

Mark 6

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[0 : 00] Now if we turn our Bibles please to Mark chapter 6 and we'll read from verse 1 of the chapter. Remember Jesus had been in Capernaum and he leaves Capernaum which is about 20 miles away from Nazareth and he heads back to his home town which was Nazareth.

So Mark chapter 6 and verse 1, Jesus left there and went to his home town and accompanied by his disciples. When 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 the wisdom, this wisdom that has been given to him that he even does miracles. Isn't this the carpenter, 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 offence at him. Jesus said to them only in his home town amongst his relatives and in his own house as a prophet without honour.

He could not do any miracles there except lay his hands on a few sick people and heal them. And he was amazed at their lack of faith.

[1 : 25] Then Jesus went round teaching from village to village. Calling the twelve to him, he sent them out two by two and gave them authority over evil spirits.

These were his instructions. Take nothing for the journey except the staff. No bread, no bag, no money in your belts. Wear sandals but not an extra tunic.

Whenever you enter a house, stay there until you leave that town. And 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.

When they went out and preached, they went out and preached that people should repent. They drove out many demons and anointed many sick people with oil and healed them.

Amen. And may God bless that reading of his word to us. Let's pray as we turn to this passage.

[2 : 27] Our Heavenly Father, we thank you for the fact that you do reveal yourself to us and through creation. We thank you for the fact that we have the truth.

We thank you for the fact that we have the truth. We thank you that as we look around us, we see these amazing evidences of your glory and your majesty and your creative power.

And we thank you that we have your word where there is a clearer revelation of who you are. We thank you that you are the God who is full of mercy and a God who is full of grace.

If you, Father, were a God who was not good, then we would have no hope. If you were to treat us only with justice, then we would be crushed.

But we thank you that as we sang in the psalm earlier, you are a God who is good to us and gracious to us and who loves to show mercy to us.

[3 : 30] And we see that so clearly in the clearest revelation of who you are to us. We thank you for Jesus. That he is the image of the invisible God.

We thank you for those who you commissioned to write these accounts for us. We thank you that the Holy Spirit took hold of and inspired men to record these eyewitness accounts of Jesus and all that he said and he did.

And we pray now that as we turn our minds to this, that you would be at work amongst us, that the Holy Spirit who inspired this passage would be active in our congregation, in our own hearts.

That we may see not only with our minds, but that we may have our hearts touched and that we may have an encounter with Christ. So hear our prayers and help us, we pray.

We pray for the children as we pray for them as they were going out. We pray for them as they sit down. And as they hear the gospel message, we pray that it would be clearly taught to them and that they would respond to it in faith.

[4 : 41] And while we pray for the children and for ourselves here, we pray for all the congregations around us. Different denominations in this place and across the nation and across all nations.

That wherever the gospel is preached, that you would add your blessing, Lord, that you would build your church. Seek and save sinners like us, we pray. And be at work in us, we pray, that we may bring glory to your name.

And we ask it in Jesus' name. Amen. Mark chapter 6.

We're just looking at a shorter portion this morning. From verse 1 through to verse 13. And I want to begin just by jogging your minds to remember some of these washing powder adverts.

I don't think we see them so much on television anymore. But those of us of a certain age can remember these washing powder adverts. The Daz Challenge and Perso and all these things.

[5 : 47] And the same kind of format would follow most of the adverts. You'd have some housewife or househusband at the door of the house. And the man would come with the new bottle of washing up powder.

And the camera is behind him with a big microphone. And they're knocking on doors. And they're saying to the people they meet behind the door. This can make your whites white. And there's always a degree of skepticism by those who open the door.

And yet all these claims are made. And so there's always the door that's really the set up. And the wife or the husband comes out and says I don't think so.

This is never. My whites are not going to be made white by this powder. And she just magically materializes with a football strip. A white football strip that's been played in yesterday. It's covered in mud.

And this is shown to the camera. This will never make this white. And yet in goes the football strip to the washing machine. And the powder is added. And magically just a few moments later it comes out of the machine.

[6 : 57] And the person at the door says. And probably with a fair bit of financial help and persuasion. I would never have believed this could be possible.

But seeing is believing. And they have this sparkling white football strip in their hand. It used to be black. It used to be stained.

I thought it was fit for the bin. But now after this powder is gone up. Seeing is believing. Look at it. It's amazing. It's probably a new strip. We don't get to see that.

But a phrase that often we hear spoken is. Seeing is believing. The point being if we see something with our eyes. If we are presented with compelling evidence.

Then even if we were sceptical before. Then surely we're going to believe now. Seeing is believing. That's not a phrase that was being said in Jesus' hometown of Nazareth.

[8 : 05] When confronted with. When reacquainted with Christ. When they once more saw Jesus. The sinless son of God. They were not those who saw him. And who believed in him. They were blind. And unbelieving. Willfully blind.

And unbelieving. And that's our first point. Just two points today. The first point is. Blind. And unbelieving. Now let's remember the context here.

Of this passage. If you just. If you've got your Bibles open in front of you. Then. If you just. Turn back one page. From Mark chapter 6. To Mark chapter 5.

Let's remember the context. Let's remember. What Mark has just told us. About the ministry. And the work. Of Jesus. Jesus. Jesus. Has just been in Capernaum.

[9 : 02] Now that was. The home town. Of Peter. And James. And John. The fisherman. That was their home town. That's where they had their. Their fishing business. That was a bigger.

A more prosperous place. And. Jesus. And his disciples. Had been at work in there. And the last thing. That had happened there. Was this. Little girl.

Had been raised from the dead. The things that were happening. In Capernaum. Just 20 miles up the road. Remember. This is like. This is like things happening. In Leverborough.

Just 20 miles up the road. All these reports. Were coming back. From that place. The sick. Were being healed. A woman. Who had been. 12 years.

Suffering. And been to every doctor. And every clinic. And looked everywhere. For healing. And got no relief. And no healing. She meets with Jesus. She touches the hem of his garment.

[9 : 58] And she's healed instantly. It's an incredible story. The blind. Were receiving their sight. The deaf.

Were having their. Ears opened. The demon. Possessed. Like legion. The. Notorious legion. That were being set free.

And even the dead. Were being raised to life. Janus's daughter. So one would expect. In the light of all these testimonies.

And exhibits. Of evidence. About Christ. And his power. And who he was. One would expect. That when Jesus returns. To his hometown.

Of Nazareth. Incidentally. Nazareth. Is about the size. When Jesus was living in Nazareth. It was about the size of Tarman. Don't know what's in your mind.

[10 : 55] In terms of Nazareth. Maybe a big city. It's not what it was. It had five to six hundred people. In it. Nazareth. Jesus was.

The carpenter. He was the joiner. That's how he. Would have been known. Just like we can think about the plumber. And the electrician. And our minds go to individuals.

Just like we know. Everything about. Everyone in Tarbert. Almost. There's not a thing you can do. There's not a place you can go. There's nothing about your business.

That isn't known. That was Nazareth. So one would expect.

That when Jesus returned. To that place. Where. Everybody knew him. And he would have known everyone. One would expect.

[11 : 50] That he would have been received. With great warmth. And one would expect. That the people. In Nazareth. More so than.

Anywhere else. Would have been ready to believe. In him. When after all. They had seen. Jesus. Up close. For 30 years.

And he was the sinless. Son of God. Imagine somebody living. In Tarbert. Who never. Ever. Committed. A sin.

It would be so. Striking. As a testament. And that was Christ. In the carpenter's workshop. In school. In the yard. In the home. Going around the place. He never sinned. No deceit. Was in his mouth.

[12 : 52] Never did he listen to. Or engage in gossip. No sin. And so. One. Would expect. That when.

He came back. To. His home. Town. And the news. Was out. That he was no. Ordinary man. But he was the Messiah. One.

Would expect. The people. Would be ready. To believe. But the reality. Was. The opposite. Was true. Look at verse one. Let's read the section.

Again. The first section. Jesus left there. Capernaum. And went to his hometown. Accompanied by his disciples.

When the Sabbath came. He began to teach. In the synagogue. And many. Who heard him. Were amazed. That's a good start. We think. But. The amazement. Is not an amazement.

[13 : 48] That leads to faith. Where did this man. Get these things. They asked. What's this wisdom. That has been given to him. That he. Even does miracles.

Isn't this the carpenter. Isn't this. Mary's son. That was likely. By the way. A disparaging term.

When somebody. Was spoken of. In that context. They'd be spoken of. As their father's son. But Jesus here. Is spoken of. As Mary's son. Now. It's quite.

Probable. That Joseph. That Joseph. Died. When Jesus. Was in his. His teenage years. So that. Could be part. Of the reason. That they speak to him. Speak of him. As Mary's son.

But even after. The father dies. Still. People will be referred to. After their father's name. The likelihood. Is. That there. Was some. Kind. Of. Resentment.

[14 : 43] About Christ. And some. Question over. Who is his father. Do you remember. Back when he was born. It was all this story. About Mary being a virgin. And all this.

Strange. Things that were being spoken of. Likely. They're talking back. About Jesus. Birth. And the question marks. That were in that place. Over Jesus birth. The question marks.

Over his father. So. They're saying. Well. Isn't this. Mary's son. We're not sure. Who his father is. But isn't this Mary's son.

Brother of James. Joseph. Judas. And Simon. Aren't his sisters here with us. And they took offense at him.

Jesus said to them. Only. In his hometown. Among. His relatives. And. In his own house. As a prophet. Without honor. He could. Not do.

[15 : 44] Any miracles there. Except. Lay his hands. On a few sick people. And heal them. And he was amazed. At their lack of faith.

I think it's one of the. Very few times. That Jesus. Is described as being amazed. He was amazed. At their lack of faith. He was amazed.

That when. When presented. With such. Overwhelmingly. Compelling. Evidence. Still. They would. Not. Believe.

And we can. Shake our heads. At the people of Nazareth. And we can say. Well if I'd been there. You know. I'd certainly. Have believed. Would you. Would you.

Of course. I would. You say. These people. Have. Have no excuse. These people. In Nazareth. Who saw Jesus. And who had all. This evidence.

[16 : 48] Right in front of them. They've got no excuse. For not believing. That's what we. Tend to feel. In our hearts. That's what we want to say. As we. Point our fingers. At the people of Nazareth.

But if. That's our thinking. If that's our mind track. God has a word for us. This morning. A word to the apostle Paul.

Who in Romans 1. Says. For since the creation. Of the world.

God's invisible qualities. His eternal power. And divine nature. Have been clearly seen. Being understood.

From what. Has been made. So that men. Are without. Excuse. To our. To all the world. To our.

[17 : 44] About. 2019. Included. As we look out. A window. As we. See. That. The creation. Of God. We.

Are presented. With. So many. Evidences. Of his. Eternal. Power. And his. Divine. Nature. Even as we look. Out a window. And the.

Consequence. Is that. We. Have no excuse. We can. Point our finger. Of the people. Of Nazareth. And say. They have no excuse. And God says to us. In response to that. You have even less excuse.

And Jesus speaks. Even more clearly. About this. In Luke chapter 16. The parable. Of the rich man. And Lazarus. We have this scene. That Jesus paints.

And the rich man. Is in hell. And he's. Asking. Abraham. Who. Is with. Lazarus. That someone. Be sent.

[18 : 40] From heaven. To go. To his brothers. And warn. His five brothers. So that they will. Also. Not come. To this place. Of torment. It's what the rich man.

Is saying. Go and warn. My five brothers. So that they won't. End up in this hell too. And the response. From heaven. Was. They have Moses.

And the prophets. Let them listen. To them. No father. Abraham. Says the rich man.

But if someone. From the dead. Goes to them. They will repent. He said to them. If they do not. Listen to Moses.

And the prophets. They will not. Be convinced. Even. If someone. Rises from the dead. And how true. That was.

[19 : 36] In Nazareth. Janus's daughter. She had risen. From. The dead. Jesus.

Passed. Through the crowds. Of grieving people. He went. Into the home. With her. He sat. With her parents. He went. To the little girl. And said. Little lamb. Arise.

And the dead girl. Was resurrected. But the news.

Of her testimony. Did not. Turn people. In faith. To Jesus. Increasingly. We read.

That they. They took offense. At him. So much. So. That Jesus. Was amazed. At their. Willfully.

[20 : 32] Blind. Unbelief. I wonder. Is Jesus. Amazed. This morning.

Even. As he looks. Into some. Of our own. Hearts. See. We are. Without. Excuse. We need. To see. That. We look.

At the stunning. Landscapes. And seascapes. Of this place. We are. Presented. Day.
After day. So. Powerfully.

With. So many. Evidences. Of God's. Creative. Beauty. And majesty. And glory. God is.
Speaking to us. Every time. We look. Out our windows. Bibles. He's.

Revealing. Himself. To us. We have. Our Bibles. We can.

[21 : 35] Open. Our Bibles. This morning. And. We have. Moses. And. We have. The prophets.
And. We have. The gospels. And.

We have. The epistles. We have. So much. More. Than. They had. We see. Jesus. Not
just. In snapshots. As he passes.

Through a place. Like Nazareth. Just. For a moment. For. For. For a few. Days. We have.
These. Eyewitnesses. Accounts. Of. Of. Christ's. Life. And.

Ministry. We have. These. Detailed. Investigated. Accounts. Inspired. By the Holy Spirit.
Recorded. By men. As they were. Carried. Along.

Preserved. Over. The generations. And. They're. In our. Hands. This. Morning. And.

[22 : 31] Remember. We see. Why. Christ. Came. We see. His. Cross. Remember. The disciples.
And the people.

Of. Nazareth. They had. No. Idea. What. Christ. Mission. Was. We see. Why. He came.
We see.

His. Cross. We see. His. Open. Tomb. We have. Heard. The good. News. That. That.
Jesus. Himself. God. The son. He. Rose. From. The dead. People., But.

Do we. Believe. That's. The question. Let me. See. If we. Do not. Believe.

This morning. It's not. Because. We don't. Have. Enough. Evidence. From. God. To.
Enable. And.

[23 : 28] Persuade. Us. to see. If we don't believe this morning, more likely it's due to a willfully
determined, blind unbelief.

So what next? The people of Nazareth, they were blind and unbelieving, determinedly so.
So what next?

Have the disciples and Christ hit a brick wall? I remember in the past when I was working
before being in ministry, I used to work on pipeline jobs for a period of months or for a
couple of years actually.

And sometimes when you were working with these water pipes, you had a route that was
laid out across various areas. And more often than not, you didn't know the ground
conditions before you started to lay the pipe.

So there would be a proposed route and you would hear back from the contractors,
they're making good progress. How are things going? Yeah, there's another 100 metres
done today and there's another 200 metres done today.

[24 : 44] It's soft ground, it's good conditions. And then all of a sudden, they would hit rock and
progress would just halt. Nazareth had been rock.

Jesus was barely able to make any progress, perform any miracles when he was there.
Does that mean he had no power to? Well, it doesn't mean he had no power to, but Jesus'
miracles were in response to faith and there was no faith there.

So there was no progress. So did that bring a halt to the gospel ministry? Well, no, it
didn't. Quite the contrary. Jesus and his disciples were bold and undeterred.

It's the second point. It's the final point. Blind and unbelieving. That's Nazareth. But the
disciples, as they face that, they are bold and undeterred as Christ spurs them on.

Look at verse 7. Then Jesus went around teaching from village to village. There's a moving on from Nazareth. Which in itself is a sobering point.

[26 : 01] My spirit will not always strive with the people, says God. We have opportunities as Jesus passes by us in time, but he moves on.

We read here. Jesus went around teaching from village to village. Verse 7. Calling the twelve to him. He sent them out two by two and gave them authority over evil spirits.

These were his instructions. Take nothing for the journey. Except a staff. No bread. No bag. No money. And your bells wear sandals, but not an extra tunic.

Whenever you enter the house, stay there until you leave that town. And if any place will not welcome you, or listen to you, shake the dust of your feet when you leave as a testimony against them.

They went out and preached that people should repent. They drove out many demons and anointed many sick people with oil and healed them.

[26 : 58] I remember a song from, I think it was the 80s. It was a Billy Ocean or Billy Joe or one of these Billies.

I can't remember which one it was that sang the song. But the line in the song that kept getting repeated was, when the going gets tough, the tough get going. And that's a lyric that you can import into this situation.

When the going got tough, they didn't give up. They just got going. They kept going. Now very often in ministry, and every Christian is called to be in ministry.

We're not all called to stand and preach at the lectern or the pulpit, but we're all called to be ministers. We're all given that ministry of the gospel to share with the people that God puts around us.

Very often when we are in ministry and when we encounter opposition, when people are offended because we speak to them about Jesus, as the people of Nazareth were offended, when that happens to us, very often our confidence is knocked.

[28 : 08] We struggle with that. And we become hesitant and fearful about trying to witness and speak about Jesus again.

That's the reality because we're fragile creatures. We have feelings. But when we encounter opposition as Jesus and his disciples did, this passage teaches us to persevere.

the disciples and Jesus, having faced that rejection in Nazareth, having had to deal with the emotional struggle of all that they encountered, we would understand if they felt like giving up.

But they didn't give up. Sinclair Ferguson says, rejection is never a reason for the servant of God to despair.

Jesus' heart was set on obedience to his father, whatever that led him and whatever that cost him. So he did not lose heart.

[29 : 20] And neither should we. Let me speak to those who are Christians here this morning. Don't give up. In an age where we are so conscious that there is so much more resistance to the gospel, don't give up.

In a culture, in a nation where we are so much more offended by everything, but especially by Jesus and his exclusive claims, when we face an opposition and persecution because of that, don't give up.

Don't lose heart. Don't be beaten into silence. Be bold is the message.

Take a leaf out of the children's book what they sing through next door. Be bold, be strong for the Lord your God is with you.

That's what Katie reminded us of this morning. Every step of the way he's with us. So why should we fear when the one who is with us is so much stronger than everyone who may be against us?

[30 : 41] So be bold. They were bold and undeterred in the ministry that God called them to.

So, what can we learn just as we finish about how we can be bold ambassadors for Christ? And this was boot camp for the disciples.

this was lesson number one in how to go out in Jesus name. So what were they to do and what are we to do as we go out boldly in the name of Jesus?

Let me just give you a couple of points just to finish. Well the first thing it's almost so obvious that I don't need to say it but I'm going to say it anyway. The first thing we need to do if we are to be bold and undeterred is we need to come to Jesus.

Verse 7 it says calling the twelve to him. Now it's very logical. We can't go out and tell people about Jesus until we have first come to Jesus in faith.

[31 : 57] The man who says you should trust Jesus to the people who are around him but doesn't trust Jesus himself is not going to be very persuasive as an ambassador for Christ.

People are going to say why should I come to Jesus and become a Christian if you're not yet a Christian? Parents and grandparents this is something especially we need to take on board.

If we are teaching our children and our grandchildren to give their lives to Christ to ask Jesus for his forgiveness to ask Jesus to be their Lord to ask Jesus to guide them but we're not doing it ourselves why would they listen?

So what must we do? Come to Jesus if you've never yet done it even this morning the quietness of this place bow your head come to Jesus ask him to be your saviour ask him to be your Lord and for those of us who already have asked Christ to be our saviour and our Lord what we're being taught here is that day by day by day by day if we are to be effective as workers for Jesus we must keep coming to him.

The first day I came to this place before I ever went into any pulpit or lectern and the salad prayed with me asking that the Lord would be with me as I would go to preach the message now he didn't do that on day one and never do it again every single week every Sunday morning evening every Wednesday before we walk through the doors we come to Christ in prayer and say help us those who are going to sing those who are going to pray those who are going to lead with musical instruments those who are going to read the Bible and those who are going to preach help us we come to Jesus so the disciples are taught to come to Jesus calling the twelve to him and then they're taught to go out into the world verse 7 he sent them out to the rhythm of the Christian life we come to

[34 : 37] Jesus to be blessed and then we go out into the world to be a blessing we might not have power to feed five thousand and drive out demons and all these things but if we have the compassion of Christ that we'll go on to read of in this chapter then we'll want to care for the people like Christ cared for the people in the hope that as we do so they see Christ in us and they hear Christ from us but for that to happen we need to be out amongst the people as Jesus wants Alistair Beds the teacher talks about the us four no more close the door syndrome sometimes we can get like that as churches we get comfortable with each other us four no more close the door Jesus says open the door and get out there there are a whole lot of people in this place who are not in any church this morning who have no interest in the things of

God who have no knowledge of who Jesus is and what he's done Jesus sends us out to say all these things that are empty and more get them filled so that no matter who is here no matter who is preaching they hear the gospel so Jesus as he sends them out he says come to me first then go out into the world and as you do support each other he sent them out two by two why not one by one because we need each other God doesn't call us to do the work of a lone ranger he calls us to work together for his sake he knows that we need support he knows that we need encouragement he knows that we need correction he knows that we veer off to the left and to the right and so we need other people who are walking straight to say come back in he sent them out two by two because we need to encourage each other it's part of the reason we're here this morning don't get out of the habit of meeting together says

God in Hebrews in the passage in Hebrews but encourage each other you know the old illustration the coals and the fire the coals and the fire as if together in the fire they glow there's heat take one out put it isolated in the hearth and in no time it's as cold as ice Christians are coals as we fellowship together as we work together as we pray for each other as we support each other there is a heat there is an attractiveness that the world sees so Jesus said support each other sent them out two by two next thing here we're almost done as Jesus is saying to them don't get too worldly don't get too worldly we're to be in the world

Jesus sends us out but we're not to be of the world it's John 17 we're to remember we have no continuing city here so we should travel light not to be too fixated on our accommodation in this world and our stuff these were his instructions where he said take nothing for the journey except the staff no bread no bag no money in your belts wear sandals but not an extra tunic whenever you enter the house stay there until you leave that time you know is it not true that the more stuff we accumulate very often the more distracted we are so Jesus says don't bring a big suitcase when you're when you're traveling around these villages don't spend too much time on Trip Advisor before you leave to see where the comfiest bed and the most delicious food is just get out there and do what I'm calling you to

St. Ferguson says they were to undertake their mission with a minimum of personal supplies they were men with one purpose and nothing was to detract from it Jesus was concerned that his disciples should not appear to be on a merely social visit one night with one family another night with another family and so on they were on the Lord's business not a holiday there were times for rest but this was not one of them now heaven is described as a place of eternal rest and we look forward to going there if we are in Christ but this world is a place where believers are called to be about the Lord's business so let's seek to focus on that and not be so worldly minded that would have no heavenly use we criticize people for being so heavenly minded that have no earthly use that's a lot of rubbish there's no one more heavenly minded than

[40 : 15] Jesus and there was no one who was more earthly useful than Jesus but we know ourselves that when we are worldly minded we are immobilized spiritually speaking we're stopped in our tracks so Jesus says don't get too worldly the final thing here is we're to stick to the message as we go out in Christ's name what is the message the message is that people should repent verse 11 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 so they went out and preached that people should repent the disciples were preaching a message both of what they did and what they said to shake the dust off one's feet was an expression of God's judgment against the people

I haven't got time to go into that and show you and the reality was that people who would not listen to or accept Christ were under the judgment and the condemnation of God John 3 18 whoever believes in him is not condemned but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only son so in order to be saved and not condemned what must we do we must repent and that's the message that Jesus gave them go and preach that people should repent but that's not a popular message you might say people don't like hearing that sermon they didn't like it back then either but that's the message that Jesus gave them back then and that's the message that Christ has given us for now we are sinners we are headed for a lost eternity that Jesus is the saviour and he calls us to repent he calls us to turn from our sin and to turn to him the message doesn't change so if you want to be saved you must trust him and if we want to be used by God to reach others even if it makes us unpopular we must stick to him we'll pray

Lord we pray that you would be at work in the power of the Holy Spirit in this place we ask Lord that as we see the revelation of yourself in creation and in and through your word we pray that we would not be like the people of Nazareth who turned away from Jesus in unbelief we pray that we would not be like the people of Rome who suppressed the truth and exchanged the truth for a lie but we ask Lord that you would help us to see our great need of Christ to see our sin and to repent and to be saved and we ask it in Jesus name Amen Matthew is very we have back in Jesus and you must advance and we have 20 10 and ev to everything to win and me all stop you we everybody take hands to

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