Rejected at Home

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Preacher: Guest: Scott Rosen

[0:00] Well, good morning. I think the sound is on. So I'm glad to be back here. I'm sorry for those of you visiting that Pastor Jeff is not here this morning. We really love this church. We've had the blessing of coming and visiting a number of churches in the area, and this is always one of our favorites to visit. And I hope if you are in the area, you will come back and visit again when Pastor Jeff is here. As Brother Greg mentioned, I'm with Virginia Beach Theological Seminary, so I'm the registrar down there and also recently received my Master of Divinity degree. And last time I got a sale, so if anybody is interested in seminary, I'd love to talk to you afterwards. We have both remote and local programs, but if not, Lord, you can just pray for us as we seek to train men in ministry for the gospel presentation. But this morning we'll be in the Book of Mark. We'll be in the Gospel of Mark in Chapter 6, verses 1 through 6. One of the things I love about this church is that Pastor Jeff is dedicated to the Word of God, and that means that he usually preaches about an hour, and when I spoke to him, he gave me full license to do the same. So I'm sorry, but I'll probably try to take advantage of that this morning. But hopefully it'll be a blessing to all of us as we work through the text together. So we're in Mark Chapter 6, and we'll be looking at verses 1 through 6 this morning. I'll be reading from the English Standard Version. I think most similar formal translations are pretty similar in the text as I look through them myself. So starting in verse 1, this is what the Scripture states, if you want to look along with me. The Bible says,

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 this not the carpenter, the son of Mary, and the brother of James, and Joseph, and Judas, and Simon? Are not his sisters here with us? They took offense at him. 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. May God bless the hearing and teaching of his word this morning. Let's pray together.

Heavenly gracious Father, Lord, I thank you for the opportunity to bring forth your word in my limited capacity and limited abilities. And Lord, may you bless this time together. May you be with Pastor Jeff as they return home, Lord. And thank you for giving them this respite, Lord. Thank you for this church and for the people you brought out today. May everyone be blessed by your holy word and the spirit. And we do pray these things in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Well, I've enjoyed the change in temperature. It's getting a little warmer here, as our normal climate is in Virginia Beach. So if I bring your attention to the Christmas season, it might not seem like the appropriate time period. It's usually a little cooler around then. But I always enjoy the Christmas season. My family does as well. I imagine many of you do. And during Christmas time, normally we'll hear preaching or teaching from the early parts of the Gospels of Matthew and Luke, where the Christmas story is contained. If you recall back to the story, one of the major characters, one of the principal characters there is the Lord Jesus Christ's mother, Mary. And we usually appreciate Mary very much in those stories. We hear about her faith there. I mean, what would otherwise be a scandalous situation?

She is willing to remain faithful to the word of the Lord she receives as she gives birth and has the honor of bearing the Christ child. And we also think highly of her when we think of the humble nature of the holy family. That, of course, you remember the famous account that they are turned away from the inn and then they have to go off to either a stable or a cave somewhere, wherever the manger may be. And that's where the Christ child is born. But as we think of Mary in that

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situation, we think of some of the attendant circumstances. You recall the shepherds being on the field and there's a multitude of angels that come forth in that situation. We sometimes forget the fact that Mary was just a normal Jewish woman. She was just a Jewish teenager, probably. And their family was pretty ordinary.
[4:34] Our Roman Catholic friends' visions aside, Mary was just an ordinary individual. And we do see some glimpses of her and her family throughout the rest of the gospel. It's not a huge focus of the gospel, but we do see them here and there. And what we do, we see them in not only ordinary circumstances, but sometimes we see them in a bit of a negative light at times. In the gospel of Mark, there's a few of these situations. In Mark 3.21, there's an interesting situation where Jesus is preaching and teaching and his family comes and it says that they try to seize him. They try to take him away by force. And the reason that is given why they do that is essentially they're saying they think he's out of his mind. They think he's crazy. They come to take the Lord Jesus Christ away. And we also see soon thereafter at the end of Mark chapter 3 that Jesus's family, his mother and his brothers come, and they want to interact with Jesus. They want to have some sort of audience with him, at least come to him maybe and see what is going on in his ministry. And somebody tells him that they are out there waiting for him. And Jesus is a little dismissive of their desire to meet with him. He says, and this is what the scripture records in Mark chapter 3, verses 33 through 33, who are my mother and who are my brothers? And looking about at those who sat around him, he said, here are my mother and my brothers. For whoever does the will of God, he is my brother and sister and mother. Now I think that the reason Jesus makes this point here is he's making a theological point. As Brother Greg talked about their study in the union of Christ, I think there's a key point here that when we come to Christ, we have this union with him. He becomes our elder brother and God the Father becomes our Father, our Heavenly Father as well. So he's making this important point, but in doing so he's being somewhat dismissive. Not sinful, of course,

Jesus Christ being perfect in every way, but he's being somewhat dismissive of his family. And you see this disconnect between Jesus and his earthly relatives, in particular his siblings, who at this time none of them have come to a saving knowledge of him. None of them truly believe at this point Mary, though, but not his brothers and not his sisters. And so we see this sort of disengagement between Jesus and his earthly family. And in our present passage, while these members of his family do not appear, they are referenced. As we have worked through the text, they are referenced in this portion. I think it's another example of showing, casting Jesus' family sort of in a negative light, or at least they're used in a negative way in this sense. It's very different than sometimes the impression we get in the Christmas story when we see them involved in the scenarios there.
And so all this leads up to what we will see in chapter 6, where Jesus returns to his hometown. But I think it's helpful, and even important, to have a good idea of the chronology that's going to take us from this present portion, where Jesus is somewhat dismissive of his family, to our present text. Now we're fortunate in the book of Mark, that pretty much is a chronological book. So the book of Mark usually gives you a pretty straightforward chronology of what's happening to the Gospels. In the other synoptic Gospels, and by that I mean Matthew and Luke, sometimes the events are clumped together for theological purposes, or to have thematic purposes, so the chronology isn't perfect there, and intentionally so. It's not there's an error in the writing of the Scripture. There's an intent that Matthew and Luke have in writing in that way. But Mark's pretty good about giving you the chronology. So this is what takes place after the encounter that Jesus has with his family.
He goes off towards the Sea of Galilee out of Capernaum, which is his home base up in the Galilean region, where his ministry is at that time. And he gives a number of the parables that we're all very familiar with. But the key point that comes from this discussion in the parables is that while people might be able to hear the parables and have some earthly sense of what Jesus is talking about, they need to be spiritually discerned. So you cannot really understand the parables the way they should be understood unless you have spiritual ears to hear. And this starts off a sequence of events that I think Mark is using to try to underscore what his theme is of the book of Mark. You might remember in the very first verse of the book of Mark, this is how he records things. The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. So the key thesis statement, or the key point that Mark is trying to make throughout the book of Mark, is that Jesus is the Son of God, that he is deity, that he is truly man, that he is also truly God. And all these events point to this. So one here, he talks in this way as a rabbi with more authority than an ordinary rabbi would have, saying essentially you cannot understand my words and my teaching unless it is spiritually revealed to you.

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Well after there's that period of teaching, these famous parables, Jesus and his disciples get on a boat and sail across the Sea of Galilee over to the western side. But on their journey as they try to travel there, as you might recall, there's a terrible storm that arises. The disciples are quite frightened and they arouse Jesus from the slumber. As Jesus rises, he commands the wind and the sea to calm down. And the disciples ask this, who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him? So he's given the parables, they're going across the sea. Now they head to the west bank to the area of the Gerasenes and the Geredines. It's different depending upon the portion of text they're in. There are different names for different cities in this time period.
[10:05] And he gets there, and you might recall the encounter he has there. There's two demoniacs. Mark only records an encounter with one of them, or focuses on one of the demoniacs. And this man who had been tied up in the tomb for so long comes to Jesus.

Jesus heals them from this demonic infestation of legion, throws them into the pigs, and they go over to the side. Well, he frees this man, but the people there are not very pleased that their livestock has just gone over the side of the cliff into the sea, and so they pretty much force him to leave, and he does so. So they go back over to the other side, to the western side of the Galilean Sea, and they're back in Capernaum. And there he interacts with this man, Jairus, or ruler in the synagogue, and he begs Jesus to come to help heal his daughter, who is very ill. Jesus agrees. So as they make their journey to Jairus' home, he comes and he interacts with this other woman who has this issue of blood. If you're not sure exactly what it is, but it's this chronic condition that no doctor has been able to heal her of, and she spends all of her life savings, all of her fortune, trying to be healed from the situation, and Jesus, in one touch of him, is able to heal her and make her whole. And then he eventually gets to Jairus' house, but the young lady, the maiden, has died already, and Jesus takes her hands and he raises her from the dead amidst the mocking and scoffing of other people around him at this time. And then after that, Mark doesn't record this, so you'll find this, I believe, in the Gospel of Matthew. He interacts with two blind men and heals them, and then he heals the meat demoniac on his way to the next step, which is our present passage. And I bring all that up to show that Jesus has made it pretty clear through his actions who he is. He is the Messiah, and he is the Son of God. Nobody can do the things he has done. Who else can speak with such authority and say, the only way you can understand what I have to say is if you can spiritually discern my teachings. Who else can command the wind and the sea to stop except the Creator himself? Who else has control over demons, disease, and even death except for a true God, except for the Lord Jesus Christ? And so he's done all these things, and now he's going to make a visit to a place that's very important, very special here. We're not given the name of the town, but as we know from elsewhere in the Scripture, he was returned to his hometown, which is the town of Nazareth. And so if you look in the text, the immediate text we have this morning in Mark chapter 6 and verse 1, there's a statement that he, well, it starts off with a statement, he went away from there. And while this is kind of a minor point, I think it is helpful to just understand the geography and to understand what Jesus' travels pertain to. So to dig in a little bit there, when it says he went away from there, the there in question is almost certainly Capernaum, where he was previously, where Jairus was. So he starts off in Capernaum, that's kind of his home base in Galilee, where he's been when he gets back. And he's made his way down. He may have interacted with blind men and the mutamaniac on his way down, but he is about to enter into Nazareth.
And there's a very clear, I think, delineation. Jesus has done all these great and wonderful works, and now he is entering the border of his hometown. He's coming home, if you will. Now you might recall, as we've talked about, that Jesus' home base in Galilee is Capernaum, and he, of course, was born in Bethlehem, but he is always known as the man from Nazareth. The demon in Mark chapter 1, when he is, when Jesus rebukes him in the synagogue, he says to Jesus this, what have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Or in the book of John, in John chapter 1, verse 46, when Nathaniel talks to Philip, he says this, can any good thing come out of Nazareth? And he's talking about Jesus. So this is clearly the place that Jesus is identified with, and even as you read even secular accounts of the scriptures in the New Testament, he's usually referred to as Jesus of Nazareth. So this is the identity that Jesus has. This is Jesus's hometown. And you might expect, at this point, of all these things that have gone on, that Jesus would receive somewhat of a hero's welcome when he comes to

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Nazareth. He's a hometown hero returning back. Even if they had not personally observed what he had done, the fame of Jesus had just gone well throughout this region. You might know or might recall from the gospel accounts that Jesus is such a celebrity, if you will, that at times he was so overwhelmed by the crowd, he either had to retreat into solitude to recharge himself in his human nature, at least, or he would even get onto boats at times, and he would go out a little way, so get away from the press, get away from the crowd, and speak to them just so they wouldn't crush him. In fact, in Mark 3, 9, it says the crowds are so great they threatened to physically crush him, overwhelm him.
They were that great. So he was clearly well known, and word would have, of course, made it back to Nazareth, which is part of this region, and of course, his family was from there, so no doubt they would have brought some word back to them. So people would have been very well familiar with what Jesus had been doing as he returns back to Nazareth. And so we would expect, our expectation would be, that Jesus would receive this welcome, this welcome as a celebrity, as welcome as this hometown hero coming back, or at least that would be my mindset. But I think that mindset is based upon a cultural bias we have being modern-day Americans. The idea of a hometown hero is kind of more limited to our day and our time and our culture. You might recall, of course, our former president, Bill Clinton, whatever you think about him personally or politically, he always used to have this element of his campaigns in the 1990s where he was the man from where? From Hope, from Hope, Arkansas. A good name for a town to be from, right? Probably why he used it in his campaign literature. But putting anything you think about him aside, it is a good story. He grew up in a small southern town, and he went off and he went to Yale,
[16:10] I believe he went to Yale Law School as well. He went and studied off in Oxford. And then he comes back home, at least to Arkansas, becomes your attorney general, eventually becomes the governor of Arkansas, and then, of course, becomes president of the United States. And there's something we really can appreciate about that as Americans. He's somebody who doesn't forget his roots, who comes back, he came from a small town, he comes back, he appreciates the way his upbringing, and people there will, of course, be very excited if such a famous person comes back to their town, and many other people. His rival in 1996, Bob Dole, had a similar story. He came from Russell, Kansas, and then became a famous U.S. senator, of course. So that's something that's very touching and encouraging to us as Americans, but that is not the case in most cultures, at least not in this time period. That's very much an American perspective. In this culture, in this part of the world, how you grew up is what you were considered when you were an adult. So if you grew up in royalty, you were always royalty. If you grew up as a commoner, you were always a commoner. There were really no self-made men back then. So that type of bias we have in our thinking can give us some confusion about why Jesus might not get the same reception. The reason he doesn't get the same reception that we might expect is because that's just not the way the culture was. It's very confusing to these people, in fact, as we will see that he can do these great works. It's also true from

Jesus' perspective that Jesus was not making a social call. So you might think that somebody who's very famous would come back to his town and want to interact with people, want to interact with little high school buddies and the like, but that's not the case here. This is a ministry. He has a ministry purpose in coming back to Nazareth. This is not a social call. And we see that, you can look at him in verse 1, who accompanies him. He's accompanied by his disciples. This is the common practice that rabbis and teachers would have. They would have an entourage of disciples. If they were coming to teach or coming to minister, they would bring these people with him. So this is a clear indication that Jesus' purpose in coming here is not a social call. He has a ministry purpose in coming to Nazareth. And in fact, this has been a practice throughout the region. In Mark 1 38 and 1 39, this is what he says. He said to them, let us go on to the next towns that I may preach there also, for that is why I came out. And he went through all Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and casting out demons. So this is Jesus' just normal practice. He's gone from town to town throughout Galilee, teaching and preaching and doing great works. And then Nazareth just happens to be the next stop on his path. So this is nothing out of the ordinary for him to come to Nazareth. Indeed, that's what he does.
If you look down in verse 2, it tells us that the Sabbath day has come and the Sabbath day for Jews both then and now is their holy religious day where they will meet in their synagogues and gather for religious worship services. And Jesus does that. As a visiting rabbi, this was a common practice

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that somebody would come in and preach and teach on that day. Kind of like in the old days, you might think of the circuit riding preacher, a guy who goes from church to church preaching. I've been out of my church for about three weeks, so I can kind of identify that process. But it's somewhat of a similar concept. A visiting rabbi would come and address the congregation, and he would engage in what was called, and it's called today, a half Torah. It's not anything in the scripture, but it's kind of a Jewish tradition where the rabbi will speak both from the law and then from the prophets, so from two sections of the Old Testament, or what we would call the Old Testament. And then he would expound upon that, kind of like we're doing now in a sermon. He would explain the law, or explain the portion of scripture to the congregation. And that is Jesus' practice. Paul had a similar practice, as we recall, throughout the New Testament, that he would go into a new city, and he would preach there in the synagogues if he was given the opportunity to share the word with the Jewish people there. It was a common practice we see in that era and amongst the Jewish people. Now, it's not clear here if Jesus is invited to preach specifically, because they know of his great works and what he's done, or if he has taken the initiative himself. But nonetheless, there doesn't seem to be any resistance, at least in non-initiative. If you look at the text, there's no reason to believe that people resisted him having this opportunity. They're pretty open to allowing him to speak and to share the word with them. And so Jesus does take this opportunity, we're told, to open the word and share it with the people. However, you might recall back to a similar account in Luke chapter 4. So there is a similar account in Luke chapter 4, where Jesus does come to

Nazareth, and he comes to the synagogue, and there he preaches and teaches. And in that case, we are given some details about his preaching. He's preaching from Isaiah 61, which is a messianic passage. And in Isaiah 61, he reads it, and then he explains it, and he explains it this way, that it has been fulfilled today in Jesus' very presence, where he claims to be the Messiah, claims to be the Christ. And while that is a very bold claim, at least initially, he receives a positive reaction. People are intrigued and interested as they hear that. They don't just chase him out of the temple when they hear that. But eventually, they start to question his authority.

They start to question, who is this man who is able to speak in this way? They don't outright reject him, but as they question, as they demonstrate that they are skeptical of Jesus' claims, Jesus responds to them. And he responds to them in this way. He relates them to some ancient Israelites. [21:43] And in particular, he relates them to the Israelites, those in the northern kingdom, who rejected the prophets Elijah and Elisha. Two different men, Elijah and Elisha. They teach a second grade Sunday school class, and we've gone through these portions of scripture, and both teachers and students are going to easily get confused between the two men.

They're two different men, Elijah and Elisha. And two elements of their ministry that are important is that they were largely rejected by the Israeli people then, but they did find an audience from time to time amongst Gentiles. So in Elijah's case, remember, he raised the widow's child from the dead. She was a Canaanite woman, I believe, who was Gentile.

And in Elisha's case, he was used by God to help heal Naaman, the warrior. Naaman was healed, both Gentiles, in contrast to most of the Israelites around them who rejected their ministry, and in doing so rejected the Lord. Well, the people of Nazareth in that account don't really appreciate being compared to those ancient Israelites who are apostates. And so how do they respond? As you may recall, they run him out of town, and they want to throw him off a cliff.

They try to throw him off a cliff. And Jesus is able to evade them. Now, there are some parallels between these two accounts. We're referring back to Luke 4, and this is Mark chapter 6. These two accounts, there are some parallels. In both cases, Jesus is speaking in the synagogue. In both cases, he ultimately has a negative interaction with the people there. And he's in Nazareth, of course. Some people have been led to believe because of that. What Luke is doing is he's just simply providing a little bit more information than what we see here in the book of Mark in Mark chapter 6, that he's just giving more details about this encounter. And so they're parallel passages. I do not think that is the case.

And I think if you studied out, the majority of theologians and commentators do not think that is the case. These are two separate events. So that means what? Jesus came to Nazareth twice. [23:38] They're two separate events. And I think this is probably why Jesus made Capernaum's headquarters, rather than Nazareth, because they tried to kill him in Nazareth. So he goes up to Capernaum, and that's where his headquarters are during his Galilean ministry.

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Well, here's the two major reasons that I believe these are separate accounts. I think it's important to explain it because that helps on our understanding of the scripture as a whole here, what's going on. The first reason I don't believe that these are the same accounts or the same instance is, one, there's differences. There's some significant differences in the story.
If you look just through, if you skin through where we are in Mark 6, you will notice that while the interaction is largely negative, ultimately, Jesus essentially kind of just leaves town afterwards. There isn't any real antagonistic interaction. Whereas in Luke chapter 4, there's quite the antagonistic situation where they attempt to murder him. You don't find any indication of that being the case here in Mark chapter 6. The second reason is because of the chronology, the chronology. So the way Luke sets it up is essentially, this is at the beginning of Jesus' Galilean ministry, the Luke account. But as we've seen, Jesus has been in Galilee for a long time ministering, performing these miracles. It happened far later in his ministry. So it seems fairly clear to me, both in terms of content and chronologically, that it was taking place that these are two events.
[25:01] And so what does that mean? Well, it means, of course, as you mentioned, that Jesus visited Nazareth twice. It also means that he was rejected in Nazareth twice, two times rejected in his own hometown of Nazareth. Now, I think if you're a thoughtful reader of the text, this should bring to your mind two questions, two big questions that are important to answer at this point. One, very related questions also. One is, if these people were so hostile in their reaction the first time they interacted with Jesus, why on earth would they want him to come back again? Why give him a second audience if they were going to kill him? They were so offended last time. And the second question, very related, is, why on earth would Jesus ever want to come back when they essentially wanted to throw him off the cliff the last time? Why would he want to come back? So why would they listen to him?

And why would he have any interest in speaking to them again? It seems like there'd be a mutual desire for both of them to keep their, go their separate ways. Well, the answer to the first question, I think, recall, if in Luke's account, if that's, if our understanding is correct, that was early on in his ministry. What does that mean? It means no miracles had really been performed in the region at that time. That they, he's kind of an unknown quantity in this situation. But here, now that his ministry has progressed so much, and they've heard about all the things that Jesus has done, now they probably have some interest in hearing from Jesus again. Who is this miracle worker? Maybe we'll give him a second chance to explain himself before they come to our synagogue. That seems most logical.
And then in regards to the second question, why would Jesus want to be here? Why would Jesus want to return to the synagogue? Well, I think there's a few reasons, but one is that this is this common practice. He goes into these different villages preaching and teaching, and he does sometimes multiple times. He goes back to Capernaum a number of times. So he would come back to Nazareth a second time. That would make some sense. But I think more so, not only is Jesus fully man, but he is also truly God. And being truly God, he is a God of mercy. A God of second and third and fourth chances.
You might remember in the book of Jonah, Jonah being the wayward servant. He has nothing to do with God after he's given his commission. He instead runs from the presence of the face of God, it tells us in the Hebrew. And God does not let him get too far and has him thrown overboard. And he could just let him fall to the bottom of the sea and die and perish there. But God, of course, sends the great fish to swallow Jonah whole, giving him a second chance at life and a second chance to fulfill his ministry.
God abounds in mercy. I think that's what's happening here as well. He's going to give Nazareth, especially his hometown, a second chance to hear the gospel and maybe respond rightly this way.
[27:48] Well, here in the text, if you recall, in Luke chapter 4, it gives us some detail about what Jesus says. We're not given any detail about Jesus' sermon, Jesus' discussion here. And I think the purpose, the reason why Mark doesn't bother to record that information or isn't inspired to record that information is because the focus isn't so much on Jesus' message as it is on the response of the people. That's the focus here. The response of the people is what is most important. And at first, we see their response is somewhat positive. It turns negative eventually. But if you look at the text here, what does it say? It says that they were kind of impressed by the wisdom that he has, that it exceeded what you'd get from a normal rabbinical homily. And they're also well familiar and impressed by what they've heard about the various miracles he has performed there. They're

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impressed by the miracles of the Lord Jesus Christ. And so they are a little bit receptive initially.

And perhaps it seems like this is going to be similar to what we have seen throughout the rest of Jesus' Galilean ministry, where we've seen it elsewhere in other villages and other towns, where people are very interested in what Jesus has to say. And they're very interested in the great works he performs. Not everyone believes. Many people are there just for the spectacle, right?
Just to see the miracles. But at least they're generally respectful of him. And maybe this will be a similar situation in which Jesus will receive some sort of respectful response. Some people will believe, and other people will just be there for the spectacle, as we mentioned. Perhaps in this way, they'll sort of redeem themselves from their past behavior and just be like any other village or any other town that he is encountering in Galilee. We're even told that initially that they are, what is their reaction? Not only are they positive, they're astonished. If you look at the text, as the ESV translated, they are astonished by what they observe. If we put that in the common day English idiom or English way of phrasing things, they were blown away by what they're saying. They're just astounded by this observation of Jesus' sermon. But, as we see, their hearts remain just as hard as in the Luke 4 encounter. So they're astonished. They're blown away. But their hearts are not changed.
And they quickly become very suspicious of Jesus. And they question his authority, as you look at the text. I mean, remarkably, after having this second opportunity to hear from the Lord Jesus Christ, and knowing about his miraculous works, what do they do? They do pretty much the exact same thing.
About a year out from the prior visit, they're impressed initially, but they quickly draw his ministry into question. This reminds me of an example from U.S. history, from colonial history, where you might be familiar with George Whitefield, the famous evangelist who came over from England and had a great ministry, particularly in New England, my understanding. And Benjamin Franklin was very interested in Whitefield's sermons. He would attend his preaching opportunities. And he was even moved by Whitefield's sermons and speeches. But, as you might know about Ben Franklin, he never became a Christian. Both his philosophy and his lifestyle testified to him never being a believer.
[31:06] So, in that situation, he was very intrigued by what he saw in the ministry, in the gospel ministry of George Whitefield, that he himself was never converted. Perhaps you've seen this in your own life. I've seen it where people are intrigued at first by the gospel. There's things that are very interesting about it to them, but they never come to Christ. They never demonstrate faith.

1 Corinthians 2.14, So, what better argument could anybody ever have for the gospel than the Lord Jesus Christ preaching to you and testifying to that preaching by miraculous works? There's nothing. Nothing else. Yet, because these people were not changed in the spirit, their hearts were not changed, they were not persuaded, and they would not receive the word. In fact, we see three questions that are laid out for us as we look down to verse 2 that specifically drive or get to the point of what were they thinking? What was going through their mind as they heard Jesus speaking? What was their reaction? And I paraphrase this in part as these three questions is, where did this man get these things? Where did he get what he's talking about? What is the wisdom given to him? What's the wisdom that he's given? Or how does he have this wisdom? And then how are such mighty works done by his hands? And if we could boil all that down to one question, we could take all their questions, all their thoughts, and boil it down to just one question, it essentially is this. What is the source of his authority? Jesus, what is your authority?
They're essentially asking. Mark progressively brings up these questions that people have about Jesus up to this point throughout the gospel. Initially, when he speaks, when Jesus speaks in chapter 1, people ask this question, what is this? What is this that Jesus is speaking of? That is, what is the content of Jesus' message? We don't really understand what he's saying. And then the next question that arises is, who is this? You might recall the Pharisees or the scribes' interaction with Jesus after he heals the paralytic man, or they lower him into the house. And Jesus not only heals him, allows him to walk, but also says he takes away his sins. And the scribes ask, who is this who can take away the sins of a man? And the disciples, as we saw, ask, who is this who can control the elements, the wind and the sea?
Who is this? Well, now the question isn't, what is this? What is he speaking about? Because they know, they understand, they're appreciating what he's speaking about. And it's not even so much, who is this? They don't fully understand who Jesus is, but they do know Jesus is Jesus of Nazareth,

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or their very hometown.
They're very familiar with him. The big question in their mind is, what is his authority? How can he do these things? And what power or what authority does he have the ability to do so? You see, the crowd in asking these things just simply cannot fathom that Jesus is what he professes himself to be, and what his words and works testify him to be. Their questions are infused with a skepticism.
[34:08] How can somebody like Jesus, how can somebody with his social standing, with his lack of pedigree, how can somebody who never went to any of the great rabbinical schools do and say what he does, what he says? How can he be so remarkable? And I think you see, if you look down at verse 3, their mindset, what is underscoring why they are so skeptical and so unwilling to appreciate Jesus, for who he truly is. And they bring up these elements about Jesus in their questioning. One, they question his career or his livelihood. Who is this? Isn't he the carpenter? And Luke 4 says he's the carpenter's son, but it's the same idea. Isn't he the carpenter? A carpenter could be and probably was somebody who works wood, but it also could just be a skilled laborer of any sort, including somebody like a stone mason or something in that time period. But I think there's reason to believe historically that he was a woodworker, somewhat similar to a carpenter today. But that's not all that important.

What is important is that they just see him as a common laborer. Jesus' job was to be a common laborer. As you might recall, Jesus' earthly ministry didn't begin until about his early 30s, which means he had a long time where he was in Nazareth as just a carpenter, just a fellow common laborer, or even beneath them as a common laborer. And so it's not clear if the Jewish people at that time looked down on being a common laborer in the sense that was that a respectable career or not. There's some debate about it. But what is pretty clear, what is pretty clear is that somebody who is a laborer, a skilled artisan, whether that was a respectable career or not, would not go on to be a great rabbi, would not be a teacher.
That is not the field he would enter if you were working with material things, if you were a skilled artisan. You don't really cross over into the realm of theology, and certainly not being an exemplary teacher like Jesus is demonstrating himself to be.
Alongside his career, they also begin to question his lineage. They question his lineage. And they call him the son of Mary as a very strange way to address somebody, particularly in the Jewish culture at that time, to be the son of your mother. Now, in part, it may be that they are trying to call him a question of legitimacy at Jesus' birth. You recall the Pharisees did that as well.
I don't know if that's the case because Mary was from Nazareth. People may have been a little bit more kind to her in the way they would speak about her, so that may not be the case. I think the bigger issue is that they are pointing out that Joseph has not been around for a long time. They're stepfathers. We see it for his father, because they would see it. And that by Joseph dying early on in Jesus' life, they would refer to him as the son of Mary. But there is a nuance there, and that is this.
[36:56] According to Jewish law, per Deuteronomy 6-7, it is the father who has the responsibility to rear his son in the Jewish tradition and in the Jewish law. But Jesus was even at this disadvantage.

He did not have an earthly father or stepfather to teach him the law. So not only did he not have a rabbinical background or a theological background, never went to seminary, he also didn't have his father there to teach him, as other little Jewish boys would have had such a privilege.
It also probably is an allusion as well to the humble origins of the holy family. You might recall that Mary, after a time of purification, per Luke 2-24, goes up to the temple and engages in a sacrifice that's commanded by the Jewish law, and she offers two turtle doves instead of the traditional lamb offering, the traditional lamb offering at the time of purification.
And this is what Leviticus 12-8 tells us, that if she, that is the woman who just gave birth, cannot afford a lamb, then she shall take two turtle doves or two pigeons. This tells us that the holy family was of very modest needs. They could not afford the lamb, and so they made this alternative offering. So they're pointing out as well, I think here, by extension, that Jesus not only comes from a common family, he comes from a pretty lower class family, pretty impoverished family as well. Well, if it's not enough for him to attack his lineage and his parentage and his career, they also bring up his siblings as well. They have his siblings as well, essentially his brothers by name. There's James, the anglicized version of Jacob. Jacob's of course actually an English name as well, but in Greek and Hebrew, it's actually the same name. James and Jacob would both be referring to the

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same type of designation. And then his brother Judas or Jude.
Now both of these men would eventually become saved, and they would even write books of the New Testament that we have from us. But he has two other brothers, Simon and Joseph. We don't know much about these men, and they are also brothers of Jesus that they mention by name. And I think the reason that they are brought up in part is because they're just saying, look, not only do we know Jesus growing up, we knew his brothers growing up. There's nothing special, there's nothing remarkable about them. So he brings up his brothers. And moreover, none of his brothers at this time believed in him.
[39:14] So Jesus in his own household, we're supposed to believe this man is a Messiah or a great teacher, even, or certainly the Son of God, when his own family, his own brothers don't believe in him? I think they're bringing that up in part as well. I would make one side note here of the theological purpose, that when the word here for brother and eventually for sisters is used, it is the traditional normal Greek word for a biological brother or a biological sister. And there's nothing in the context here or elsewhere that would indicate it's anything but. So as we may interact with various Roman Catholics, you might use this as a passage to demonstrate that there is no reason to believe that Jesus had anything but biological siblings or cousins or anything else. And that is just imposing an outside tradition upon the text itself. And so that may be a helpful note.

But nonetheless, they denigrate him in this way, or at least they point out the ordinariness, the commonness because of his siblings. And they even go a step further as they talk about his sisters being there. But look what it says about the sisters. It says the sisters are here with us. And there's a distinction being drawn. It may be that Mary and his brothers have left Nazareth. And we do see them follow Jesus around. But his sisters, what they're saying here, have remained here. And why would his sisters remain there? Well, most likely they married local men. It would be the tradition, it would be the situation. You'd marry somebody in your village. And they remained there. So not only did we know Jesus' brothers growing up and know Jesus growing up, we see his sisters on a daily basis here in the small village of Nazareth. There's nothing special about A&M.; There's nothing remarkable about them.
We see them in our normal, ordinary course of affairs. And so there's no reason why we would think that this man should be anything remarkable, anything to really be worthy of further consideration the way he wants us to think about him. Well, we've mentioned our Catholic friends a few times. And of course, they have a doctrine of the perpetual virginity of Mary and so on, where they elevate her to an inappropriate position, a way that would be displeasing to her and certainly displeasing to God. But as Protestants, we can do sort of the same thing. If you think back to the Christmas story, we usually have that mindset of who Mary is, this sort of elevated saint in some ways. That's our image of her. But as we see here, we see the Holy Family, there was no angelic host in the sky every time they walked around. There was no aura about any of them. Mary wasn't venerated. Not only was she not venerated, she wasn't even shown much respect here. It just melded into normal society. They were just normal people. And all this is to say, in their view, that the people of Nazareth saw Jesus as an ordinary fellow, with an ordinary job that came from an ordinary, if not a lower class family.
Nothing special about him. Nothing remarkable about him caused them to believe. Well, this is what the prophet Isaiah said about Jesus centuries before in Isaiah 53 too. 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. Kind of fulfilled in Isaiah's prophecy right there. Nothing to see here. Nothing remarkable about him. But they didn't have spiritual eyes to see. Well, what drives them to this discussion? What drives them to this thought process of why we should consider the authority of Jesus? Why is there this disconnect in their mind between what they are observing and what they know about Jesus? And the reason for that, I think, is just about how extraordinary Jesus' ministry is. We're told in the book of Luke in chapter 19, in different incidents, where people were listening to him, and it says pretty literally via translation, they were hanging on his words. They were so enthralled when people heard him. They just hung on his words, unlike with any other speaker, any other rabbi, any other teacher. And you might recall Nicodemus in John chapter 3, where he says, Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher come from God, for no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with them. So on the one hand, you have this amazing teacher doing these works that you cannot deny came from God. And on the other hand, you have Jesus, the guy we grew up with. There's just this complete disconnect in what they know or what

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they think they know about him and what they have observed. And so what we see here is for those who are heart of heart, when they are confronted with the power of the gospel, what does it do? Instead of producing belief and repentance, it only causes somebody to harden their heart more and to resolve against Jesus more. Recall, I think, Brother Jeremiah was here a few weeks ago. I think we talked about John chapter 11, where the raising of Lazarus, and what that produced in the Pharisees. Instead of being amazed that a man was raised from the dead, it caused a lot against Jesus. That's what the gospel does, even in particularly when it's most appropriately preached, because it's hardness in the hearts of those who reject the Lord Jesus Christ. And that's what we see here in Nazareth. First, there is amazement that this ordinary person from their hometown could do these things. But then when they think about it more, when they contemplate it more, what is it producing them? Contempts. They are offended, it says in verse 3. They are offended that he claims or demonstrates to have such power or authority. The word for offended in Greek is the word scandalizo, where we get the English word scandal. They were scandalized by him, but put another way, he made them stumble. He made them stumble. He was a stumbling block to them. Like the Pharisees, they were not just offended, they were even angry at him. They were angry at this fact that the man was preaching in this way.

[45:15] Now, they don't go quite as far as the Pharisees. The Pharisees, at one point, recognized that Jesus was doing great things, doing great works. But they didn't attribute those works to God. Instead, they attributed it to the evil one. In Mark 3.22, and the scribes who came down from Jerusalem were saying, he is possessed by Beelzebul, and by the prince of demons, he casts out the demons. Well, the people of Nazareth don't go quite as far. They don't expect that.

They don't explicitly say that. But what do they say? Well, they know he's doing great works, and they know he's a great teacher, and they know they have some sort of authority and power, but clearly they don't think it's from God, right? They don't think this comes from God. Well, kind of only one other option, right? It comes to Satan.

They're essentially calling Jesus of Nazareth, their hometown, to the devil. Indirectly, but nonetheless, that is their thought as what they consider. Now, Jesus here does not respond to them like he does in chapter 4. You recall he engages with them further in chapter 4, where he refers to them as the Israelites who rejected Elijah and Elijah, and produces their murderous rage. That's not the case here. Instead, in response to their blasphemy, he doesn't engage in a further argumentation with them. He doesn't engage in further argumentation. Instead, he says this, a prophet, if you look in verse 4, a prophet is not without honor, except in his hometown, and among his relatives, and in his own household. That is a very similar statement the way he says in Luke 4. And there, like now, they don't really respond appropriately. They do not have open hearts. They do not listen to that rebuke the way they should.

It seems like they just generally ignore it this time. The only thing that's somewhat different in this case than what we see in Luke chapter 4 is that he gives a little bit more specificity.

So he says there, he is not without honor, except in his hometown, among his relatives, and his own household. That means he's rejected by his community at large, his kin overall, and then his immediate family, his own household. They all reject the Lord Jesus Christ, even though they've heard this preaching, and even though they know about the miracles have taken place. Instead of being persuaded, they are ultimately offended. Instead of being persuaded, they are offended. They never question his words, never question the grandeur of the miracles. They only are offended that it's Jesus who's the one speaking, Jesus who's the one performing these miracles. Kind of the ultimate example of the phrase, familiarity breeds contempt. They have great contempt for him. And so, the people of Nazareth, his own home community, rejects Jesus. And Jesus rejects them. Luke 9, 26.

[48:09] For whoever is ashamed of me and my words, of him will the Son of Man be ashamed when he comes in his glory and the glory of the Father and of his holy angels. Or as is the case here, Jesus refuses to perform any miracles here. He can't perform any great works. And the reason for that is that miracles have a purpose. The reason for the miracles is that they attest to the preaching. They attest to the gospel.

And the people have already rejected the gospel. So there's no reason, no call to engage in the miracles. There's no benefit for the signs here. Well, in verse 6, in our last verse in front of us, Mark adds that Jesus marveled or was astonished because of their unbelief. It was shocking that these recipients of the gospel and such revelation, such testimony, would so dismiss the gospel.

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Think what Jesus says in the book of Mark about his headquarters in Galilee, Capernaum. He says, And you, Capernaum, will you be exalted to heaven? That's a question. You will be brought down instead to Hades. For if the mighty works done in you had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. But I tell you, there will be more tolerable on the day of judgment for the land of Sodom than for you. This is about Capernaum. Capernaum was a lot more receptive to the Lord Jesus Christ than Nazareth.
How much more will Nazareth be condemned? And if you think back to Jesus' incident with the demoniac over in the land of the Gerenzeans, Jesus, the man, pardon me, wants to come with Jesus' disciples. And he says, no, go back to your hometown and tell people about what God has done.
What that means is that Jesus has a higher thought of what this pagan, pig-rearing, Gentile community will think about their hometown son when he comes back and shares the gospel than what happens in Nazareth, the home of the Messiah. Clear distinction. And so because of the unbelief of Nazareth, we are told, Jesus simply continues on his way to share the gospel in other towns and other communities. Never to return to his hometown. Luke 9, 4, and 5. And whatever house you enter, stay there, and from there depart. And wherever they did not receive you, when you leave that town, shake off the dust from your feet as a testimony against them. Nazareth, the home of the Messiah, where they rejected him, and he rejected them. The prophet Isaiah says in Isaiah 8, 14, 15, and 15, and he, referring to Jesus, the Messiah, will become a sanctuary and a stone of offense, and a rock a stumbling to both houses of Israel, a trap and a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and many shall stumble on it. They shall fall and be broken, and they shall be snared and taken. And centuries later, Peter will repurpose this verse in 1 Peter 2, 7. So the honor is for you who believe, but for those who do not believe, the stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone, and a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense. They stumble because they disobey the word as they were destined to do. The word for offense here that Peter brings into the Greek from the Hebrew is the same word, the scandalizo word we saw earlier. The Jewish people overall stumbled over Jesus, and the people called Nazareth here stumble over him again. The Lamb of God who had grown up in their own community visited them twice during his ministry, and both times they refused to believe that he was the Messiah. Both times they refused to believe that he had truly brought the gospel to them. And once again, what more could somebody ask for in a gospel presentation than the Lord
[52:09] Jesus Christ preaching to the authority of God and authenticating his preaching with miraculous works? You could take every sermon and every great evangelistic crusade from the beginning of the church through now and roll it into one, and it wouldn't come anywhere close to hearing the Lord Jesus Christ speak before you and testifying to it through these great works.

What this shows us is that theologically, it's not persuasion that ultimately brings somebody to salvation, not persuasion. It's God's own sovereign revealing of the truth in his will to his people in his perfect timing that saves people.
Jesus identifies himself with the prophets in this text, not that he's just a prophet, he's more than a prophet. But he does so because the people refused to listen to the prophets. They refused to listen to the prophets. And perhaps here, there are maybe some people who have never come to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ, and you might have a very similar mindset. That you might even say that if some of these things truly happened, if you were to understand and be convinced that they happened, they would be amazing things. For the Son of God to speak before men would be amazing. If he could testify those things through great miraculous works that overturn the laws of nature, that would be amazing.
If you actually had in your hands the word, God-breathed word, that is from the Lord himself testifying to you about his works and words, that would be amazing. But like the people of Nazareth, you reason in your own hearts a similar way. But who is this Jesus? Why does he have any authority speak to me to say? A myth? Just made up by people later on? A legend? Maybe he really exists, but he took on these legendary proportions, and those were recorded in history for us? Why should I give my life to something like that? Maybe he was truly a great teacher, but his disciples took things too far and added information about him. They added information that made him look like God himself.
But if that's not true in your mind, then why should I believe something like that? It's the same Jesus who's a central character of history, is he not? All these secular scholars will spend all this time

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wondering who is the historical Jesus. He's not anything important. Why did they spend such time investigating him? They are offended by him and mock him, but why be so offended and why mock individuality isn't truly what he says he is? So there's really a question before you today, if you are an unbeliever. In hearing all this, you need to ask yourself, will God leave you today in your skepticism as he left the people of Nazareth? Will you're familiar with the raw Jesus story as an American that you've heard so many times leave you today unimpressed and uninterested and just go out the door in the same way the people of Nazareth did? Or perhaps God is using this account today in your life to show you the seriousness of rejecting Jesus for who he truly is, the Son of God, the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world, who will take away your sins if you believe and receive them, or who will condemn you like he did with Nazareth if you reject him. And if you are a follower of the Lord Jesus Christ, is there not a similar danger of just being too familiar with Jesus?

[55:47] You've heard the gospel so many times. You've heard the Bible stories since you were in infancy if you grew up in the church. This is just part of your routine as you kind of stumble in the church every Sunday morning to perform your holy rite of obligation and mutually speaking to all of us.

But there's a warning for us in this passage as well, if that's our mindset, that the words and works of Jesus Christ are powerful and they should stir us from apathy. They should stir us from simple religious procedure. They should provoke us to proclaim the truth to others and to follow him passionately.

Who in his mercy opened our eyes to see, our ears to hear, and except for his words of life and his work in us, quickening our hearts, we too would scoff like his countrymen, like the Jewish nation that stumbled as a whole, like any other Gentile unbeliever. John chapter 17. I have given them your word and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world.

Lord, sanctify them in truth. Thy word or your word is truth. His words are powerful. They touch us as a Christian today. They provoke the unbeliever. They have power of the word of the Lord that forth in our hearts today.

I pray this thing for you. Thank you, Lord. We thank you for this gospel. We thank you, Father God, that you have shown mercy to people who have responded initially like the people of Nazareth. We thank you, Lord, that you'll open eyes and open ears, and may you do so today and cause all of us who know Christ to be invigorated by this word. We thank you and pray this again in your son's name. Amen.

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