

More than a Carpenter

Mark 6:1 – 13

Proposition: If we try to figure out who Jesus is from a human point of view, we will always misjudge who He truly is.

Application: Overcome the fear of going on mission knowing that serving the Lord Jesus brings joy.

Introduction

Many inventions have been misjudged only to later enjoy huge global success. For instance, Thomas Edison, at the 1878 World Fair in Paris, lit up *Avenue de l'Opera* and *Place de l'Opera* for the first time with electric light. An Oxford Professor said: "*When the Paris World Fair is over, the electric light will go out and we'll never hear about it again.*" Twenty years later Edison applied for a patent for his light bulb. Henry Morton, then president of the Stevens Institute of Technology, wrote in a local paper: "*Anyone familiar with Mr. Edison's light bulb will recognize that it is a clear failure.*" Just as Edison's invention was misjudged so was Jesus.

If we try to figure out who Jesus is from a human standpoint, we will always misjudge Him. Only the *eyes of faith* allow us to see Jesus as He truly is.

I. Facing Hostility (6:1 – 6)

Jesus the Nazarene (6:1, 2): Jesus left His ministry base in Capernaum and went to His hometown of Nazareth. This was Jesus' last visit there. A year earlier the people of Nazareth tried to kill Him (Luke 4:28 – 30). Jesus returned to give Nazareth one more opportunity to accept Him. When He arrived nothing special happened until the Sabbath. The Sabbath found Him in the synagogue. This was likely the same synagogue Jesus went to as a young boy. This is Mark's last mention of Jesus teaching in a synagogue. The synagogue became a place of rejection not reception. From this point onward Jesus will mostly teach in homes (7:17; 9:33).

Jesus' message stunned His hearers with wonder. There was a disconnect between the Jesus they heard and the Jesus they knew. Notice they called Him *this Man*. For 30 years they knew Him as Jesus. Why call Him *this man*? Did they want to deny that they knew Him? Notice also the phrase *given to Him*. They knew His wisdom was not due to formal training His wisdom was given to Him as a gift. However, the giver of wisdom is not spelled out. Some believed *atan* was the source of His wisdom and power (3:22). They were not willing to accept that *this Man* was more than a Carpenter. They could not admit He was anointed by God; that His wisdom was from God; that He was the promised Messiah.

To be awed at the teaching of Jesus is not enough. His teaching must lead to a faith response in Him.

Because Jesus did not have any formal training as a Rabbi the people believed He did not have authority to teach in their synagogue. We often look for man's credentials rather than God's authority.

Jesus, Son and Brother (6:3): The Nazarenes still viewed Jesus as a worker in wood. Some in Nazareth may have owned things Jesus built for them. The people could not grasp that Jesus was more than a carpenter. They were outraged that a lowly carpenter claimed to be the Jewish Messiah. Scriptures are full of great people from humble backgrounds. For instance, King David grew up as a shepherd boy in the obscure village of Bethlehem. According to Scripture the Messiah was from the offspring of David.

When talking about a son, it was common practice in Israel to use the father's name (i.e. *son of Joseph*) even after the father had died. The mother's name was used only when the father was unknown. Calling Jesus, the *son of Mary*, was in effect saying Mary was a harlot and Jesus was illegitimate.

There is a teaching in the Roman Catholic Church called *the perpetual virginity of Mary*. This doctrine states that Jesus was the only child of Mary, and Mary was a lifelong virgin. By listing the siblings of Jesus this passage proves Mary did not remain a virgin after Jesus was born.

James was the oldest of the four boys listed. He was the leader of the early church in Jerusalem (Acts 21:17, 18). James was also the author of the letter James. While Jesus was alive, James did not believe in Him. What changed? When James saw the risen Lord, he finally grasped that his brother was the Messiah (1 Cor 15:7). Nothing more is known about *Joses*, except what is written here. *Jude*, also known as *Judah*, was the author of the book of Jude (Jude 1:1). Like James, Jude did not believe Jesus was the Messiah until after His resurrection. Nothing more is known about *Simon*. The people of Nazareth were offended by Jesus' lowly origin. Their physical knowledge of Jesus kept them from gaining spiritual knowledge of Him. They were using human standards to grasp who Jesus was. The yardstick they used kept them from seeing that Jesus was the Messiah. Because the Nazarenes could not explain Jesus, they refused to believe He was more than a carpenter. As Bible scholar Kenneth Wuest once said *they could not explain Him, so they rejected Him*. If we seek to figure out who Jesus is from a human point of view, we will always come to the wrong conclusion. Only the *eyes of faith* allow us to see Jesus as He truly is – the God-Man (2 Cor 5:16). The Nazarenes needed to move from knowing Jesus as a Carpenter to knowing Him as the Christ. How can we know Jesus in this way (2 Cor 5:17). When we become a new person in Christ Jesus, we gain a new knowledge of who He is and what He has done. Since we have the Spirit and the Scripture, we can truly know Him.

Jesus the Prophet (6:4): We have likely heard the saying *familiarity breeds contempt*. The Christian faith can become so routine that we can adopt a posture of contempt toward the habits of the faith. We may ask ourselves: *Do I have to attend Church every Sunday? Reading the Bible daily is so dry. Why do I have to pray over and over again about the same thing? Don't I know Jesus well enough?* We need to avoid the trap of *familiarity breeds contempt*. How? By letting the Holy Spirit teach us about Jesus through His Word (John 16:14b). The Holy Spirit uses the Word of God to open to us the riches of God's grace such that we are amazed at Who Jesus is and what He has done.

Jesus the Healer (6:5): In Capernaum, Jesus healed many. In Nazareth, He healed few. Mark points out how much more Jesus could have done. The Lord was present to heal but only a few showed up. The Nazarenes were in such a state of unbelief they would not even bring their sick to Jesus. The Lord will not force His power on those who do not want Him (Matt 13:58). Notice in this verse it does not say *He could not* it says *He did not*. The heart of the problem was a hardened heart. Unbelief does not limit God's power; it constrains His will. Unbelief is the wilful refusal to receive what God has to give. Unbelief pushes God out of our lives. Faith is the capacity to receive what God has to give. Faith receives God into our lives. Charles Spurgeon once said, *Unbelief will destroy the best of us. Faith will save the worst of us.*

Jesus the Preacher (6:6a): Twice Jesus marvelled. He marvelled at the *absence of faith*. It was expected to find faith in Israel. Jesus also marvelled at the *presence of faith* (Luke 7:9). It was not expected to find faith among Gentiles. What would Jesus find, if He peered into your heart? Would He marvel at your faith, or would He marvel at your unbelief?

Unbelief caused Jesus to leave Nazareth, but it did not stop His mission to preach the Gospel.

II. Finding Hospitality (6:7 – 14)

Sharing in His Mission (6:6b, 7): In order to extend His impact and expand His mission, Jesus sent out His 12 disciples. Going out in pairs was a common Jewish practice. Two can achieve more than one (Eccl 4:9). The witness of two people fulfills the legal requirement to confirm a matter. The Torah requires at least two people to prove the truth of a testimony (Deut 19:15b; John 8:17). Hudson Taylor, founder of CIM, once said "*God's will done God's way will never lack God's supply.*" God's will is to preach the Gospel. God's way is to do so as a team with His authority. Any person called by God to serve is also equipped by God to serve. The 12 were equipped with the authority of God to confront the forces of evil.

Compared to the Gospels, we find very little display of demon forces in the OT. It seems that the coming of Jesus caused a massive incursion of demons in Israel. Could it be, that satan marshalled his demon forces hoping to thwart the gospel ministry of the Lord Jesus?

Sparseness in the Mission (6:8, 9): A mission's trip is not a vacation it is an exercise of faith. When engaged in the Lord's work, all that is needed is to trust in His power and provision. A servant of God should always depend on the supply from God (Luke 22:35). As the great missionary George Mueller once said, *if the Lord fails me this time, it will be the first time*. There are people to reach for the Lord Jesus and we cannot be hampered in our mission to reach them. If we rely on our own resources, we may cease to rely on the Holy Spirit (Heb 12:1, 2). The basic principle in mission is to be content with a lifestyle of simplicity.

Say Yes to Hospitality (6:10, 11): It was common practice in ancient Israel, to offer hospitality to strangers when they arrived in a village. While on mission, the disciples were to depend upon the host to meet their needs. They were to guard against the desire to switch to better lodgings than the one they were offered. Some may offer the disciples better and more luxurious lodging. Moving to better lodging, may offend to the original host family as they may conclude their hospitality was sub-standard. This will reflect badly on the Gospel.

As the disciples' minister from place to place some will receive their message others will reject their message. Sometimes they will find hospitality other times hostility. If the people refused their message they were to leave – just as Jesus did after casting out demons from a man. *Shaking the dust off their feet* was a gesture stating that the disciples were free to walk away with a clear conscience.

A person may be set free from devils, healed of diseases, but what good are the miracles if that person dies without knowing the Lord Jesus?

Sharing the Message (6:12, 13): While the Lord armed His disciples with might and miracle, He sent them out first to preach that men and women should repent. John the Baptist preached repentance; Jesus preached repentance; the disciples preached repentance; we preach repentance. When the Lord delegates His authority, it is so that we might first preach repentance; then cast out demons and heal the sick. The order is vital! Repentance always comes first. The first great work of the Holy Spirit is to convict us of sin. We must know we are sick before we will take the cure. What is repentance? Repentance means to leave the sins we once loved.

The disciples were likely quite nervous as they went out. But when they returned, they were thrilled (6:30; Luke 10:17). That is the way it is when on mission with the Lord – it is scary to go out, but what joy when we return!