

Study Notes: Mark 6:1-6
June 6, 2021: “All too Familiar”
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Jesus left there and went to his hometown, accompanied by his disciples. When the Sabbath came, he began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard him were amazed.

- After Jesus healed both the sick woman and Jairus' daughter, He and the disciples returned to Nazareth, the town He grew up in. As was His custom, Jesus taught in the synagogue. Jesus' teaching was initially received with amazement, as it was in other places. Earlier in Mark's Gospel, Mark explains that Jesus' teaching was received this way because Jesus taught with authority, unlike other rabbis (see Mark 1:27).
- Some scholars note that the people's amazement may not have been a positive reaction. Instead, their amazement may have been a result of their skepticism and disbelief.

“Where did this man get these things?” they asked. “What’s this wisdom that has been given him? What are these remarkable miracles he is performing? Isn’t this the carpenter? Isn’t this Mary’s son and the brother of James, Joseph, Judas and Simon? Aren’t his sisters here with us?” And they took offense at him.

- The people's amazement quickly turned to offense and disbelief. They could not understand how Jesus, the man they knew and watched grow up, could have such wisdom, understanding, and be able to perform such miracles. To them, Jesus was simply a carpenter (the word in Greek is *tektōn* which really means “craftsman”), whose family they knew.
 - The Faithlife Study Bible attempts to explain the sudden shift in the people's attitude, “This abrupt shift from amazement to offense is unexplained. Verse 4 seems to imply that no one respected Jesus in Nazareth after this point, suggesting that those who were amazed (v. 2) became convinced by certain naysayers. It may also be that some people believed but the majority of people agreed with the opinion of those who cited Jesus' background as evidence of why not to believe Him.”
- The statements that the people make can all be seen as demeaning and disrespectful. Some scholars believe that the phrase, “Mary's son,” may be akin to calling Jesus a bastard!
- To summarize the interactions, Mark explains that the people “took offense at Jesus.” The word translated “took offense” in Greek is *skandalizō* which means “stumbling block.” It is also the word from which the English word “scandal” is derived. The people's familiarity with and the knowledge of Jesus and His family became a stumbling block for them, which led them to disbelief.

Jesus said to them, “A prophet is not without honor except in his own town, among his relatives, and in his own home.”

- Hearing what people were saying, Jesus then quoted a proverb that explained the situation. Anywhere else, Jesus would have honor, except here among the people who knew Him.

He could not do any miracles there, except lay his hands on a few sick people and heal them. He was amazed at their lack of faith.

- The response of Jesus to the people’s lack of faith was troubling. Because of their lack of faith, Jesus could not do many miracles. Mark’s statement does not mean that somehow Jesus was stripped of His power in Nazareth; instead, He chose not to do miracles. Miracles go hand in hand with faith, and Jesus was always searching for faith in people prior to His mighty works. The New American commentary explains, “The statement clarifies that Jesus was not the kind of miracle worker whose primary purpose was to impress his viewers.”
- Jesus’ reaction to the people’s lack of faith was amazement, but in this case, the word is used negatively. The Pillar New Testament Commentary notes, “What amazes God about humanity is not its sinfulness and propensity for evil but its hardness of heart and unwillingness to believe in him.”
 - The Pillar New Testament Commentary also comments on faith further, “The greatest obstacle to faith is not the failure of God to act but the unwillingness of the human heart to accept the God who condescends to us in only a carpenter, the son of Mary.”

Then Jesus went around teaching from village to village.

- After this encounter in Nazareth, Jesus continued to move to other villages and towns, teaching and preaching. This phrase is a summary and transition for Mark to move on to the next story in his Gospel.