

Introduction: Pg. _____

“Jesus Marveled”

Mark 6:1-6

When we come to Mark chapter 6, we find a perplexing account.

For starters, Jesus faces some of his harshest rejection, from his own hometown and from his own family!

But then, we have the only instance where Mark tells us Jesus marveled at other people. As we will see, he marveled for all the wrong reasons...

Mark 6:1-6 (Text Displayed)

As we work our way through this story, I want to ask you...

The Question: Is Jesus marveling at your faith?

In order to help us grow in our faith, I am going to give you...

5 Principles to Practice Greater Faith

1. Faith sees past the surface. (6:1-3)

Text

- Jesus and his disciples paid a visit to “his hometown,” of Nazareth (see 1:9 & 1:24, “Jesus of Nazareth”).
 - Nazareth was not known as the Athens of Israel, or Tiletown, or the Hub of the Universe (LIKE BOSTON!)
 - We’re talking about an obscure village with a population hovering around 150-200 people! I’m not sure Google Maps would have zoomed in close enough to find it!
 - The common attitude of people, even from other parts of the countryside, is reflected in Nathaniel’s words in John 1:46, “Can anything good come from Nazareth?”
- Once again, Jesus received an invitation to teach in the synagogue, and once again, the people were astonished, so much so that their astonishment led to skepticism (Neighbor Michael - designs Rickie Fowler’s golf gear).
- Their skepticism increases with each of the six questions they ask about Jesus.
 - First, they ask: “Where did this man get these things? What is the wisdom given to him? How are such mighty works done by his hands?”
 - They are questioning his authority and authenticity. “There’s no way that the kid we knew growing up in our tiny village can be saying what he’s saying and doing what he’s doing!”
 - They continue.... “We’re talking about our local carpenter. He was never trained in the intricacies of the law. In fact, Jesus fixed my doorframe and your sheep pen before he left for the shores of the Sea of Galilee a year ago!”
 - Here’s the message: He’s one of us! He’s no better than we are!
 - Not only that, we know his very ordinary brothers and his sisters. How could he be so different?
 - And remember, he’s the “son of Mary.” Why would they not have used the typical designation: “son of Joseph”?
 - 1) Joseph has died.

- 2) But this is also probably an allusion to his questionable birth. Mary was an unmarried virgin, so it appeared to she was unfaithful to her future spouse. It appeared Jesus was born in illegitimate circumstances. (See John 8:41)

What's going on here?

- The people of Nazareth jumped to conclusions based on their expectations and what fit within the realm of their finite thinking.
- They judged by appearances, and we do the same, not just with people, but with God.
 - Nothing seems to be happening here. My circumstances haven't changed.
 - My prayers seem to hitting a brick wall.
- But faith sees past the surface. Faith sees the unseen. Faith sees the character of Christ, and leans into his true identity. Jesus, you are the Messiah. You are the Son of God. There's nothing you can't do!

T: #2...

5 Principles to Practice Greater Faith

2. Faith rejoices in the work of God. (6:3)

The final words of verse 3 show us the end result of their skepticism: "And they took offense at him."

Jesus upset their sensibilities. His words and works were so shocking they found scandalous. The overarching idea is: "This can't be true. He can't be God's messenger. We must reject him."

Though they heard him with their own ears and heard reports of his miracles, which by this point in Mark include healing...

1. Demon oppressed man (1:23-28)
2. Peter's mother-in-law (1:29-31)
3. Many in Capernaum (1:32-34)
4. A leper (1:40-45)
5. A paralyzed man (2:1-12)
6. A man with a deformed hand (3:1-6)
7. Many more in (3:7-12)
8. Calming the storm (4:35-41)
9. The demoniac (5:1-20)
10. The woman who bled for 12 years (5:25-34)
11. Jairus' daughter who had died (5:35-43)

They STILL said, "Nope, he can't be the one to bring God's kingdom near!"

HUGE LESSON... especially if you've been in church for a number of years.

There are two lessons here:

1. "Apart from the eyes of faith, no one will see Jesus for who He truly is. In and of themselves, miracles are not enough." (Danny Akin) His miracles reveal his identity!
2. As the old adage says: "FAMILIARITY BREEDS CONTEMPT." (Disregard)
 - This is a warning for those of us who have been following Jesus for a number of years.
 - Oh, I know the stories... Yeah, Jesus is God; he died for my sins, he rose from the dead, he can do anything, but these truths don't move our souls. They don't strengthen us for life. They don't raise our expectation of the possible for us. TODAY.

- The great Boston preacher, Phillips Brooks, whose statue stands outside of Trinity Church in Copley Square said: "Familiarity breeds contempt, but only with contemptible things or among contemptible people."

APP: Unbelief rejects the work of God. Faith rejoices in the work of God.

T: When we see God work, we celebrate! This includes, other churches. RHC never competes with other churches who introduce people to Jesus Christ.

5 Principles to Practice Greater Faith

3. Faith elevates the honor of Jesus. (6:4)

Jesus says, "A prophet is not without honor, except in his hometown."

- Honor is a relational word conveying the idea of respecting someone, of recognizing their value and contributions as a human being.
- To honor someone is to lift them up in the sight of others. To shame someone is to bring them down.

It's important to note that Jesus identifies himself as a prophet.

- Prophets were truth tellers, both foretelling (what was to come) and forth telling (what is true in the present).
- Prophets were one of the three key leadership offices in Israel: prophets, priests, and kings. Jesus fulfilled all three!

Here, Jesus emphasizes how the prophets were often rejected by their own people.

- Elijah was constantly running from King Ahab and Queen Jezebel who killed the prophets of the Lord (1 Kings 18).
- Jeremiah was imprisoned, persecuted, and deported (Jer 26:8, 37:16, 38:6, 42:1ff, 36:20ff)
- Zechariah was stoned to death (2 Chronicles 24:20-22)
- History tells us the prophet Isaiah was sawn in two. (Hebrews 11:37)
- It turns out that we just don't like hearing the truth.

Jesus speaks of concentric circles of rejection, which grow more intense. First, his hometown. Then, relatives. Finally, his own household.

- If you've lived very long, I'm sure you've experience some form of rejection. Rejection almost always hurts, but nothing hurts like rejection from those closest to you.
- Mark already told us his family thought he was out of his mind (3:21).
- John 7:5 tells us his own brothers did not believe in him until after his resurrection (see Acts 1:14).

And here, we learn another valuable lesson of faith: Unbelief dishonors Jesus, but faith honors him.

If you want to honor him, if you want to lift him up in the sight of others, if you want people to see his value and worth: Believe what he says... take him at his word.

You ask, "Pastor Tanner, how do I know if I'm doing that?" Look at your life! Faith acts. Faith moves. Faith prays. Faith shows up. Faith steps out. Faith takes risks. Faith leaves home. Faith suffers. Faith speaks up. (It's all in Hebrews 11)

I'm so proud of the many faith steps our church has taken in the past few weeks: showing up to 6am prayer, serving people through Community Groups, inviting friends for our Easter celebration, and much more!

T: Every act of faith elevates the honor of Jesus!

5 Principles to Practice Greater Faith

4. Faith unlocks the power of God. (6:5)

After seeing Jesus perform miracle after miracle, verse 5 should shocks us... “And he could do no mighty work there, except that he laid his hands on a few sick people and healed them.”

What does this mean? Was there a deficiency in the ministry of Jesus? After all, the language is very strong: “he could do no mighty work there...”

- Whenever you have a question, here’s a principle for biblical interpretation: KEEP READING. “He could do no mighty work there, expect that he laid his hands on a few sick people and healed them.” Jesus was not powerless. He still healed people in Nazareth.
- Mark’s emphasis is on the absence, not of Jesus’ power, but of their FAITH.

This story helps us understand the nature of Jesus’ miracles...

1) Redemptive, not magical

- Tim Keller says: “Jesus’ miracles were not ‘magic tricks’ designed to prove how powerful he was, but ‘signs of the kingdom’ to show how his redemptive power operates. His miracles always healed and restored and delivered people in ways that revealed how we are to find him by faith and have our lives transformed by him. . . . He ‘could’ not do a deed that would not redeem” (Keller, “Mark,” 62).

2) Received, not forced.

- Mark has already informed his readers how Jesus often performs miracles in response to faith (see 2:5 - the paralyzed man; and 5:21-43 with Jairus and the bleeding woman). Faith is often pre-requisite for the work of God.
 - Now, we need to be careful here. You may hear people say to someone suffering, “It’s because you don’t have enough faith.” To which we ask: “Did Paul not have enough faith in 2 Corinthians 12?” “Did Jesus not have enough faith in the Garden of Gethsemane?” That’s true. It needs to be said, but we must not swing the pendulum too far as if faith is not a factor at all.
 - God heals where faith is present: great faith, little (mustard seed) faith, and where people exercise faith for others (Mk 2:1-12).
- Miracles are most often received by faith, not forced by God.
- Related to this, Grant Osbourne says: “Most likely this is divine judgment: they reject Jesus, so God rejects them. God will not work where he is not wanted.” - Osbourne

This reminds me of what Jon Tyson said when he was speaking about revival: “God shows up where he is most wanted.”

T: If unbelief hinders the power of God, faith unlocks it! Let our prayers and (ARE YOU READY) our ACTIONS - because faith moves - say, “God we believe you can change us, change our workplaces, change our neighborhoods, change our city!” Finally....

5 Principles to Practice Greater Faith

5. Faith moves the heart of Jesus. (6:5-6)

Verse 6 should stop us in our tracks. “And he, JESUS, MARVELED (WHY?) because of their unbelief.”

Jesus was amazed, shocked by the extent of their rejection and lack of faith.

When we compare this story with the one before it, we see there are really only two responses to Jesus: reception or rejection; faith or unbelief.

What about you? Have you trusted Jesus? If not, do so today. Jesus died and rose again to bring you life. Baptizing people in 2 weeks. Maybe it's your time to step into the life of Jesus and show that through baptism!

But it's not just "have you?" but "are you?" Are you TRUSTING Jesus? Trusting him

- with your relationships...
- with your health...
- with the next steps in your faith journey...
- with the dreams he's put in your heart...
- to work wonders before our eyes, as he has so many times in the past.

Unbelief makes Jesus marvel, but so does belief!

"But say the word, and let my servant be healed. For I too am a man set under authority, with soldiers under me: and I say to one, 'Go,' and he goes; and to another, 'Come,' and he comes; and to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it." When Jesus heard these things, he marveled at him, and turning to the crowd that followed him, said, "I tell you, not even in Israel have I found such faith." (Luke 7:7-10)

Faith moves the heart of Jesus!

Conclusion:

Is Jesus marveling at your faith?

He will and he does, either because of your belief or unbelief!

Let's ask God to increase your faith.

- Mark 9:23 "I believe; help my unbelief."
- Beg him for the gift of faith (1 Cor 12:9)
- Pray and move... Pray and act...

"Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. . . . And without faith it is impossible to PLEASE HIM, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him." (Hebrews 11:1, 6)

Pray...