

Luke 6:1-6 Jesus is Rejected in Nazareth

6 Jesus went out from there and came into His hometown; and His disciples followed Him.

So far, Jesus' teaching and activity have centered around the Sea of Galilee, with Capernaum acting as his base of operations. Jesus now traveled to the City of Nazareth with His disciples. Jesus spent his youth and the young adulthood, working as an apprentice to his father Joseph in his carpentry shop. This is how they knew Him. Now Jesus returns as a rabbi, with His disciples. The people of Nazareth had heard of Jesus' miracles and healing by this point, so they were very interested to reconcile this "Jesus of Nazareth", with the boy and young man that they had all known. They had perhaps heard of His power--how the forces of wind and rain, demonic possession, illness, leprosy, and even death have yielded to his authority. And it was hard for them to square this with the Jesus they knew as their neighbor who worked as a carpenter in what had been His father's shop. If faith had been the key to some of His most powerful miracles, then what was going to happen in a town where He was thought of as a 'local boy'?

2 And when the Sabbath came, He began to teach in the synagogue; and the many listeners were astonished, saying, "Where did this Man learn these things, and what is this wisdom that has been given to Him, and such miracles as these performed by His hands?"

On the sabbath day, Jesus attended the synagogue, and was invited to teach from the Law and the Prophets. **16 And He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up; and as was His custom, He entered the synagogue on the Sabbath, and stood up to read.** He was now a person of significance, and had a reputation as a teacher and a healer. So, Jesus was invited to teach in the synagogue, which indicates that at least some of those present were willing to hear His interpretation of the law and prophets. Mark, unlike Luke, tells us nothing of what he taught. Luke 4:17-22 gives us His sermon. **17 And the scroll of Isaiah the prophet was handed to Him. And He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written: 18 "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, Because He anointed Me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent Me to proclaim release to captives, And recovery of sight to the blind, To set free those who are oppressed, 19 To proclaim the favorable year of the Lord." 20 And He rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down; and the eyes of all the people in the synagogue were intently directed at Him. 21 Now He began to say to them, "Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing." 22 And all the people were speaking well of Him, and admiring the gracious words which were coming from His lips;** So far, so good. He had revealed Himself as one filled with the Spirit of the Lord, and that evidence of this was His message of the gospel to the poor in spirit of Israel who had no hope, who were often excluded from Temple worship by some pharisaic idea of uncleanness which had been stretched far beyond the Law of Moses. He had come to give them Hope because of His anointing as Messiah. Those who had been held captive by sin were to be set free. Col 1:13 **13 For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, 14 in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.** Because Jesus suffered temptation and death, and overcame them, then we through His power have overcome sin and death, if we remain and abide in this spiritual life He has purchased for us. Hebrews 2:14-15 would echo this sentiment later **14 Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, so that through death He might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, 15 and free those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives.** As believers, Jesus sets us free. Gal 5:1 **It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery.** This freedom from sin and death is central to what it means to be a Christian. Jesus wants to rescue them from their spiritual blindness. Sin blinds, binds, then destroys, just as it did with Samson. 2 Cor 4:4 **The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so they cannot see the light of the gospel that displays the glory of Christ, who is**

the image of God.” Spiritual blindness is caused by deception, whether self-delusion or by the external influence of deception and sin. Jesus was the only one who was offering light. John 9:39 **For judgment I have come into this world, so that the blind will see and those who see will become blind.”** Jesus highlights that those who thought that they were seeing the truth apart from Him were blind. So, Jesus’ message to them is all about the fact that they are the spiritually poor, walking in darkness, and blind, and in need for Him to set them free. He was proclaiming **the favorable year of the Lord**, the Chairos, the appointed, fulfilled time of their visitation by their Messiah. Then Jesus **20 And He rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down;** Jesus is finished proclaiming heart-revealing truth to His former friends and neighbors, and sits down as they evaluate His Word. He just proclaimed truth to them. **and the eyes of all the people in the synagogue were intently directed at Him. 21 Now He began to say to them, “Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.”** So, he reveals to them their hearts, and offers the cure for their illness—faith in the Fulfillment of this prophecy in Isaiah; faith in Him. But, their hearts have a problem. Their reaction, according to Mark 6:2 is **the many listeners were astonished, saying, “Where did this Man learn these things, and what is this wisdom that has been given to Him, and such miracles as these performed by His hands?”** The emphasis here is *“this man”*. In other words, they were astonished not by the wonderful revelation of the Word that Jesus was giving them, but that this local boy Jesus was giving it to them. Jesus had not been schooled in rabbinic fashion but had been trained as a manual laborer. His immediate family were well known to the villagers, who judged that there was nothing extraordinary about them that would have led them to expect something unusual from Jesus. They weren’t hung up on the words of Isaiah, they were confounded by their misunderstanding of Jesus. He had offered them spiritual perception, the true insight comes through Him. But they were too confused by their own ideas, preconceptions, and misunderstandings about Him to believe in Him as Messiah. But in Him was the only hope of the Gospel!

3 Is this not the carpenter, the son of Mary and brother of James, Joses, Judas, and Simon? And are His sisters not here with us?” And they took offense at Him.—To the people of Nazareth Jesus is the local boy, and they know no reason why he should have turned out to be any different from the rest of his family. They find no reason to believe that he possesses the anointment of God. Basically they were saying *“who is he to make himself great when he was just a village carpenter, craftsmen and handyman, just like us.”* It should be noted, that even in the Old Testament, God had called His prophets from a great variety of occupations, including shepherds, businessmen, farmers, scribes, and others, so they shouldn’t have been too surprised, if they knew their OT. Although the Pharisees kept insisting that prophets came only from Jerusalem, the OT clearly states that they came from all over Israel, and went TO Jerusalem, usually to admonish the King, and his court, who were sinning. As usual, they got it backward.

4 Jesus said to them, “A prophet is not dishonored except in his hometown and among his own relatives, and in his own household.” Jesus recognized their rejection of Him, and their refusal to honor Him as being sent by God as a prophet, teacher, healer, and Messiah. He had cut His sermon short, just because of this attitude of unbelief. Just like the prophets were rejected in their own times for the unpopularity of what they had to say, so Jesus points out their rejection of Him now. Again Luke gives us a lot more details, saying in **6:23-27 23 And He said to them, “No doubt you will quote this proverb to Me: ‘Physician, heal yourself! All the miracles that we heard were done in Capernaum, do here in Your hometown as well.’” 24 But He said, “Truly I say to you, no prophet is welcome in his hometown.** Jesus is accusing them of only wanting Him to be there to do miracles, not because they have any love for Him, or especially for His message of submission to God, and repentance of sins, for the Kingdom of God is At Hand. As with so many others, they didn’t want a relationship with God mediated through this carpenter, they just wanted

the healings, and they had no real desire to follow God's Will for their lives. **25 But I say to you in truth, there were many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the sky was shut up for three years and six months, when a severe famine came over all the land; 26 and yet Elijah was sent to none of them, but only to Zarephath, in the land of Sidon, to a woman who was a widow. 27 And there were many with leprosy in Israel in the time of Elisha the prophet; and none of them was cleansed, but only Naaman the Syrian."** **28 And all the people in the synagogue were filled with rage as they heard these things;**

And, so Jesus gives them a couple of examples of other Israelites who disqualified themselves from deliverance, because they didn't want to follow God's path, and so God sent His prophets to gentiles who were willing to believe. And, just in case we aren't sure how angry the people of the village of Nazareth were, Luke lets us know in 4:29-30: **29 and they got up and drove Him out of the city, and brought Him to the crest of the hill on which their city had been built, so that they could throw Him down from the cliff. 30 But He passed through their midst and went on His way.** So, not only did they reject Jesus' message convicting them of their sin, but they then blamed Jesus for His being willing to accept their rejection, and move on to others who would accept Him and His message. In fact they were so angry that they tried to murder him by throwing Him off of a cliff. But, it was not yet His time, and He passed through their midst, and went on His way. I'm guessing that he simply made Himself un-notice-able to their eyes, and escaped.

5 And He could not do any miracle there except that He laid His hands on a few sick people and healed them.--The healing of a few invalids by laying hands on them would hardly constitute the mighty miracles that we have seen so far. Matthew adds in 13:58 **58 And He did not do many miracles there because of their unbelief.** The presence of gross unbelief Jesus restricted his activity to the healing of a few sick individuals. Mark's purpose is to indicate that Jesus was not free to exercise his power in these circumstances. The performance of miracles in the absence of faith could have resulted only in the aggravation of human guilt and the hardening of men's hearts against God. The power of God which Jesus possessed could be materialized in a for people's true eternal good only when there was the receptivity of faith. Unbelief excluded the people of Nazareth from the dynamic disclosure of God's grace, and the wonderful power of God, and Joy that others had experienced.

6 And He was amazed at their unbelief. And He was going around the villages, teaching.

Apparently Jesus had not anticipated that the reaction of the people from His own hometown would be this bad. He "marvelled" at the degree of resistance to the Gospel that He encountered in Nazareth. Like anyone faced with unbelief, there is disappointment, and Mark's mention of this underlines the 'human' character of Mark's portrait of Jesus. This kind of unbelief from people He knew and loved made Him sad and disappointed. But, the immediate mention of teaching in other villages of the neighborhood area indicates that he remained in the hill country around Nazareth rather than returning to the lake.