

**Amazing Unbelief**  
**Mark 6:1-6**

We get to return to Mark chapter 6, and one of the notable qualities of the Bible, the ancient words that we have, is that we have not just a chance to learn and to get more facts and information but a hopeful, actual result of change in our lives, and that can come through different ways. And sometimes, it's difficult; it's hard. We really have to work through it to understand what God's intending, but sometimes, it's just easy. It's right in front of us. Sometimes God just gives us an example and says here's a good thing to do. Do what this person did. And other times, God gives us a bad example. Here's something bad. Don't do this. Learn; don't be foolish. Don't follow their missteps. I mean, this is a nice, easy principle that you and I all put into practice every day. We look around, we work with people, go to school with people. We live with people, and we watch, and we see their missteps, and we make a decision. Either I'm going to be wise and learn from that and decide, I'm not going to do that. That's a bad example that I can learn from. Or, you're going to be the fool and continue and do and repeat exactly what had been done. As a youngest sibling, I had that opportunity many a time. My brothers were good examples; that's what I'm saying, good examples, good examples.

But the times come where we have bad examples, and in Mark 6, that's what we find today, a bad example. A simple story placed in front of us of a bad example; what not to do, that we find. It's set in perfect contrast to what we looked at last time in Mark 5. At the end of Mark 5, we saw these two wonderful, good examples of faith. In Jairus the synagogue ruler coming to Jesus, asking Him to heal his daughter, and Jesus ends up raising her from the dead. And the woman with the discharge that Jesus healed - was interrupted and allowed power to go out from Him and healed this woman who had faith, desperate dependence upon Jesus. Two beautiful examples of faith that Jesus, kind of, basically took a light and allowed it to shine on these people so that everyone in the crowd and all His disciples could see this is faith. This is how you respond to Jesus the Messiah. And now we get the opposite. We get Jesus showing His disciples, today, an example of unbelief - not having the faith that we just saw in Mark 5.

Let's look at our text. Mark 6:1-6, now; "He went away from there and came to his hometown, and his disciples followed him. And on the Sabbath he

began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard him were astonished, saying, 'Where did this man get these things? What is the wisdom given to him? How are such mighty works done by his hands? 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?' And they took offense at him. And Jesus said to them, 'A prophet is not without honor, except in his hometown and among his relatives and in his own household.' And he could do no mighty work there, except that he laid his hands on a few sick people and healed them. And he marveled because of their unbelief. And he went about among the villages teaching.'" This is what we find today, this contrast with good examples of faith and now a bad example of unbelief set before us that we can learn from. And really, it's a critical text because Jesus uses His disciples to teach them and to show them in this text before us, (and it, also, is still applicable today); and that's one of the joys of studying the ancient words of Scripture. It's not just something that was nice for the disciples and good for them, but that's it, but it extends down two thousand years later to you and me. How we can learn from this? We can be instructed by it, so let's pray that that happens now.

In our first couple of verses, what we see - Jesus returning to His hometown, the hometown reunion. The passage starts out, "He went away from there and came to his hometown..." ... "...away from there..." As we've been noting, and specifically in Mark's gospel, so much of Jesus ministry, so much of His healing, His teaching, and what He's been doing with people, has been in Galilee, right around the Sea of Galilee, right on the Sea, even going across the Sea at times and interacting with people, specifically in the town of Capernaum. He's done so much there, and that's, actually, where we left off. Jesus was there in Capernaum, and He was doing these miracles and showing these examples of faith. And now, in verse 1, we see, "He went away from there..." "He went away from..." the shore of the Sea of Galilee. And He comes to His hometown. Mark doesn't tell us His hometown because he's already made note of it back in chapter 1. It's the hometown that you and I both know, Nazareth. Right? The famous Nazareth was the hometown that Jesus decides to venture to at this moment.

So, to understand this just a little bit, we're not leaving the region of Galilee, per se. We're still in the north of Israel. We're not going down to Judea and Jerusalem where the temple is. We're not in Samaria. We're still up north, but we're not on the Sea of Galilee any more where Jesus has done so much

of His ministry. He's gone back and forth, and now He comes about twenty to twenty-five miles inland here up on a hill to Nazareth overlooking the Jezreel Valley. This is where He comes to His hometown where He grew up. And we see in our text it says, "...his disciples followed him." And that's, actually, an important detail here because where we left off, if you remember, last we saw, Jesus was in a house, raising a little girl twelve years old from the dead, and He didn't have all His disciples with Him. He only had Peter, James, and John, the inner three. Now, He has all His disciples again, and that's intentional.

Jesus is doing this for a reason. He's making sure all His disciples come with Him because He wants all of them to see this bad example. You see, what's going to happen next, if you were to look ahead and check out verses 7-13, Jesus will then take His disciples and, kind of, enroll them in the lab part of the course of training. He will say hands-on-time. It's time for you to go and do this yourself. It's time for some on-the-job training. You're going to go out, you're going to take this message, and you're going to have the power and authority to do so. But before Jesus sends them out and gives them that opportunity, He makes sure that they have this last moment, this last lesson to learn, before they go. And you think, well, it's fantastic. It's perfect time for a motivational speech, pump up the troops, get 'em excited, make sure there's some positive energy flowing here, as they have the enthusiasm and adrenalin rushing through them to go out and take this message. And that's not what we find today. Jesus makes certain that His disciples see the reality of what taking this message to people looks like; that there are those who have no faith; that unbelief is common, and Jesus makes sure that His disciples see that before He sends them out. So, we note that it's no longer just Jesus and the inner three or just a couple people, but it's His disciples that are following Him, that are with Him as He journeys back to His hometown in Nazareth.

Our text goes on and in verse 2... and states, "on the Sabbath he began to teach in the synagogue..." ... "on the Sabbath he began to teach in the synagogue..." Something we've see happen regularly so far, just in Mark's gospel. This was how Jesus operated. He would go around to different cities and towns in Galilee. He would be healing people, interacting with them, but He would take advantage of the Sabbaths. On the Sabbath, He would go into the synagogue, and being the guest there, He would get the opportunity to teach. And we don't hear and see for sure in this text what He taught, but we

know, generally in the synagogue on the Sabbath, they would have a reading from the Old Testament, something from Moses and the prophets, and then, someone would, actually, expound on that, explain it, and teach it - a lot, like, almost what we do here.

Jesus had been doing this, so coming back to His hometown, He gets this opportunity, an opportunity again to teach, to do what He came out to do, to do what He came to this earth to do - to teach, to make known the truth of the kingdom. He takes advantage of this chance, and it's interesting that we've seen Him do this a few times up until this moment, but after this account, He will never do this again in Mark's gospel. We will never see Him enter a synagogue again to teach on the Sabbath. This kind of resounding end, almost, as Jesus' ministry will change drastically, after this encounter with His hometown. We've seen Him healing people in the synagogues. We've seen people being amazed at His teaching. He teaches unlike the scribes; He has authority in what He says. And this will be the last time that He does this, and it doesn't fail to deliver. We see once again that people are amazed at what He has to say.

As we press on, we really do see an amazement, but it turns out to be quite negative. The hostile rejection is what we find in His hometown synagogue here on the Sabbath - the hostile rejection. And at first, as you read through this, you start to think this is positive. This is good; "...many who heard him were astonished, saying, 'Where did this man get these things? What is the wisdom given to him? How are such mighty works done by his hands?'" Sounds like this could be genuine, legitimate questioning from His hometown, excitement even, maybe enthusiasm coming with this. So, it appeared as you see in the beginning here, they appear to be overwhelmed by Jesus - so overwhelmed by Him as they hear Him. He comes in, and they're getting something they were not expecting at all, apparently. Because they knew Him - He grew up there, and yet they respond this way, astonished. Astonished! The word "astonished" is *ekpléssó* (ἐκπλήσσω), and it, basically, means... an easy way to understand it is to be blown away, just be blown away. Kind of have your socks just completely knocked off, just amazed, and this happens not just here in Nazareth, but several times throughout Jesus' ministry, people respond this way. They're amazed. They're astonished at what Jesus is doing, at how He teaches, at His ability to heal - His supernatural demonstration of His Messianic authority.

People are amazed. And so, here, in the hometown, we find astonishment. So, it looks positive. We think. We think this could be a good thing, and so we ask, well, how exactly were they astonished? And that's where we have these questions that come in our passage, these questions that they ask, and we think how do we understand these questions? You, really, have three questions that are grouped into one category of what Jesus is doing and, then, the last two questions grouped into the category of who Jesus is. So, as they're overwhelmed by Jesus, we see these first three questions, and let's look at them. First, they say, "Where did this man get these things?" ... "Where did this man get these things?"

"...these things..." is a reference to His teaching. They've just heard Him teach in the synagogue, and this is, kind of, really, setting them back because they're realizing... I don't remember Jesus doing this before. Do you guys? I mean, we all know Jesus. Right? He grew up here a lot of His life. Where did this come from? I mean, wow! Right? You think you know someone and all of a sudden they pull something out and, where did that talent come from? I didn't know you could sing. Wow! Right? Jesus comes up, and He teaches with authority, and they're saying, where did this come from? "Where did this man get these things?" ...this teaching. The second question, "What is the wisdom given to Him?" What is this wisdom that He has? This is not the Jesus we have known. We didn't have Him pinned down to be this amazing teacher with lots of knowledge and wisdom. This is kind of shocking everybody there, and yet, they grew up with Him. This is kind of taking them back.

Well, where did this wisdom come from? This is the only time Mark uses the word wisdom in his gospel, and, really, it's going to show that clearly, in Jesus' life during Nazareth when He hadn't began officially and formally His public ministry in Galilee and Israel, He was not flashy. Jesus was not going about His upbringing and trying to show off all the abilities He had and making sure everyone in the town knew, oh, there goes Jesus again using His special abilities. That wasn't what He did. He was humble. He was ordinary, an ordinary boy that grew up into a man in Nazareth, just an ordinary person, thus their shock, thus their astonishment that... This amazing teaching and this wisdom... Wow! Who would of thought! Really? ...that He had this wisdom? This is quite incredible. I mean, we might expect, maybe, if someone was training to be a rabbi or a scribe of some sort - that prestigious occupation that takes all the time and diligence, and you

give your life to it. But that wasn't Jesus because as they'll go on to say, "...is not this the carpenter..." The carpenter is not the person you associate with wisdom, knowledge, and this ability to teach.

Thirdly, they ask, "How are such mighty works done by his hands?" Later on, in this passage we see, "...he could do no mighty work there..." So, what are they referring to? They're referring to the reports that they've heard about Him. It's pretty obvious that they would hear something by this point. Jesus has been going about Galilee; He's been doing plenty of miracles, giving plenty of, really, data showing who He is, His abilities, His authority. We've seen a lot of this. We were just looking at it in Mark 5. Yeah, He can calm and control nature, no problem. He can cast out thousands of demons just by speaking. He can raise someone from the dead. He's a big deal. He's been doing all of this, and this had spread to even Gentile regions. People that weren't even a part of Israel were starting to hear of this amazing ability and authority. So, it makes good sense that in His hometown, Nazareth, only twenty miles away, they would know. Thus, they ask the question, not only are we hearing and seeing His wisdom and His teaching - but then these stories about these mighty works that He's done; is anybody aware of this? Where did this come from? This is incredible. And you might be thinking, I don't see how this is really a hostile rejection at this point. This seems like it's totally normal. They're just trying to wrap their minds around what's happening.

The sad thing is, as we'll go on to see in the next couple questions and how they respond, this is a hostile rejection, flat out. And the reason why is because it really is quite appalling that these people are even asking these questions to begin with. It's amazing that they would, actually, take time to be suspicious - and not sure what to think about this man. This is what they're doing. They're almost throwing Jesus on trial. They're scrutinizing Him. They're kind of thinking we know this guy, but here He comes with all His knowledge and doing amazing things, helping people. Okay. Alright. What do we think about this guy? What an insult. It's an absolute insult, especially to someone that should and ought to be a hometown hero. There should be a parade for this man, an amazing reception for Him. And this is what He gets - He's a guest speaker in the synagogue - and He gets people suspicious of Him? ...putting Him on trial in some sense? They're over thinking it. Just being simple Jewish people with some knowledge of the Scriptures, they should be able to connect the dots at this point. What do you

start to think about a person that comes as an Israelite and does these amazing miracles that are clearly beneficial and good things that, actually, line up with the Old Testament, too? And you start to see what the Old Testament says about the Messiah and what you're hearing about this Jesus doing, and it's not that hard to put two and two together at some point.

How many more times does Jesus have to calm a storm? How many more times does He have to raise people from the dead? How many more miracles does He have to do? How much more teaching do you have to hear? They should be able to connect the dots at this point. This should be excitement because you are the hometown to this man that is displaying Messianic qualities, and yet, Jesus has none of that. Instead, He gets suspicion thrown at Him, the people questioning Him, not sure what to think about Him. In all reality, you start to see that there's a connection here, basically, between how His hometown is treating Him and will treat Him, and how the Jewish leaders treated Him back in chapter 3. You remember when the scribes came from Jerusalem to go up to Galilee and investigate, to watch Jesus and to, really, establish a verdict. What do we think of this man? What's our decision about Jesus? Is He a legitimate prophet? Is He a man of God or is He a phony? What do we decide? They're the Jewish leadership, and they need to make a decision, and they come, they examine Jesus, and you remember their decision; He's working with Satan, is what they said. They decided after all their examining of Jesus that He's in league with Satan, and this is the suspicion that's coming from His own people in Nazareth, too. This is weird. Where did He all of a sudden get all this wisdom? Hold on a second. Where'd all these reports all of a sudden just, kind of, come from? Wait a minute! This just doesn't seem like God. This is fishy. Is it possible there's some demonic work happening here? It's a terrible example of unbelief that's being manifested.

You think, but the astonishment - they're astonished. That's a good thing. Right? It can be. There's times in the Old Testament where you have people that are just amazed and floored at God and His glory. They're astonished, like Moses and the burning bush, like Isaiah and the temple when he gets the vision of God's glory - they fall down. They say woe is me, and then they respond, and they do what God asks them to do. They walk forward in faith, and that's the key. It's not just being astonished and amazed at what you've witnessed or what you've heard, but it's actually doing something about it. It's connecting it with a decision to move, to act, to manifest what would be

and show what would be true, legitimate faith. So, are these people astonished? Well, yes, they are. They are amazed because this is something else. This is something they were not expecting on the Sabbath - to encounter a whole new Jesus, but the response of astonishment is not fulfilled into faith. They're running the risk of being that generation of Israelites that got to see amazing glory and miracles that God did, destroying Egypt, allowing them to cross the Red Sea, leading them to the Promised Land, and yet they rebelled. They were astonished, no doubt. They were amazed at the work of God when He drowned Pharaoh and his army, but that didn't mean that they had faith. In fact, Scripture's very clear that they failed to enter the Promised Land because of unbelief, because of their lack of faith. So, they wandered for forty years, and that whole generation died. Astonishment is the right response to God and His glory, but it's not the end goal, and that's what's happening here - yes, amazed but not ending in the right spot of faith.

Astonishment does not equal true faith, and this is still happening today. This is the bad example we need to learn from. People are astonished and amazed at what the Bible says. Some people just love this kind of thing. They're intellectuals, and they say, yeah, this is a great history book. What other things are in here? This is wonderful to fill my head with this knowledge. Or, man, I love the feeling of these people coming together, the good vibes that come from a place like this. I love the great potlucks we have with the fellowship groups and the growth groups and the adult Sunday school. I love these things. And they're astonished, and they enjoy it, and they partake in it, but it never fully blossoms into faith and action. See, unbelievers can be these interested people that are inspired by this and motivated by it, but it never really works itself out in their lives in true faith, walking forward. It's not enough to be moved emotionally; that's not faith. Faith is not this feeling, so it's not enough to see these people astonished at Jesus.

In the same way, believers do the same thing. You and I can be guilty of the same thing on any given day. We live our lives, and we are amazed, and we enjoy the many blessings God has given us, and we just say, man, Lord, what a great day. What a great time to be together and to sing songs to You and to enjoy this encouragement, and then you leave from this service and nothing has changed. There's emotions, though. There's even astonishment. You might of been amazed at what took place; the choir was awesome, but

does it translate into faith, actual, true faith? That's what the Scriptures are after. That's what Jesus is after, and that's what Nazareth was lacking. They did not have this. And for Christians, the same thing can happen on any given day. Church is not your pick me up for the week. Growth group is not a time to have your emotional needs met. Alright? We aim for a response. We aim for action because that's what true faith is. That's why, in Hebrews 11, you have a list of people that did things by faith. It's not by faith Moses really felt good about God, and by faith Jacob really was pumped to hear the promises given to him - by faith they acted. That's what Nazareth lacked, and that's what the world still lacks in their unbelief. They can even be amazed at some of the things that Scripture says. They can be amazed at what you and I do in the church as the body of Christ, but they don't walk forward in faith.

Nazareth was overwhelmed. They were overwhelmed with Jesus. They were astonished, but they did not have true faith, and that's what we clearly see in our next verse here. In verse 3, we see them being offended, at first overwhelmed, but, really, the true character of their heart coming out as they're offended by Jesus – offended. Verse 3; we read, “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?” And they took offense at him.” ...states it plainly. You start to now capture the tone in which they're asking these questions. It's not a genuine tone at all. It's not a legitimate desire to know more. It's suspicion absolute suspicion. Why? Because they say this is a carpenter; surely, God would not use a carpenter to be His Messiah. Give me a break. They knew the Old Testament, but they thought they knew God well enough to know He would not do it this way, not with this ordinary woodworker, not with this ordinary man that's creating farming tools. Really? God wouldn't do that. This guy's the carpenter that we've known for years. I mean, we know His family; they're nothing special. It's just Mary His mom, and we know all His brothers here. His sisters are still with us. This can't be, and they're offended, offended.

This word for taking offense at Him is *skandalizó* (σκανδαλίζω). It's a scandal. In reality, it's a stumbling block. They've been caused to stumble by this thought. They understood the Scriptures. They knew the concept of a Messiah and a Savior to come, but it wasn't Jesus and to be encountered with this is quite amazing and a lot to process, but, no, this can't be it. It's something else, but it's not that. It's not Messianic. No way! It's a stumbling

block. They can't get past it. They can't bear to, actually, embrace that this could be, and this, actually, is God's plan. They can't bring themselves to embrace the reports that they've heard and match them up clearly with Scripture and see this man is right on track to do the work of God. They couldn't do it. They couldn't put it all together. It was a stumbling block to them because of how ordinary and typical Jesus was, just a normal man - in a town like Nazareth? Come on. In other gospels, they describe Nazareth as a place where nothing good comes from; "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Yeah, right. So, even the people that live there are thinking, nah, this is impossible, when they should be rejoicing. They should be saying this is great; this'll put us on the map. We have the Messiah and ample evidence of it. No. They're offended. It's a stumbling block.

This happens multiple times in Jesus' ministry. There's other times where people had similar responses to Him and His teaching. John 6:42; Jews replied and said, "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How does he now say, 'I have come down from heaven'?" Jesus is claiming this authority that's even divine and from heaven, like He's the Son of God or something, and like He's the Messiah, but, hello, I know His parents Mary and Joseph. No way! I can't get past that. John 7:15-16; "The Jews therefore marveled, saying, 'How is it that this man has learning, when he has never studied?' " So Jesus answered them, 'My teaching is not mine, but his who sent me.' " That wasn't a good enough answer for Nazareth. They saw this wisdom and they understood that, but they thought there's no way, no way that was actually God that gave it to Him. Otherwise, we would've seen it, and we would've known it from long ago, certainly. They weren't willing to embrace that possibility. This is not just to make sure we're all on the same page. This is not a surprise or a shock in the plan of God or in the ministry of Jesus.

This is a very intentional moment as He's brought His disciples to witness and see this rejection of Him, and it's, actually, something that was prophesied in the Old Testament, one of the major passages concerning the Messiah, the Suffering Servant as He's known in Isaiah 53:1-3. Look at these verses; "Who has believed what he has heard from us? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? For he grew up before him like a young plant, and like a root out of dry ground; he had no form or majesty that we should look at him, and no beauty that we should desire him. He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief;

and as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not.” Prophecy, seven hundred years before Jesus comes to this earth, seven hundred years prior to this event, saying He’s going to be rejected. It’s not going to be a parade, a welcome home reception in Nazareth. People will not esteem Him as they ought to, when the irony is He’s the Messiah. Even at His birth when Joseph and Mary do the right thing and take Jesus to the temple, they encounter this man Simeon, and even Simeon prophesies that this will take place. He “...said to Mary his mother, “Behold, this child is appointed for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign that is opposed (and a sword will pierce through your own soul also), so that thoughts from many hearts may be revealed.” And they were revealed. That’s for sure.

As Jesus came to Nazareth, the thoughts of these people come out, and it becomes very evident that there are those that are falling in Israel, not rising up and excited for what is taking place, but suspicious and putting Him on trial, even offended at Him, very offended. This lesson, while it’s perfect for the disciples to hear before they go out - Jesus gives them this honest transparent look at what they’re in store for, what they have in front of them, this rejection that lies ahead. And it was not something that only the disciples encountered and experienced, but it’s something you and I can bank on even now. Look at Paul and his ministry; this was how he described his glamorous ministry, so to speak. He says, “For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom but we preach Christ crucified...” How’s that message going? It’s “...a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles...” Well, that kind of covers everyone, so that’s a difficult and a hard sell, but this is the reality. We can be promised and we can know that rejection awaits us, unbelief is in store as we throw the seed of God’s word. As we proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ, we’ll get people that view it as a scandal. It’s a stumbling block. I can’t get past certain elements of Christ, and this whole story you’re telling me - and other people that’ll say, really, your hero died on a cross? No thanks. It’s foolishness to them.

This is a guarantee that you and I have as we take this ministry, as we go out, we’ve been fully warned, and we know we’re equipped - that we’re dealing with people that have no desire for this. They’ll even rise up and mock it. There’ll be opposition and unbelief in the response. Unbelievers, really, they’ll not be able to exercise true faith until they have humbled themselves to God’s character and His ways. The people in Nazareth were

hung up. They had this image of the Messiah, and it was not a carpenter. They had the picture of where He would come from, and it was not Mary and her family. Right? They had this picture before them that they couldn't get out of their mind, and Jesus just didn't fit it. They had essentially taken what God's plans and God's thoughts and God's ways were and said, umm, we have something in mind. We're going to elevate our thoughts, our images, our plans, and what we expect the Messiah to be like. And as long as people do that, as long as they take what God has said in His word, as long as they take what we know to be true about God and say I could never worship a God like that; you see, the god that I worship, he's different. He's different than what the Bible says because I have it all figured out. It's pride and as long as unbelievers, as long as people continue in that pride, they have that picture of God, and that picture of what the god that they worship is like, they'll never come to true faith. They won't humble themselves and embrace that God did use Jesus as the Messiah, and He was a humble carpenter, and He did die a death on a cross - that you and I and everybody needed.

And believers, too, on a day to day basis, you and I fail to exercise true faith when we're offended at God's character and His ways, and how often this happens. We're fine embracing aspects of God's character, even the harder things we're willing to accept as we move through life, but some days a certain trial comes up, a certain form of God's love in disciplining us, and we say huh uh. No. Nah, that's not right, God. There's a better way to do this, and we completely remove ourselves from faith. We've now taken what we think and we've elevated it and made it greater than what God is doing. We fail, too. We become just like this. We have our picture of the Christian life. We have our picture of our own life. We have our picture of the church. We have our picture of how it should be, and when it doesn't go that way, we've fail to comply with God. It's wrong. It's unbelief. It's ridiculous. We're offended at God, and that can't be true of believers who are described as those who are fighting the good fight of faith. We must be those who rise up, respond in faith, embrace who God is and His ways, knowing certainly that His thoughts, His plans, His ways are higher than ours for He created us, and He knows what He's doing. What a bad example we have in front of us. May we learn from it, not repeat such folly as they are offended at Jesus.

At verse 4, we finally transition and see the response that Jesus gives. In verses 4-6, we see the hindered response - the hindered response. What Jesus

ends up doing is not very much like what He does in the rest of Galilee. It's not the same. It's quite different. It's hindered. It's held back. Looking at verse 4, we read, "And Jesus said to them, 'A prophet is not without honor, except in his hometown and among his relatives and in his own household.'" First, Jesus responds with the expression, this kind of proverb if you will, this proverbial expression that He gives. That's common. You and I have our own versions of it when we speak it in our day, but this concept of this prophet, as Jesus definitely was and more, being received in all these other places, even in Samaria where they're half-breeds, and in the Gentile region where they're not even Jewish - people responding, and yet, here He is in His hometown, no honor for Him. You think about military heroes, when they return to their hometowns, the small town rises up to greet them, pushes everything aside just to welcome them. Celebrities, they feel the love when they come home to their towns, and people go to great lengths to welcome them. Sports teams, when they win championships, get to shut down parts of the city for their parades. This is the normal expectation, and yet, Jesus is treated like He is on trial, potentially working with Satan; we're still not sure.

It's a terrible response, but it fits in with this idea. You and I might express it as "familiarity breeds contempt." This kind of familiarity over time with something or someone can lead to contempt, and what they had done is they've taken this image of Jesus and they just made it what it was, stuck in a box, never possible to be Messianic. No way. Absolutely not! And instead, they treat Jesus like that food at a certain restaurant they've had for ten years, and they're just, like, ugh, I want something different. That desk job they sat at for twenty years, and it's just contempt, and they want to do something different. There's no way. Jesus is just the same old, same old, carpenter man. There's no way God would use Him, no way - and Jesus reveals the truth. They're not excepting Him in the place where they ought to be throwing a party for Him. In the Old Testament, this is how Jeremiah was treated in his prophetic ministry. The people from his hometown eventually got so mad at him and just said shut up. Stop! They were the ones that, actually, rose up and told him to stop prophesying. His own hometown was not proud of Jeremiah, although they should have been because he was the only one speaking the truth. In Jesus' ministry, in John 7:5, we learn, "For not even his brothers believed in him." They mocked Him. They "...said to him, 'Leave here and go to Judea, that your disciples also may see the works you are doing. For no one works in secret if he seeks to be

known openly. If you do these things, show yourself to the world.” Just mocked in His own household, mocked in His own town - not received with faith as He ought to have been.

In verse 5, we see an exception here. In verse 5; “And he could do no mighty work there, except that he laid his hands on a few sick people and healed them.” And what you really have are two exceptions. The first exception is the bigger one, that is that Jesus “...could do no mighty work there...” All these other places He had gone, He would engage with the crowds. He had compassion on the people. He’d talk to them as long as He saw fit. He would feed them. He would heal them. He would do these mighty works for hours on end. Yet, here’s an exception. This is one time where He doesn’t do that - an exception where He doesn’t do these mighty works, and you think is this a limitation in His power? Was He just not able to, and He was trying to? Not at all. Jesus was purposeful with His ministry, and the whole point of these miracles that He’s was doing was to show and display faith. Just as we saw in Mark 5 right before this, when He did these miracles, it was for a lesson. It was for a reason. It was an opportunity to teach and show and instruct, and yet, what do you do when you come to a place where there’s no faith? What do you do when you come to a people, and you know their hearts, and they have no faith? Any miracle you do, any mighty work you’re doing, is just for the show at that point. It’s just entertainment, and Jesus didn’t come to be an entertainer. So, this is just an exception. He “... could do no mighty work there...”

In some senses, the second exception is that He’s willing to have compassion on the very few that are there, the apparent few that had faith, that were sick, that He laid His hands on and healed. But this, even, still was limited compared to His other ministry and the stories that had circulated about Him. Jesus’ miracles and His ministry was revealing true faith, but when faith is lacking in a place like Nazareth, there’s no point, so He chooses to “...do no mighty work there...” It’s not a limitation of power. It’s an assessment of ministry and what’s important and what’s at hand.

This is explained in our text in verse 6, and that’s what we find - an explanation in verse 6 - this explanation that surfaces; “And he marveled because of their unbelief. And he went about among the villages teaching.” This is amazing. This word marvel or wonder, every time you see it normally in the gospels, it’s people marveling at Jesus. This is the one time

in Mark where you have Jesus marveling, and when is the time that Jesus marvels? When does Jesus have the wonder and when is Jesus truly amazed? It's when He sees unbelief, an unbelief of this magnitude in His own hometown, His own people rejecting Him, failing to exercise simple faith, as He would go on and later teach faith (even the size of a mustard seed) that could take a mountain and throw it into the sea, and yet, none of that in Nazareth, none of that. Really, what happens, this rejection that we find here in Nazareth, one commentator puts it this way, "This event becomes a foreshadowing of the dark cloud descending upon the Son of God which will eventually lead to the Cross." This is the beginning of Him teaching His disciples, if you follow Me, this is what is in store for you - rejection. They did not esteem Me. They did not embrace Me, and that's what you can bank on. The ultimate display of that will be when His own people hand Him over to be crucified, but for now, in the beginning of this ministry, He uses this example of His hometown rejecting Him.

So, the reality is unbelievers will either embrace the message of Christ or they'll be offended. There's not this wishy-washy middle ground. There's no way that people can say, yeah, I have Jesus along with other things that I believe, and I think He's a great guy. I don't fully embrace Him and believe in Him and surrender to Him, but I think He's great along with all these other things that I believe and ideologies that I have. You can't do that. You're either embracing Jesus or you are offended because you will recognize that Jesus has said, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." Jesus makes it exclusively hinged upon Him for anyone to receive eternal life. If you truly understand that statement, you either hate it or you love it. And that's the condition and place of all those who have not come to a place of belief in Jesus in our preaching of this message.

But even more so for believers, we have options. We either submit to God's ways in faith or we continue to stumble and sin because we think our ways are better, and so, the faith that we exercise is not this one moment faith where we got saved, and now, we don't look back, and we just kind of walk along and float along aimlessly in life. The faith that we had when we got saved we continue to exercise day in and day out, and it's more than just being amazed and astonished. It's more than an emotional feeling, and it's humble in a way that it doesn't put our thoughts and our ways above God's thoughts and His ways. It's legitimate faith that has action each and every

day, that walks as one who not only hears the word but does it. That's the faith that you and I have to exercise, and it's a daily challenge. We have to rise up and meet this challenge. Faith is a huge deal. Let us not be like Nazareth with this amazing unbelief that we can have in every day of our life. Let us respond and, actually, act - have good deeds that show our faith and be excited to let God be God as we submit to His plans, His ways, and His character.