19] She grabbed this opportunity from her daughter! The daughter **must** have **enslaved** to her mother. (a) She gave it to her mother(b) She **forfeited half the kingdom** to please her mother?[23]

Such a **sad** passage! But **behind** it all is the glorious **gospel!** John’s death **strengthened** the disciples. **None** of them gave up. None apart from Judas, gave up preaching - so that **you/I** can be saved!