

Scripture: Mark 6:1-13; John 1:11

Text: Mark 6:1-6a

Jesus: The Prophet without Honor

Beloved in Christ: usually in a home coming, a person who has been gone for a while, would receive a warm welcome! Think of the Toronto Raptors with its key player Kwahi Leonard. They won the NBA title and championship. The city held a parade for them. Fans poured their honor and tribute on them.

Now turn to Mark 6. You think Jesus, the eternal Son of God, through whom all things were made, would receive honor among His own at His hometown. He has news to share, the greatest news to share: in Him, the kingdom has come!

He goes to His own but His own do not receive Him [John 1:11]. Indeed, He is the Prophet without honor. Is it possible that He is without honor among His own today? From Mark 6:1-6, see Him, the Prophet without honor.

1. They are astonished at Him [verses 1-2]
2. They are offended at Him [verses 2-3]
3. They reject Him [verses 4-6]

1. They are astonished at Him [vv.1-2]

Jesus was in Capernaum. This was His headquarters you might say. He had just raised Jairus' daughter to life and healed the woman with the issue of blood. Now **verse 1** says that *"He went from there and came to His own country and His disciples followed Him."*

His *"own country"* refers to the place where He was brought up as a boy and, though not named here, this place was Nazareth [Luke 4:16]. Bethlehem was where He was born. He grew up, however, in the town of Nazareth in the home of Joseph and Mary. The Bible does not mention much about His first 30 years, except the mention of visiting the temple in Jerusalem when He was 12 years old [Luke 2:41ff].

He now moves inland with His disciples from the Sea of Galilee to the hilly area of Galilee, about a 20 mile walk to the south and west. In spite of His birth in Bethlehem and His base in Capernaum, Jesus was known as *"the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee"* [Matthew 21:11] or simply as *"a Nazarene"* [Matthew 2:23].

Jesus does not return to Nazareth to take time off for vacation or to visit family. He went there to teach and to heal. Surely His own would receive Him and honor Him, wouldn't they?

We read in **verse 2a** that *"when the Sabbath had come, He began to teach in the synagogue. And many hearing Him were astonished...."* They were hearing Him and they were astonished! The word 'astonished' is a strong word here. His own were amazed and continued to be amazed. What were they astonished about?

Two things: they heard His wisdom in His teaching; they heard about His power, His mighty works. They question the source of His wisdom and power: **Verse 2b**: *"Where did this man get these things? And what wisdom is this which is given to Him, that such mighty works are performed by His hands!"* They are puzzled, perplexed! They were astonished in this sense.

From Luke 4:17-22 we hear what happened. The attendant handed the scroll of Isaiah to Jesus. Jesus chose Isaiah 61:1-2 as His text. There, Isaiah states that in the coming age, the Spirit would rest upon God's anointed One. He would proclaim good tidings to the poor, release to the captives, recovery of sight to the blind and liberty to the oppressed. Then Jesus rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and all eyes were fixed upon Him. Jesus affirms that in Himself these promises are being realized! He is the anointed One!

Jesus spoke with freshness, with conviction, with authority and with grace. His old acquaintances were struck with amazement.

But that favorable reaction didn't last. Why not? They are offended at Him [v.3]. Why so?

2. They are offended at Jesus [vv.2-3]

They knew Him as one of their own. He grew up with them, went to school with them. The fact that He spoke with wisdom and did these wonderful things didn't fit with how they knew Him.

These words were wonderful but coming from Him From HIM? How is that possible? Where did these things come from? That it might be from God did not seem to occur to them. To them, He was just an ordinary man, a simple, plain Jesus.

They speak in **verses 2-3**, literally, in a derogatory, belittling way, *"Where did this guy get these things? And what wisdom is this which is given to this guy, that such mighty works are performed by his hands! Is this not the carpenter, the son of Mary, and brother of James, Joses, Judas and Simeon? And are not His sisters here with us?"*

In other words we grew up with this guy. He is a carpenter. The Bible tells us that He was the son of a carpenter [Matthew 13:55]. Joseph, Mary's husband, was a carpenter. And here He is called the carpenter. Before Jesus began His ministry, He was employed as a carpenter. He was Joseph's apprentice.

It seems strange, even bizarre to think that God incarnate, the One through whom all things were made, was taught to build things by Joseph. But see Jesus submitting Himself to the humility of being fully human, like us in every way. He was not ashamed. He learned how to fix things, build things. He was a handyman. He used His hands to fix and build things from wood or stone. His hands were rough and calloused using a hammer and piques! The Son of God took to Himself the form of a servant and 'in the sweat of His face at bread' as a working man. It is shameful to be a gambler, a drunkard, a liar or covetous, but it is not shameful to work with your hands.

His human origins offend them. He's the son of Mary. He has brothers. His other sisters are here with us. In **verse 3**, we read that *"they were offended at Him."* The actual word is 'scandalized.' They were scandalized by a working man proclaiming that God's kingdom had come in His person and presence. It didn't fit. This was not their idea of the Messiah, the Son of God. He should be a warrior Messiah, who in their mind, would turn Rome upside down or a glorious firebrand coming down from the sky.

This man was just too ordinary! They were scandalized by Him. They didn't see beyond His ordinariness, His plainness. They didn't see beyond His humanity. They didn't see Him by faith! This was the problem!

They didn't see beyond the calloused hands of a carpenter. That's all they saw. They didn't see the hands that touched the leper [1:41], or the hand that took the little girl by the hand saying, "Little girl, I say to you,

arise" [5:41]. They did not see His compassionate, tender, powerful hands. They did not see His hands that were strong in cleansing the temple, gracious to receive children [10:16], hands – wounded at Calvary because of our sins, yet hands victorious after death [Luke 24:50-51].

They didn't see beyond a carpenter, a human builder. They did not see that by Him all things were made. They did not see the Son of God, the carpenter of Nazareth who would build His church on earth through His Word and preparing mansions in heaven for all who trust in Him. They didn't see Him by faith.

Isn't this a danger for us too? The danger is that we become so familiar with the Word of God, the preaching of the gospel. We take it for granted. It's so ordinary; so plain, that we no longer see the glory and power of Christ. It's like Niagara Falls. For all newcomers – this is the first place they want to see. But for those who live there – it has become so familiar, so ordinary. They don't see its glory, power and beauty.

Many are offended when they don't see signs and wonders, drama and people falling to the floor in worship. They are offended by only hearing the ordinary, plain Word of God. That's all?? Oh, they don't have the Holy Spirit,' they say! Yet, through His Word by His Spirit Jesus does His real, supernaturally powerful work – shaping us, molding us by His hands, building up our faith. The wonder, the glory of Christ's work we see by faith through the plain, spoken Word.

Are you offended at Jesus for coming to you in this way, offering to cleanse you of your sins and heal you from hatred, anger, jealous? Does this not fit your idea of Jesus? Is He too ordinary for you? The apostle Paul says in 1 Corinthians 1:23-24, *"but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God."*

Verse 3 ends by saying *"they were offended at Him."* This Jesus was not for them! Christ was like a stone to them who stood in their way. They stumbled over Him, tripped and fell.

3. They finally reject Him [vv.4-6]

How does Jesus respond? With a proverb. **Verse 4**, *"But Jesus said to them, 'A prophet is not without honor except in his own country, among his own relatives, and in his own house.'" What Jesus says is this: wherever it may be a prophet is honored, it is not in his own hometown.*

Some of us may know what that is like. Sometimes family or friends in the town in which we grew up, say: 'who are you to tell us?' They remember you. They are very familiar with you but they don't honor what you say. For some of you as new believers, family is sometimes the most difficult to witness and share the Word with. They remember you and know you all too well!

This is what is going on here. But in saying this proverb Jesus definitely implies that He is a prophet. He has the right to be honored. Their own Scripture in Deuteronomy declared that God would raise up the Prophet, Him you shall hear! [Deuteronomy 18:15].

But they did not hear Him. Unbelief stood in the way. There were two results as we see in **verses 5-6**: First, *"He could do no mighty works there except that He laid His hands on a few sick people and healed them"* and, second, Jesus *"marveled because of their unbelief."*

First, Jesus could do no mighty works there. This does not mean that He did not have the power. But because of their unbelief, He did not want to do them [Matthew 13:58]. He did not come to tantalize their senses. Worship is not a circus. It is not a gong show.

Many today don't experience the blessing of God's mighty work of grace in their lives because they reject Him. Rejection can come in different forms among His own. One way is by choosing not to hear His Word. This is not honoring Him to whom all honor is due! Others dishonor Him by making priorities over honoring Him in worship. Look at His heart for you. He gave His life for you! He wants your heart!

How do times of refreshing come? **Acts 3:19**, *"Repent, therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord."* Times of refreshing come through His Word. These are the showers of blessings which revive, refresh, and renew. He could do no mighty works because of their unbelief.

Second, Jesus marveled because of their unbelief. Why? Because they had the Word of God! They heard His wisdom and heard about His mighty works. But they did not believe. How Jesus marvels! John says, *"He came to His own and His own did not receive Him"* [John 1:11]

Do you notice something here in our passage? Mission follows Jesus' rejection. Jesus sends out His disciples two by two throughout Israel. The truth is the truth. The Word will triumph in the midst of unbelief. This passage points to a greater rejection and a greater mission: the rejection of Christ on the cross and the risen Christ's commission to His disciples, *"Going, therefore, make disciples of all nations, baptizing them ... teaching them...."* [Matthew 28:19].

The truth is not dependent on a vote. You can't vote it in or out. Christ is the truth. For all who believe there is life. But for all who do not believe, there is death. See Christ intensifying His efforts? He sends out the twelve throughout Israel and later, He sends out the church, into all the world with His Word, to spread the high honors of His name .

His rejection on the cross due to our sin becomes the life-giving message to the world for all who believe. Christ died, arose again and ascended into heaven. God has honored Him, by seating Him at His right hand. Today He sends out His church into the world with the Word of God. The apostle Peter says, *"For Moses truly said to the fathers, 'The Lord your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your brethren. Him you shall hear in all things, whatever He says to you'"* [Acts 3:22]. Hear Jesus, whatever He says to you.

Jesus says, *"Blessed is he who is not offended because of Me"* [Matthew 11:6]. Amen