

## Mark 6:1-29

### “Because Of Unbelief”

We read in the 6<sup>th</sup> Ch of the book of Genesis where the Lord said, “*My Spirit shall not strive with man forever,*” Gen 6:3 and it’s a horrifying thought to think that one can actually come to the point whereby their conscience is so seared; their heart is so hard that God actually gives them over to their own desires and ceases to extend to them the opportunity to repent. In the 1<sup>st</sup> Ch of the book of Romans Paul speaks there about a people who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, and that even though they knew God they refused to glorify Him *as* God, nor were thankful, but they became futile in their thoughts and their foolish hearts were darkened. and We read how God in His righteous judgment gives them up to uncleanness and the lusts of their hearts, gives them up to vile passions, gives them over to a debased mind to do those things which aren’t fitting. In 2<sup>nd</sup> Thess Paul speaks of the time in which the antichrist will be in power upon the earth. and That there will be those who because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved, God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness. and So the warning goes out in the scriptures regarding the sin of *unbelief*. The author of Hebrews writes, “*Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God; but exhort one another daily, while it is called ‘Today,’ lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.*” Heb 3:12-13

But having said that I’m *so glad* that we serve a God who is merciful and gracious, longsuffering and abounding in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin. Oh He deals *with* and brings judgment *on* the guilty, but here’s my point. Jesus isn’t about giving you one shot at salvation and if you blow it then the party’s over for you. “You had your chance and you chose to reject Me, now *I’m* rejecting you.” Oh that’s His right, He would be completely just in extending Himself to you or me and if we didn’t take Him up on His offer of forgiveness and eternal life the 1<sup>st</sup> time then we don’t get a 2<sup>nd</sup> chance. As a matter of fact He’d be completely just in *never* offering us the opportunity to repent because *we’re* the one’s who’ve sinned, we’re the one’s who’ve separated ourselves from Him in the 1<sup>st</sup> place, He didn’t separate Himself from us, we separated ourselves from Him. Yet He continues to visit us, to give opportunity *to* us to repent, to come to Him, to confess our sins, our failures to Him and be forgiven *by* Him.

That’s what we enter into here in Mark Ch 6, a rejected Jesus continuing to reach out. Maybe you’ve rejected Jesus before, you need to understand that He’s seeking to visit with you again today, and He’s reaching out *to* you, placing opportunity *before* you to receive Him now. Notice.

#### **Vs1-6**

You recall that Jesus had been in Capernaum, and He’d done some *radical* works there. He’d healed a woman, who’d been hemorrhaging for 12 yrs; He’d raised the little girl of a prominent religious leader from the dead. People were thronging Him, pressing in all around

Him, and here we read in Vs 1 that He went out from there and came to His own country. Which is another way of saying He headed southwest about 20 miles to Nazareth, “and His disciples followed Him.” Which is what disciples do right? They follow their master, they spend time *with* them it’s their goal to learn *from* them and become more and more *like* them. and So to with you and with me, if I *am* and you *are* a disciple of Christ then we’re to be about the business of *following* Him. Walking intimately *with* Him, desiring to learn *from* Him that we might become more and more *like* Him. In Christ we’re to be being changed, transformed by the renewing of our minds.

It’s about being emptied of ourselves and filled to the overflow with who He is. J.B. put it like this, “*He must increase, but I must decrease.*” John 3:30 Jesus came to His own country, and His disciples followed Him.

Now what Mark doesn’t mention is that about a yr or a little over before this Jesus had been there before, it’s where He began His ministry. Luke mentions it in the 4<sup>th</sup> Ch of his gospel. Right after Jesus was baptized and went out into the wilderness for 40 days of fasting and overcoming temptation He returned to Nazareth and taught in the synagogue. and The people were blown away, but as He began to minister in a way that was confrontational the bible says that they were filled with wrath and they all drove Him out to the edge of the city whereby they were going to throw Him off a cliff. But passing through the midst of them He went His way. So He’s been there before, they rejected Him, now over a yr later He comes back and He’s reaching out to them again. Looking to give them another opportunity to receive Him and see Him for who He is. and This is just the grace and compassion of the Lord toward the lost, He gives us (often times but not always) multiple opportunities to receive Him, to humble ourselves *before* Him and submit ourselves *to* Him.

Now humanly I’m certain it was incredibly painful for Him to be rejected again and again by His own friends and family. He was rejected initially, not too long ago His mom and brothers came to Him and tried to take Him into custody asserting that He’d lost His mind. Now He returns to those He’d grown up around, neighbors, perhaps customers throughout the village that He’d done carpentry work for, and really it’s the same routine, blown away *by* Him yet refusing to *receive* Him.

There seems to be a “Who does He think He is!” Type aggression toward Him, coming into town with this entourage of disciples which clearly distinguish Him as a Rabbi, yet they *know* Him, He didn’t go to bible school, didn’t have any formal theological training, never sat under a Rabbi, much less a prominent Rabbi and so they’re all, “Where did He get this stuff... and who does He think He is coming around here with all these *disciples* of His?”

Vs 2 tells us they were astonished by 2 things. #1 His wisdom, and #2 His mighty works. Now we know that He didn’t do comparatively mighty things there in Nazareth so they must’ve heard of all that had been going on, calming the sea, delivering the demon possessed, healing the sick, raising the dead. and The essence of what they’re saying is, “We know this guy, there’s no way.” Notice Vs 3, “Is this not the carpenter?” Now that’s not a simple means of identification, that’s blatant degradation, they’re degrading and demeaning Him. “He’s a commoner, He grew up down the street, my oxen are still plowing with the plow and the yoke He made 5 yrs ago, He’s not no bible scholar.” Yet He was speaking with wisdom and authority, His reputation went before Him regarding the things He’d done miraculously.

By the way I find it interesting that of all the things the Son of God could've come into this world as He chose to be a builder. God is into building, and He knows what He's doing, and He's not into unfinished projects, if He starts a work He's going to complete it. So if He's begun a good work in you, He's going to be faithful to complete it.

So the 1<sup>st</sup> slam regards occupation, "He's a common laborer, not a theologian." The 2<sup>nd</sup> concerns identification, "The Son of Mary!" Again don't miss what's being said here, because in that day and in that culture people were never identified as being the son of their mother, always the son of their father. If they were being polite or cordial they'd have said, "The son of Joseph." But the fact that they called Him the son of Mary indicates to us that they were in reality emphasizing the ambiguity (at best) that surrounded His birth and basically calling Him illegitimate.

"and Here He is as though He's a reflection of God to us!?" and Again we note here the fact that Mary wasn't a perpetual virgin, Jesus had brothers and even sisters. Which only added insult to injury in that even *they* didn't believe in Him; Vs 3 tells us that all the people were offended at Him. More literally they were *scandalized*, shocked, stumbled.

#### Vs4

Perhaps you've heard the phrase, "Familiarity breeds contempt." The Farther away someone lives the more of an expert they become, but if they live next door, or in the neighborhood they're just little Johnny down the street. Now in all reality it's impossible to be *too* familiar with Jesus. Yet at the same time we can grow overly comfortable with *thinking* we know all *about* Him, are where we need to be in our relationship *with* Him and we lose the necessary reverence we should have *for* Him.

#### Vs5-6

Which is to say that He wasn't going to let their unbelief debilitate His mission which was to preach and teach the gospel, but it blew Him away nonetheless. Now there in Vs 5 where we read that He could do no mighty work we need to understand that what's *not* being said is that their unbelief literally stalled out Jesus' ability and He couldn't do anything because of it. God is all-powerful whether we believe it or not, and our unbelief doesn't in any way take away from the Lord's ability. Yet at the same time God has chosen to in many ways "partner" with man in the moving of His hand through the means of faith. and Because they wouldn't believe, He wouldn't move in the miraculous. He wasn't obligated to "prove" Himself to anybody; all they did through their unbelief was to block God's blessings from flowing into their lives. and *That's* what I want you to see, unbelief will hinder God's work, and block God's blessing in our lives. The book of Hebrews tells us, "*But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.*" Heb 11:6 Unbelief will block the blessing and benefits of God from flowing into our lives.

But check it out, we read that Jesus "marveled" because of their unbelief. You know it seems as though there wasn't a whole lot in this world that "blew Jesus away." and I suppose that's only natural, He made it all. So we don't read of Him being blown away or marveling over creation, He never marveled over human ingenuity or innovation, never marveled over Roman domination and their global empire. Only 2 times we read of in scripture where Jesus marveled and both cases revolved around faith, one time because of the overwhelming amount

in an unexpected place, and the other time because of the absolute lack where it should've been overflowing. Perhaps you recall when the Gentile centurion sought for Jesus to heal his servant, and Jesus said He'd come heal him. But the centurion stopped Him and said, "Lord, I'm not worthy that You should come to my house and I know how authority works, so You just say the word and my servant will be healed." and We read that Jesus marveled and told everyone who was following Him that He'd not found such great faith, even in all Israel. An overwhelming amount of faith in an unexpected place. and Here just the opposite, Jesus marveled at the absolute lack of faith in a place where it should've been abounding. These people *knew* Jesus, they knew His integrity, His honesty, He did things right, no one was ever ripped off by His business, always got a quality product, He was never in any trouble, never caused trouble. They should've simply connected the dots and fell in line, there was no reason why they shouldn't believe, yet they didn't and it blew His mind.

The question is which of these categories more closely describes our relationship with the Lord? Maybe you're in a place whereby it's been one hardship after the other, things going from bad to worse.

and When Jesus looks *at* you He's (for lack of a better way to say it) pleasantly surprised *with* you because you just continue to trust *in* Him, not looking for proof *from* Him and He's "blown away" by your faith. Or are you in the other category, things have gone relatively good for you, He's been there for you, and ministered *to* you time and time again yet you still struggle really believing *in* Him. and He's more like, "What more do you want me to do? My faithfulness has abounded to you, My grace has overflowed you, My goodness has continued toward you yet you still won't believe..." and He's just blown away, is He marveling at your faith, or your lack of it? Unbelief will rob you of so much that God wants to do in you, through you and for you.

### **Vs7-13**

You know Jesus knew that His time on earth was "limited" at best, so He took the time to pour Himself into some men that He'd chosen to place *around* Him so that they could carry on and minister in manner like *unto* Him after He was gone. Paul tells us to do the same thing. In speaking to Timothy he said, "*You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.*" 2 Tim 2:1-2 We're to be taking guys and gals and pouring into them, training them and teaching them ministry. Should the Lord tarry He's got work to do that goes well beyond me and you. and Part of being a faithful and wise steward is in training others to carry on well after we're gone.

and Here Jesus is taking them to the "next level" of hands on ministry training in turning them loose, they've spent time *with* Him, now they're being sent out *by* Him. and That's always the order, we're not to grab a hold of new believers and send them out. There's to be a season of sitting and learning, teaching and training, rooting and grounding and then the sending comes.

Now as for the particulars Jesus changed them up as time went by, there's flexibility there, but there are principles here that are constant. 1<sup>st</sup> we note (in Vs 7) that they were *called to* Jesus, then they were *sent out by* Jesus, and He equipped them for the calling He placed *upon* them. "He gave them power over unclean spirits." We've mentioned this before, if Jesus *enlists*

you He will *enable* you, if He *calls* you, He will *equip* you. He sent them out to do what He'd been doing, to preach the gospel, to heal the sick, and to set people free from the chains of the enemy/demonic possession. We also note that He sent them 2 by 2, why? Multiple reasons, for purposes of accountability, in order that by the mouth of 2 or more witnesses their testimony might be established, for mutual encouragement, strength in #'s, the power in agreement as they prayed with one another and for one another. It's just a healthy thing to do.

Vs 8-9 inform us of the fact that He told them to basically carry nothing with them except for the clothes on their back and the staff in their hand. and Again this was part of their training; later Jesus wouldn't repeat these details. But for now they were to learn that where God guides, God provides, the minimum of provisions was no doubt meant to call out the maximum of faith. But if we're to be effective in our ministering to the lost in Jesus name there needs to be a dependency upon the Lord, we can't do it in our own strength. It's not about having the most technologically advanced gadgets, or top notch instruments, though there's nothing wrong with those things, but our trust is to be in the Lord, not in the resources or supplies that we have. and If they were going to teach others to trust in the Lord, it had to be real in their own lives. It's hard to encourage someone to trust the Lord if you don't trust the Lord.

In Vs 10 He told them that they're not to look to *upgrade* their lodging when they enter a city. If people find out who they are or what they're doing, they're not to take advantage of that in order to better their living conditions. They're to be profitable servants, not pampered celebrities.

"Hey why are you staying there, I've got an extra room, a pool in my backyard, we're eating steak every night, why not stay with us?" You're there to serve not to be served.

and If people won't receive what you have to say then keep working and working, and cramming it down their throat until they do. Is that what Vs 11 says? No, share it; if they won't receive it, you've done your part move on. Shake the dust off your feet as a witness against them. It's not my job to try and change your mind; I want to present the message as persuasively as I can no doubt. But ultimately if you won't receive it that's your choice. But you'll be held accountable for your decision.

Now not every version has this portion regarding it being more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah but the point remains that to reject Jesus Christ is to invite God's judgment, and there isn't anyone who's going to have it good in hell. However some may very well have it worse than others. But the idea here is that we're not to cast our pearls before swine or give what is holy to the dogs, don't cram the message down people's throats. If they don't want it that's their choice, it's a tragic choice, but their choice nonetheless.

## **Vs12**

Or another way to understand this, "They did what they were told." They obeyed the word of the Lord, we can hear it all day long, but the benefit/blessing comes in doing it. The bible calls us to be doers of the word, not hearers only.

and We shouldn't think of them just going out and standing on the street corner yelling, "Repent! Repent!" Like the guy that carries that sandwich sign over his shoulders. We're talking here about them preaching in such a way as to bring men to repentance. No doubt they shared the love of God, His goodness, His grace, His mercy. I'm sure they were straight about

righteousness, holiness and our failure to keep the law, but that God had provided a Savior who is Christ the Lord. The very same things that *you* learned about the Lord that drew you to repentance are the type of things that *they* shared about the Lord leading these people to repentance.

### **Vs13**

They were learning that Jesus didn't have to be with them physically to move through them spiritually. That Jesus was able to impart His authority to them spiritually even being absent from them physically, yet He hadn't left them nor forsaken them.

Now with this incident and in James are the only places we find in the scriptures regarding the anointing with oil the sick for their healing. and Practically oil was used medicinally in that day; Jesus even references that in the parable of the good Samaritan (Luke 10). But we also realize spiritually that oil in the scriptures is a picture of the Holy Spirit and God moving upon a person's life. Here's my point, the medical and the miraculous aren't in conflict with one another. Both are a means by which God touches and brings healing to our bodies. So when someone is ill we pray for them and then send them to the doctor, however God wants to move we just want to be open to Him. and When we anoint someone with oil we're simply saying that we're placing ourselves, this person under the submission of the Holy Spirit and whatever He wants to do *in* them, however He may want to move *through* them and we're definitely open to a miraculous healing *from* Him.

### **Vs14-16**

The "I" is emphatic, this is the cry of a man who's conscience is plaguing him, "I've done this and it's coming back to haunt me."

Now before we pick up the pace I want to note one thing; in Vs 14 we see that king Herod (that is Antipas) heard of Him because His name had become well known.

What's my point? That just as when Jesus ministered, the Father was glorified, when His disciples ministered it was His name not their name that became well known. They'd learned what we need to and that is to minister in such a way so as not to draw attention to ourselves but to magnify and glorify the name of Jesus.

Now in Vs 14 the camera pulls back and fades away from the disciples and takes focus on a "meanwhile" scene at the palace of Herod the tetrarch. and We learn that at this point J.B. has been beheaded, back in Ch 1 we learned that he'd been incarcerated, here we learn why and what happened. and In Vs 17 a "flashback" begins as to what went on and why things went the way they did.

### **Vs17-20**

You get the picture don't you, Herod was wicked, Herodias was even more wicked (kind of a NT Ahab and Jezebel. Herod had married the daughter of an Arabian king, but decided he'd rather have his ½ brother Philip's wife, so he divorced his wife, Herodias divorced Philip and they married each other. Obviously there was all kinds of things wrong with that whole scenario according to the law and J.B. being no respecter of persons was busting them out on it. and The tense of the Vs is that he said it not once, but over and over again he chastised Herod and Herodias for their immoral actions. Herod couldn't allow someone to be busting his chops so he had John imprisoned. But he feared John because John was a holy man and he knew it, so he sought to protect him (meaning he didn't allow Herodias to have him killed). But here's the

fascinating part of all this. Herod had this strange attraction to John, couldn't stand the fact that he condemned his lifestyle but yet loved listening to him preach. and There are people like that today, there's an attraction for you to the word of God, yet it causes you to grit your teeth when you're hearing it. Like a moth to the flame, singes the wings yet it just keeps coming back for more, that's how it was for Herod. He was in this inner conflict, John rebuked his sin fearlessly, yet he knew that there was a power and a purity from God there that intrigued and interested him. Herodias wasn't on that level, she just wanted him dead. John was such a thorn in her side that she just wanted him out of the picture, but Herod wouldn't do that, he kept John around.

### **Vs21-23**

The scene is vivid isn't it, a big banquet, all the who's who, everyone is getting drunk, the party is underway. They've had the lascivious, paid profession prostitute type dancers come in, but then comes in the princess, the daughter of Herodias (history tells us her name was Salome). and This was something that would never be done, yet here she is being provocative and pleasing the men by how she's moving and Herod says, "Just tell me what you want, whatever you want up to 1/2 my kingdom" meaning "The sky is the limit." and "Snap" went the trap that Herodias had set with cold calculation, notice.

### **Vs24-29**

Immorality leading to murder...no wonder his conscience was haunted by what he'd done. Vs 26 tells us that Herod was exceedingly sorry (and he was) this word translated exceedingly sorry is the same word that Jesus used in the garden the night of His betrayal when He said that His soul was exceeding sorrowful, even unto death. He hated what'd just happened, but he felt trapped, didn't know what to do, felt like all his buddies would laugh at him and he'd lose face if he didn't follow through with it. The bible teaches us that the fear of man is a snare, how many people refuse to respond to the conviction of the Holy Spirit because they're afraid of what others might think? Or like Herod how many people hear the word, know what they *should* do, but love their sin even more so they refuse to do it.

Entertained by the word, but not *changed* by the word. *Convicted, challenged*, but unchanged, they hang on to their sin, their lifestyle and refuse to repent.

Herodias thought she could get away from the conviction of one sin by piling another sin on top of it. There's only one way to rid yourself of the guilt and the shame of sin, only one way to truly cleanse your conscience from the stain of sin and that's through the blood of Jesus Christ We've seen tragic results take place today both in and among Jesus' own country, and Herod and Herodias, common folk and famous people because of unbelief. Don't be unbelieving but believing, and may the Lord marvel because of the faith He finds in you.

### **Prayer Points:**

Lord increase our faith, and in those areas in which we struggle may we echo the plea of the one who said, "Lord I believe, help my unbelief." We want to grow, we want to trust You, be delivered *by* You, not block blessings that flow forth *from* you because of unbelief. We thank You for Your grace and mercy, Your willingness to visit us again and again, may we be obedient to Your word, called of You, equipped *by* You. and If there be any here today that You're dealing with and they need to believe in You, or respond in repentance to You and the

conviction of Your spirit may they do so today. Not worried about what other's think, not wanting their sin more than a Savior.

If God's dealing with you right where you're at, your conscience is awakening to the reality of your need to surrender to God's goodness, repent of your sin and give your life to Him. Jesus is coming to you, giving an opportunity to you to not be unbelieving but believing. Let the Lord have His way, that more than being challenged by the word, you allow yourself to be changed by the word of God. Maybe you know the Lord, but you haven't been walking in submission to the Lord, surrender today. Maybe you don't know the Lord, haven't given your heart to the Lord, why put it off another day. Today is the day of salvation.