

Second Baptist Church of Doylestown
Bible Study Notes
9-11-24

Mark 6

Jesus' Countrymen Are Offended At Him – Verses 1-3

¹ Jesus left there and went to his hometown, accompanied by his disciples. ²When the Sabbath came, he began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard him were amazed. “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? ³Isn’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.

6:1-3 Is this not the carpenter: In His hometown, Jesus faced a crowd that wondered how He became so powerful in both word and works. Jesus left Nazareth as a carpenter. He came back as a rabbi, complete with a group of disciples. It isn’t hard to see how the Nazareth locals would wonder, “What happened to Jesus?” Throughout the centuries, some people have thought that Jesus’ employment as a carpenter somehow discredited His message.

6:3 The Son of Mary: “The additional phrase ‘the son of Mary’ is probably disparaging. It was contrary to Jewish usage to describe a man as the son of his mother, even when she was a widow, except in insulting terms. Rumors to the effect that Jesus was illegitimate appear to have circulated in his own lifetime and may lie behind this reference as well.”

Jesus' Reaction To The Rejection By His Own Countrymen – Verses 4-6

⁴ Jesus said to them, “A prophet is not without honor except in his own town, among his relatives and in his own home.” ⁵He could not do any miracles there, except lay his hands on a few sick people and heal them. ⁶He was amazed at their lack of faith. Then Jesus went around teaching from village to village.

6:4 Jesus said that a prophet (in other words, a worker for God) is never honored in his hometown. But that doesn’t make his work any less important. A person doesn’t need to be respected or honored to be useful to God. If friends, neighbors, or family don’t respect your Christian work, don’t let their rejection keep you from serving God.

6:5 Jesus could have done greater miracles in Nazareth, but he chose not to because of the people’s pride and unbelief. The miracles he did had little effect on the people because they did not accept his message or believe that he was from God. Therefore, Jesus looked elsewhere, seeking those who would respond to his miracles and message.

Jesus Sends Out the Twelve – Verses 7-13

⁷ Calling the Twelve to him, he began to send them out two by two and gave them authority over impure spirits. ⁸These were his instructions: “Take nothing for the journey except a staff—no bread, no bag, no money in your belts. ⁹Wear sandals but not an extra shirt. ¹⁰Whenever you enter a house, stay there until you leave that town. ¹¹And if any place will not welcome you or listen to you, leave that place and shake the dust off your feet as a

testimony against them.”¹² They went out and preached that people should repent.¹³ They drove out many demons and anointed many sick people with oil and healed them.

6:7 The disciples were sent out in pairs. Individually they could have reached more areas of the country, but this was not Christ’s plan. The advantages in going out by twos include: (1) They could strengthen and encourage each other. (2) They could provide comfort in rejection. (3) They could give each other discernment, and fewer mistakes would be made. (4) They could stir each other to action as a counter to idleness or indifference. Our strength comes from God, but he meets many of our needs through our teamwork with others. As you serve Christ, don’t try to go it alone.

6:8-9 Mark records that the disciples were instructed to take nothing with them except staffs, while Matthew and Luke record that Jesus told them not to take staffs. One explanation is that Matthew and Luke were referring to a club used for protection, whereas Mark was talking about a shepherd’s crook. In any case, the point in all three accounts is the same—the disciples were to leave at once, without extensive preparation, trusting in God’s care rather than in their own resources.

6:11 Pious Jews shook the dust from their feet after passing through Gentile cities or territory to show their separation from Gentile influences and practices. When the disciples shook the dust from their feet after leaving a Jewish town, it was a vivid sign that they wished to remain separate from people who had rejected Jesus and his message. Jesus made it clear that all who heard the gospel were responsible for what they did with it. The disciples were not to blame if the message was rejected, as long as they had faithfully and carefully presented it. We are not responsible when others reject Christ’s message of salvation, but we do have the responsibility to share the Good News clearly and faithfully.

Herod Hears Of Jesus’ Ministry And Is Perplexed – Verses 14-16

¹⁴ King Herod heard about this, for Jesus’ name had become well known. Some were saying, “John the Baptist has been raised from the dead, and that is why miraculous powers are at work in him.”¹⁵ Others said, “He is Elijah.” And still others claimed, “He is a prophet, like one of the prophets of long ago.”¹⁶ But when Herod heard this, he said, “John, whom I beheaded, has been raised from the dead!”

6:14-15 Herod, along with many others, wondered who Jesus really was. Unable to accept Jesus’ claim to be God’s Son, many people made up their own explanations for his power and authority. Herod thought that Jesus was John the Baptist come back to life, while those who were familiar with the Old Testament thought he was Elijah (Malachi 4: 5). Still others believed that Jesus was a teaching prophet in the tradition of Moses, Isaiah, or Jeremiah. Today people still have to make up their minds about Jesus. Some think that if they can name what he is— prophet, teacher, good man— they can weaken the power of his claim on their lives. But what they think does not change who Jesus is.

The Death Of John The Baptist – Verses 17-29

¹⁷ For Herod himself had given orders to have John arrested, and he had him bound and put in prison. He did this because of Herodias, his brother Philip’s wife, whom he had married.¹⁸ For John had been saying to Herod, “It is not lawful for you to have your brother’s wife.”¹⁹ So Herodias nursed a grudge against John and wanted to kill him. But she was not able to,²⁰ because Herod feared John and protected him, knowing him to be a righteous and holy man. When Herod heard John, he was greatly puzzled; yet he liked to listen to him.²¹ Finally the opportune time came. On his birthday Herod gave a banquet for his high officials and

military commanders and the leading men of Galilee. ²² When the daughter of Herodias came in and danced, she pleased Herod and his dinner guests. The king said to the girl, “Ask me for anything you want, and I’ll give it to you.” ²³ And he promised her with an oath, “Whatever you ask I will give you, up to half my kingdom.” ²⁴ She went out and said to her mother, “What shall I ask for?” “The head of John the Baptist,” she answered. ²⁵ At once the girl hurried in to the king with the request: “I want you to give me right now the head of John the Baptist on a platter.” ²⁶ The king was greatly distressed, but because of his oaths and his dinner guests, he did not want to refuse her. ²⁷ So he immediately sent an executioner with orders to bring John’s head. The man went, beheaded John in the prison, ²⁸ and brought back his head on a platter. He presented it to the girl, and she gave it to her mother. ²⁹ On hearing of this, John’s disciples came and took his body and laid it in a tomb.

6:17-19 Palestine was divided into four territories, each with a different ruler. Herod Antipas, called Herod in the Gospels, was ruler over Galilee; his brother Philip ruled over Traconitis and Iturea. Philip’s wife was Herodias, but she had left him to marry Herod Antipas. When John confronted the two for committing adultery, Herodias formulated a plot to kill him. Instead of trying to get rid of her sin, Herodias tried to get rid of the one who brought it to public attention. This is also exactly what the religious leaders were trying to do to Jesus.

6:18 Christians today face a world of moral compromise. Secular power sets standards that correspond to majority vote; Christian standards, however, begin and end with God’s Word. To be faithful to God’s Word, we must stand up against what is morally wrong. Responsible Christians must choose their battles. Start with prayers for wisdom, then prayers for courage. Once your battle is chosen, speak and act as a faithful follower of the living God. Witness with strength; move mountains by faith; overcome in love. Show the compromised world a little of John’s stubbornness, fortitude, and faith.

6:20 Herod arrested John the Baptist under pressure from his wife and advisers. Though Herod respected John’s integrity, in the end Herod had John killed because of pressure from his peers and family. What you do under pressure often shows what you are really like.

6:22-23 As a ruler under Roman authority, Herod had no kingdom to give. The offer of half his kingdom was Herod’s way to say that he would give Herodias’s daughter almost anything she wanted. When Herodias asked for John’s head, Herod would have been greatly embarrassed in front of his guests if he had denied her request. Words are powerful. Because they can lead to great sin, we should use them with great care.

Jesus Feeds the Five Thousand – Verses 30-34

³⁰ The apostles gathered around Jesus and reported to him all they had done and taught. ³¹ Then, because so many people were coming and going that they did not even have a chance to eat, he said to them, “Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest.” ³² So they went away by themselves in a boat to a solitary place. ³³ But many who saw them leaving recognized them and ran on foot from all the towns and got there ahead of them. ³⁴ When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. So he began teaching them many things.

6:30 Mark uses the word apostles here and in 3: 14. Apostle means “one sent” as messenger, authorized agent, or missionary. The word became an official title for Jesus’ 12 disciples after his death and resurrection (Acts 1: 25-26; Ephesians 2: 20).

6:31 When the disciples had returned from their mission, Jesus took them away to rest. Doing God's work is very important, but Jesus recognized that to do it effectively we need periodic rest and renewal. Jesus and his disciples, however, did not always find it easy to get the rest they needed!

6:34 This crowd was as pitiful as a flock of sheep without a shepherd. Sheep are easily scattered; without a shepherd they are in grave danger. Jesus was the Shepherd who could teach them what they needed to know and keep them from straying from God. See Psalm 23; Isaiah 40:11; Ezekiel 34: 5-31; and John 10:11-16 for descriptions of the Good Shepherd.

Jesus Feeds The Multitude – Verses 35-44

35 By this time it was late in the day, so his disciples came to him. "This is a remote place," they said, "and it's already very late. **36** Send the people away so that they can go to the surrounding countryside and villages and buy themselves something to eat." **37** But he answered, "You give them something to eat." They said to him, "That would take more than half a year's wages! Are we to go and spend that much on bread and give it to them to eat?" **38** "How many loaves do you have?" he asked. "Go and see." When they found out, they said, "Five—and two fish." **39** Then Jesus directed them to have all the people sit down in groups on the green grass. **40** So they sat down in groups of hundreds and fifties. **41** Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to his disciples to distribute to the people. He also divided the two fish among them all. **42** They all ate and were satisfied, **43** and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces of bread and fish. **44** The number of the men who had eaten was five thousand.

6:37-42 When Jesus asked the disciples to provide food for over 5,000 people, they were amazed and said it would take a small fortune to feed such a crowd. How do you react when you are given an impossible task? A situation that seems impossible with human resources is simply an opportunity for God. The disciples did everything they could by gathering the available food and organizing the people into groups. Then, in answer to prayer, God did the impossible. When facing a seemingly impossible task, do what you can and ask God to do the rest. He may see fit to make the impossible happen.

6:37-42 Why did Jesus bother to feed these people? He could just as easily have sent them on their way. Jesus does not ignore needs, however. He is concerned with every aspect of our lives—the physical as well as the spiritual. We might well ask why the church has taken so lightly the command, "You give them something to eat." Jesus' compassion for these hungry people is recorded in all four Gospels. For people who are desperately hungry, there is no better way for us to show God's love to them than to help to provide for their physical needs. As we work to bring wholeness to people's lives, we must never ignore the fact that all of us have both physical and spiritual needs. It is impossible to minister effectively to the spiritual need without considering the physical need. (See also James 2: 14-17.)

Jesus Departs For Prayer – Verses 45-46

45 Immediately Jesus made his disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him to Bethsaida, while he dismissed the crowd. **46** After leaving them, he went up on a mountainside to pray.

6:45-46 He sent the multitude away: Jesus loved the multitude, but he was not obsessed with crowds. He knew when to kindly tell them to go home (He sent the multitude away). He departed to

the mountain to pray: A long, difficult day spent ministering to the spiritual and physical needs of the multitude left Jesus exhausted. But that hard day drove Jesus to prayer, not from prayer.

Jesus Walks On The Water – Verses 47-52

⁴⁷ Later that night, the boat was in the middle of the lake, and he was alone on land. ⁴⁸ He saw the disciples straining at the oars, because the wind was against them. Shortly before dawn he went out to them, walking on the lake. He was about to pass by them, ⁴⁹ but when they saw him walking on the lake, they thought he was a ghost. They cried out, ⁵⁰ because they all saw him and were terrified. Immediately he spoke to them and said, “Take courage! It is I. Don’t be afraid.” ⁵¹ Then he climbed into the boat with them, and the wind died down. They were completely amazed, ⁵² for they had not understood about the loaves; their hearts were hardened.

6:49-50 The disciples were afraid, but Jesus’ presence calmed their fears. When you experience fear, do you try to deal with it yourself, or do you let Jesus deal with it? In times of fear and uncertainty, it is calming to know that Christ is always with you (Matthew 28: 20). To recognize Christ’s presence is the antidote for fear.

6:52 The disciples didn’t want to believe, perhaps because (1) they couldn’t accept the fact that this human named Jesus was really the Son of God; (2) they dared not believe that the Messiah would choose them as his followers; (3) they still did not understand the real purpose for Jesus’ coming to earth. Their disbelief took the form of misunderstanding. Even after watching Jesus miraculously feed 5,000 people, they still could not take the final step of faith and believe that he was God’s Son. If they had, they would not have been amazed that Jesus could walk on water. Is your heart hardened against Jesus? Even Christians can be hard-hearted to Jesus’ words. We can be informed about what his Word says, and we can be amazed at how he has worked in other people’s lives, but we can refuse to believe he will come to our aid in our time of trouble. Such a reaction is not unbelief, but willful, hard-hearted rejection of Christ’s ability to help. Instead, “take courage,” and trust that he is there for you.

Jesus Heals Many In Unusual Ways – Verses 53-56

⁵³ When they had crossed over, they landed at Gennesaret and anchored there. ⁵⁴ As soon as they got out of the boat, people recognized Jesus. ⁵⁵ They ran throughout that whole region and carried the sick on mats to wherever they heard he was. ⁵⁶ And wherever he went—into villages, towns or countryside—they placed the sick in the marketplaces. They begged him to let them touch even the edge of his cloak, and all who touched it were healed.

6:53-56 Gennesaret was a small fertile plain located on the west side of the Sea of Galilee. Capernaum, Jesus’ home, sat at the northern edge of this plain. As many as touched Him were made well: With this description of the healing ministry of Jesus, Mark concludes a brief section where we see the power of Jesus over the laws of nature. Normally, five thousand are not fed by one small lunch. Normally, men don’t walk on water. Normally, the sick are not instantly healed. None of this is normal, except by the power of God.