

Mark 6:1-6. *The Problem with Hometowns.* After great things (e.g., raising Jarius' daughter from the dead), Jesus went back home to Nazareth, along with His followers. When Sabbath came, He went to temple, and taught right there in the synagogue. The folks marveled upon hearing Him teach.

Where did this man learn these things? What's this wisdom He's been given; He even does miracles! Isn't this the contractor, you know the son of Mary,⁴ and brother to James, Joseph, Judas & Simon? Are not His sisters with us here?

They were shocked, offended, indignant by Him.⁵

Jesus simply responded—*Only in His hometown, among His relatives, and in His own house, is a prophet without honor.*

Jesus was not able to do miracles [δύναμιν, work of power, 1411] except for a few sick people who He healed. He was amazed [marveled] at their lack of trust [ἀπιστίαν]. Then Jesus went around to other villages, teaching from village to village.



MARK 6:1-6

Jesus left there and went to his hometown, accompanied by his disciples. ²When the Sabbath came, he began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard him were amazed.

"Where did this man get these things?" they asked. "What's this wisdom [σοφία] that has been given him, that he even does miracles! ³Isn't this the carpenter [τεκτων, 5045]? Isn't this Mary's son and the brother of James, Joseph, Judas and Simon? Aren't his sisters here with us?" And they took offense [ἐσκανδαλίζοντο, eskandalizonto; cause to stumble, cause to sin, cause to become indignant, shock, offend, 4624] at him.

⁴Jesus said to them, "Only in his hometown, among his relatives and in his own house is a prophet without honor." ⁵He could not do any miracles there, except lay his hands on a few sick people and heal them. ⁶And he was amazed at their lack of faith. Then Jesus went around teaching from village to village.

Q Why were the residents of Nazareth shocked, even offended by Jesus' teaching, even though they recognized His wisdom and ability to even do miracles?

Q Why couldn't the Christ, the Son of God, the Creator of the universe "do any miracles there?"⁶ [Note: Matthew says it was because of their lack of πίστεος (trust); see Matt 13:58]

Q What amazed the Christ about the people in Nazareth? Why did He so marvel?

⁴Note that Yeshua was **not** noted as the son of **Joseph**, but of Miriam. Many conclude from Mark's listing that Joseph was gone, probably deceased.

⁵ἐσκανδαλίζοντο, eskandalizonto; cause to stumble, cause to sin, cause to become indignant, shock, offend, 4624

⁶Consider the interesting analysis of Robert Alan King at <http://biblecommentator.com/mark-jesus-healing-hometown>

Mark 6:7-16, 30-34. *Marching Orders & Tactics.* Gathering the core 12, the Christ sent them out in dyads, and He gave them authority even over unclean spirits. His marching orders & tactics instructions included:

1. Take nothing for your journeys except a staff [ῥάβδος; a rod, staff, staff of authority, scepter, 4464].
2. No bread, no bag or money in your belts.
3. Wear sandals, but bring no extra underwear [χιτών, *chi-tone*; garment, undergarment; 5509].
4. When you enter a house, stay there until you leave that town.
5. If people do not welcome you, leave—shake the dust off your feet as evidence of their rejection.



They did as they were told—preaching people should change their *raison d'être* [μετανοῶσιν, change the inner person; 3340] and driving many demons and anointing many sick with oil to heal them.

All of this did not escape King Herod—Jesus had become well-known. Some opined, *It's John the Baptizer—he's been raised from the dead and that's why miracles are at work in him.* Others posited, *It's Elijah—he's returned.* Others said *He's a new prophet, just like the ones before.* Herod was freaked—*John the man I had beheaded, has been raised from the dead.*

Meanwhile, the apostles returned, reporting all that had happened, and what they'd taught. It was so busy with people buzzing around that they didn't even eat, so Jesus said, *Come with Me, by yourselves, to a place of quiet, a place where you can get so rest.* And so they did by using a boat to get away to a solitary place.

- Q Why were they to teach & preach [ἐκήρυξαν, proclaim, 2784] two by two?
- Q Why no bread? Extra undergarments? Extra money? And why a staff?
- Q Why did people think Jesus the Christ may be Elijah? John the Baptizer? Why was Herod particularly freaked?
- Q Why did the Christ tell them to stop their good work, and eat and rest, finding a solitary place?

MARK 6:7-16, 30-34

Calling the Twelve to him, he sent them out two by two and gave them authority over evil [unclean] spirits. ⁸These were his instructions: "Take nothing for the journey except a staff—no bread, no bag, no money in your belts. ⁹Wear sandals but not an extra tunic. ¹⁰Whenever you enter a house, stay there until you leave that town. ¹¹And if any place will not welcome you or listen to you, shake the dust off your feet when you leave, as a testimony against them."
¹²They went out and preached that people should repent. ¹³They drove out many demons and anointed many sick people with oil and healed them.

¹⁴King Herod heard about this, for Jesus' name had become well known. Some were saying, "John the Baptist has been raised from the dead, and that is why miraculous powers are at work in him."

¹⁵Others said, "He is Elijah." And still others claimed, "He is a prophet, like one of the prophets of long ago."

¹⁶But when Herod heard this, he said, "John, the man I beheaded, has been raised from the dead!"

³⁰The apostles gathered around Jesus and reported to him all they had done and taught. ³¹Then, because so many people were coming and going that they did not even have a chance to eat, he said to them, "Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest."

³²So they went away by themselves in a boat to a solitary place. ³³But many who saw them leaving recognized them and ran on foot from all the towns and got there ahead of them. ³⁴When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. So he began teaching them many things.

Mark 6:17-29. *Herod & John, John & Herod*. And, now, an interlude of historical context... Mark provides some background on Herod & John the baptizer. John had been arrested for calling out Herod for marrying Philip's wife, his brother's wife, Herodias. She was not happy; in fact, she wanted to kill John but was not able because Herod respected John and protected him, knowing him to be cool, to say nothing of holy. When Herod heard John, he was puzzled, but yet liked to listen to him talk.

Well, it finally happened—Herod had a big birthday banquet with lots of mucky mucks, including military commanders and the leading men of Galilee. When Herodias' daughter [Salome, according to Josephus] came in and danced, he was smitten, as were his guests.

Herod said to the girl *Ask me anything—I'll give to you, up to half my kingdom*. She left and asked mom—*For what shall I ask?* Mom answered, *The head of John the Baptist-er*.

Immediately she returned to Herod with her bloody request—*I want John the Baptist-er's head on a platter*.

Herod was not happy, but after all, he had promised, in front of all his friends, and he did not want to refuse. So he immediately had an executioner bring John's head, on a platter no less. It was presented to the dancing girl, and she in turn gave it to Herodias. Yuck. Once John's disciples/followers heard, they retrieved his body and laid in a tomb.

- Q Why did the Lord our God allow this great servant to be killed?
- Q Why did Mark provide this background to Herod and his relationship to John the Baptizer?
- Q Was Herod a believer?

MARK 6:17-29

For Herod himself had given orders to have John arrested, and he had him bound and put in prison. He did this because of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, whom he had married.

¹⁸For John had been saying to Herod, "It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife." ¹⁹So Herodias nursed a grudge against John and wanted to kill him. But she was not able to, ²⁰because Herod feared John and protected him, knowing him to be a righteous and holy man. When Herod heard John, he was greatly puzzled [some mss say *he did many things*]; yet he liked to listen to him.

²¹Finally the opportune time came. On his birthday Herod gave a banquet for his high officials and military commanders and the leading men of Galilee. ²²When the daughter of Herodias came in and danced, she pleased Herod and his dinner guests.

The king said to the girl, "Ask me for anything you want, and I'll give it to you." ²³And he promised her with an oath, "Whatever you ask I will give you, up to half my kingdom."

²⁴She went out and said to her mother, "What shall I ask for?"

"The head of John the Baptist," she answered.

²⁵At once the girl hurried in to the king with the request: "I want you to give me right now the head of John the Baptist on a platter."

²⁶The king was greatly distressed, but because of his oaths and his dinner guests, he did not want to refuse her. ²⁷So he immediately sent an executioner with orders to bring John's head. The man went, beheaded John in the prison, ²⁸and brought back his head on a platter. He presented it to the girl, and she gave it to her mother. ²⁹On hearing of this, John's disciples came and took his body and laid it in a tomb.



Mark 6:35-44. *Feeding: Souls & Stomachs*. It was getting late and finding a remote place, Jesus' followers encouraged Him to send the 5,000 men and their families away so they could buy a bite to eat elsewhere.

Jesus called them out—You give them something to eat. Kvetching they replied, *That would take more than \$19,000. Are we to spend that much so they can eat?* Jesus then asked, *How many loaves of bread do you have?* After investigating, they reported they had five loaves, and two fish. Then it happened...

Jesus had the disciples direct all the people to sit down in groups of hundreds and fifties [James Tissot painting, 1880-90's]. Taking the five loaves and two fish, the Christ prayed thanks by looking up to heaven, and then opened the loaves. He gave the loaves to the disciples to be distributed to the people; the fish were divided similarly. All the people ate; and, all were satisfied. There were in fact 12 baskets of leftovers of bread and fish.

- Q Why didn't the followers of Jesus want to feed the crowds of people following them?
- Q Why don't we look up to Father God when we pray?
- Q When were the loaves and fishes increased in number?
- Q Why did Jesus feed these people—after all, it was time to go home?
- Q Why do we have government programs to feed the hungry?

MARK 6:35-44

By this time it was late in the day, so his disciples came to him. "This is a remote place," they said, "and it's already very late. ³⁶Send the people away so they can go to the surrounding countryside and villages and buy themselves something to eat."

³⁷But he answered, "You give them something to eat." They said to him, "That would take eight months of a man's wages [about 200 days' wages; at \$15 per hour, about \$19,000]! Are we to go and spend that much on bread and give it to them to eat?" ³⁸"How many loaves do you have?" he asked. "Go and see." When they found out, they said, "Five—and two fish." ³⁹Then Jesus directed them to have all the people sit down in groups on the green grass.

⁴⁰So they sat down in groups of hundreds and fifties. ⁴¹Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to his disciples to set before the people. He also divided the two fish among them all. ⁴²They all ate and were satisfied, ⁴³and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces of bread and fish. ⁴⁴The number of the men who had eaten was five thousand.



Mark 6:45-56. Seeing Ghosts Instead of Bread.

Immediately after feeding the satiated crowds, Jesus made his followers get into the boat and go ahead of Him to Bethsaida (the “bad,” gentile side). He dismissed the crowd and after leaving them, He went up on a mountainside to pray.

As evening came, He was alone and the boat was in the middle of Lake Galilee. Noticing the disciples straining at the oars (the wind was against them), He left land about 3am. He was about to pass them by, but they saw Him, thinking He was a spirit. They freaked until He reassured them the “spirit” was Jesus Himself. Climbing into the boat with them and with the wind dying down, they were freaked all over again. Mark notes they were freaked because they had not understood the loaves—their *raison d’être* was hardened [*πεπωρωμένη*, render callous, petrify; 4456].

When they all arrived, they anchored again in Gennesaret (i.e., near the pig farmer missionaries; Mark 5:14). Upon landing, folks recognized them. Running throughout the whole region, they carried sick to wherever Jesus was.

Wherever He went—villages, towns or the country—they placed their sick in the marketplaces, begging Him to let them touch even the edge of His cloak. All who touched Him were healed (*ἐσώζοντο*, saved; derived from *σοζο*).

- Q Cecil deMille—How many of you knew Jesus was going to “walk on by” the boat containing the disciples?
- Q What is it about not understanding the loaves made them amazed about Jesus’ stroll on the water?
- Q How do we get people to reach out and touch Jesus?



MARK 6:45-56

Immediately Jesus made his disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him to Bethsaida, while he dismissed the crowd. ⁴⁶After leaving them, he went up on a mountainside to pray.

⁴⁷When evening came, the boat was in the middle of the lake, and he was alone on land. ⁴⁸He saw the disciples straining at the oars, because the wind was against them. About the fourth watch of the night he went out to them, walking on the lake. He was about to pass by them, ⁴⁹but when they saw him walking on the lake, they thought he was a ghost. They cried out, ⁵⁰because they all saw him and were terrified. Immediately he spoke to them and said, "Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid." ⁵¹Then he climbed into the boat with them, and the wind died down. They were completely amazed, ⁵²for they had not understood about the loaves; their hearts were hardened.

⁵³When they had crossed over, they landed at Gennesaret and anchored there. ⁵⁴As soon as they got out of the boat, people recognized Jesus. ⁵⁵They ran throughout that whole region and carried the sick on mats to wherever they heard he was. ⁵⁶And wherever he went—into villages, towns or countryside—they placed the sick in the marketplaces. They begged him to let them touch even the edge of his cloak, and all who touched him were healed.