

## A Prophet at Home Mark 6:1-6

If Mark five is the chapter of lost causes found, chapter six is the chapter of found causes lost. Ministry in Nazareth is a bust (v5), John the Baptizer gets murdered (v27), and the disciples have hard hearts and lack understanding (v52). Jesus is coming home, but there's no homecoming parade or welcome. Like the mourners who laughed him down (5:40), the Nazarenes are offended (v3). But as in so many stories in Mark, there is victory on the horizon—both Jesus' horizon and ours. The gospel is good news. It's *news* in the urgent and relevant sense, applicable here and now. And it's *good*, that grace has triumphed over sin and death, is triumphing, and will triumph. Don't be like the short-sighted reader of Ecclesiastes who only concludes "All is vapor." How did his homecoming bless Jesus and the church? What do we learn from it?

### Normal Jesus

So far Jesus has been in Capernaum and around the Sea of Galilee. He leaves there to go to Nazareth, his home town (*patrida*, lit. fatherland; v1). He was born in Bethlehem but grew up in Nazareth about 25 miles southwest of the Sea of Galilee and Capernaum, a town consisting of about sixty acres with less than 500 people. Luke tells us that it was Jesus custom to go to the synagogue (Lk. 4:16), so in one sense he is doing what he has always done. He teaches like a rabbi—with skill, and more notably, power—yet he was untrained. They were literally translated "knocked out" by what he said (v2). "Where did this man get these things?" He didn't sit under a prominent rabbi. They knew Mary and likely her reputation (v3). This may indicate Joseph was dead, but either way it's a shot at her, his four brothers and his sisters. Jesus didn't grow up in a holy bubble or enclave. He was a son, a big brother (Matt. 1:24-25; Lk. 2:52), and a *tekton*, a skilled craftsman which was apparently good preparation for ministry. Some traditions opposed physical and theological labor, but the Bible does not as we see with Bezalel (Ex. 31:1-6). We get a sketch of a very pedestrian Jesus, good news for us pedestrians.

### Taking Offense

Jesus' normal and humble beginnings scandalized them. Why? Because he preached the truth about himself (Lk. 4:17ff). A *scandalon* is a stone rejected by builders (cf. Ps. 118:22; Mk. 12:10; Acts 4:11, 1 Peter 2:7). Oddly, it's those we are closest to who provide the most likely candidates for envy. They recognize Jesus' gifts, but won't acknowledge his greatness. "A prophet is not without honor, except in his hometown and among his relatives and in his own household" (v4). They will not learn, which is worse than it sounds. Our phrase for this is "Familiarity breeds contempt." How many grow up in the church taking Christ for granted? How many of us are bored with the Bible? How many of us talk to our family members in a way we wouldn't dream of speaking to someone outside the house? Watch your life and doctrine and how you treat one another, particularly your immediate family (1 Tim. 4:16; Eph. 4:29). In our day, people think it's a virtue to take offense, but most of the time it's a sin and a manipulative attempt at control.

### Disappointed Yet Determined

The fact that Jesus marvels means he had hope they would hear. He doesn't react and return evil for evil, but acts, healing a few sick people. He's not a piñata full of divine favors, but heals according to faith, so where there is no faith, he can do no mighty work (v5). We've seen Jesus angry with those who would turn healing into an opportunity to accuse him, and we've seen him leave Gerasa when they asked him to. But this is different, literally closer to home. Being mocked and rejected, he still loves and serves. How? He has his security in the Father who loves him and is well-pleased (1:11; 1 Cor. 4:3-4). He hurts, but doesn't hurt in return—he doesn't need to. He trusts the Father and continues the mission (v6). The early church would read this knowing what came of it—the conversion of James and Jude and countless others. You're not fighting against those who don't like you or Jesus. You're fighting for them.

## NOTES FOR LITTLE SAINTS

### **Today's Passage: Mark 6:1-6**

*He went away from there and came to his hometown, and his disciples followed him. 2 And on the Sabbath he began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard him were astonished, saying, "Where did this man get these things? What is the wisdom given to him? How are such mighty works done by his hands?" 3 Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary and brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon? And are not his sisters here with us?" And they took offense at him. 4 And Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not without honor, except in his hometown and among his relatives and in his own household." 5 And he could do no mighty work there, except that he laid his hands on a few sick people and healed them. 6 And he marveled because of their unbelief. And he went about among the villages teaching.*

1. What are the people in Nazareth surprised about (verse 2)?
2. List all the people related to Jesus (verse 3).
3. According to Jesus, where are prophets not honored (verse 4)?
4. Draw a picture of Jesus laying hands on sick people and healing them.

### **Memory Verse to Recite Next Week:**

*And Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not without honor, except in his hometown and among his relatives and in his own household."—Mark 6:4*