

July 19, 2020

Lesson 7

THE WISDOM OF JESUS

ADULT/YOUTH

ADULT/YOUNG ADULT TOPIC: **Wisdom that Astounds and Offends**

YOUTH TOPIC: **Wow! What Wisdom!**

CHILDREN

GENERAL LESSON TITLE: **An All-wise Jesus**
CHILDREN'S TOPIC: **Don't Let the Doubters Stop You**

DEVOTIONAL READING
Mark 7:14-23

ADULT/YOUTH

BACKGROUND SCRIPTURE: **Mark 6:1-6; 7:1-23**

PRINT PASSAGE: **Mark 6:1-6**

ADULT KEY VERSES: **Mark 6:2-3**

YOUTH KEY VERSE: **Mark 6:2**

CHILDREN

BACKGROUND SCRIPTURE: **Mark 6:1-6; 7:1-23**

PRINT PASSAGE: **Mark 6:1-6**

KEY VERSE: **Mark 6:2**

Mark 6:1-6—KJV

AND HE went out from thence, and came into his own country; and his disciples follow him.

2 And when the sabbath day was come, he began to teach in the synagogue: and many hearing him were astonished, saying, From whence hath this man these things? and what wisdom is this which is given unto him, that even such mighty works are wrought by his hands?

3 Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James, and Joses, and of Juda, and Simon? and are not his sisters here with us? And they were offended at him.

4 But Jesus, said unto them, A prophet is not without honour, but in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house.

5 And he could there do no mighty work, save that he laid his hands upon a few sick folk, and healed them.

6 And he marvelled because of their unbelief. And he went round about the villages, teaching.

Mark 6:1-6—NIV

JESUS LEFT there and went to his hometown, accompanied by his disciples.

2 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 this wisdom that has been given him? What are these remarkable miracles he is performing?"

3 "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 offense at him.

4 Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not without honor except in his own town, among his relatives and in his own home."

5 He could not do any miracles there, except lay his hands on a few sick people and heal them.

6 He was amazed at their lack of faith. Then Jesus went around teaching from village to village.

UNIFYING LESSON PRINCIPLE: Some people amaze us by displaying unexpected wisdom. What happens when people show such extraordinary wisdom? Mark tells us that the people in Jesus' hometown were both astounded and offended by Jesus' wise teachings, and the religious leaders were incensed when Jesus' wisdom challenged their traditions.

LESSON OBJECTIVES

Upon the completion of this lesson, the students will be able to do the following:

1. Identify the reason or reasons why the people in Nazareth could not accept the wisdom with which Jesus spoke.
2. Repent of occasions when Jesus' words resulted in their taking offense rather than in accepting the wisdom inherent in those words.
3. Commit to accepting the words of Jesus even when His words are challenging and stretching.

AGE-LEVEL POINTS TO BE EMPHASIZED

Teachers of ADULTS and YOUTH

- Jesus' teaching and preaching are very sharp and critical, especially of religious leaders who have varied from the truth of God. This style reflects what the writer of the book of Hebrews says of the Word of God: "Indeed, the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing until it divides soul from spirit, joints from marrow" (see Hebrews 4:12).
- The term "Son of Mary" may be an insult: people were known by their father's name, not their mother's.
- Verse 4 indicates that Jesus is among the prophets, whose message from God is rejected by their own people.
- "Corban" (Mark 7:9-13): A child could, per the aural Torah, declare possessions to be *korban*, i.e., an offering to God. The commandment to "Honor your father and mother" was interpreted as giving parents a right to a child's possessions. Making possessions "korban" circumvented a child's obligations to his parents under the Law.
- Jesus came from humble beginnings and His

- friends and neighbors knew that; they knew His family and knew that none of them had done such wondrous things and were upset when they believed that Jesus thought higher of Himself than what they once knew Him to be.
- His hearers could not believe that Jesus was filled with so much wisdom yet was so humble and lowly.
- Jesus acknowledged that the people closest to Him would not understand the mission and vision that was created for Him.
- Jesus did not allow the plan for His life to be stopped even though they admonished Him.

Teachers of CHILDREN

- Jesus, along with the disciples, returned to Nazareth.
- When Jesus began to teach in the synagogue on the Sabbath day, His listeners were astonished. They wondered how Jesus had so much wisdom and power, seeing as though He was just a carpenter's son.
- When the people rejected Jesus, He expressed that a prophet is without honor among his own people.
- The listeners' rejection established an

environment of faithlessness. This lack of trust in Jesus hindered the listeners from fully receiving

what Jesus had to offer, including miracles and other signs and wonders.

THE CHRONOLOGICAL SETTING OF THE LESSON

There is some measure of disagreement as to the exact date of composition of the gospel of Mark. Those who support the theory that both Matthew and Luke used Mark's gospel as their primary source also tend to hold that Mark was composed in the fifties or early sixties AD. Still others contend that the content of this gospel points toward chronological placement of Mark around AD 70, shortly after the Temple in Jerusalem was destroyed.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL AND CULTURAL SETTING OF THE LESSON

The name of the book is the same as its most likely author. Although there is no specific reference to Mark as the writer, the early church universally agreed that John Mark penned this gospel (see Acts 12:12, 25; 15:37).

The gospel of Mark poignantly focuses on the life, ministry, and crucifixion of Jesus the Christ. This second book of the Synoptic Gospels is the earliest gospel on record, and it serves as an important scriptural guide for inspiration, information, and instruction. The gospel of Mark is also referred to as a passion narrative because one-third of the book describes the final week that Jesus ministered in Jerusalem. Mark divides his gospel according to the geographical areas of northern Palestine (encompassing Galilee and adjacent areas) and southern Palestine. Mark was likely written in the regions of Italy or, more specifically, in Rome.

PROMINENT CHARACTER(S) IN THE LESSON

Mary: Mary was the mother of Jesus. She conceived and bore other children naturally after Jesus' supernatural conception. Mary's husband was Joseph, who served as Jesus' earthly father.

Jesus' brothers: James, Joseph, Simon, and Judas are all mentioned as the brothers or siblings of Jesus (see Matthew 13:55; Mark 6:3).

Jesus' sisters: Matthew 13:56 states, "His sisters, are they not all with us?" There were two or more sisters who were probably married and residents of Nazareth. Siblings are not mentioned at all until after Jesus began His ministry and are first mentioned as going with Jesus and Mary to Capernaum (see John 2:12). It is not clear whether they followed Him or even believed in His claims until after His death and resurrection.

KEY TERMS IN THE LESSON

Hometown (verse 1)—Greek: *patris* (pat-rece): of one's father's homeland; fatherland; "own country" (KJV).

Miracles (verse 2)—Greek: *dunamis* (doo'-nam-is): might; power; marvelous works; "mighty works" (KJV).

Prophet (verse 4)—Greek: *prophétés* (prof-ay'-tace): a poet; a person gifted at expounding divine truth.

Synagogue (verse 2)—Greek: *sunagógé* (soon-ag-o-gay'): an assembly; congregation.

Teach (verse 2)—Greek: *didaskó* (did-as'-ko): to teach, direct, admonish.

Took Offense (verse 3)—Greek: *skandalizó* (skan-dal-id'-zo): was made to stumble, sin; became indignant, shocked, offended; "were offended" (KJV).

TOPICAL OUTLINE OF THE LESSON

I. Introduction

- A. Jesus: The Minister
- B. Biblical Background

II. Exposition and Application of the Scripture

- A. Declaration and Doubt at Home
(Mark 6:1-4)
- B. Jesus' Power Is Limited
(Mark 6:5-6)

III. Concluding Reflection

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Jesus: The Minister

The gospel of Mark shows Jesus as a doer of mighty works rather than as a teacher of profound truths. Obviously, He is both. Throughout the gospel of Mark we see Jesus as the suffering servant and incarnate Son of God. A key verse in Mark is found in Mark 10:45, which reads, “For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister.” Mark is therefore characteristically a gospel of deeds rather than a gospel of words. The gospel of Mark gives explanations about Jewish customs (see 7:2-4; 15:42), translates Aramaic words (see 3:17; 5:41; 7:11, 34; 15:22, 34) and devotes a special amount of interest to the subject of persecution and martyrdom (see 8:34-38; 13:9-13). These characteristics make the gospel of Mark a likely candidate for its readers’ being Romans.

B. Biblical Background

In order to spiritually prepare oneself for a study of Mark, a prayerful reading of the following passages would be of great benefit: Isaiah 42:1-21; 50:4-11; 52:13–53:12; Zechariah 3:8; Philippians 2:5-8. Mark is basically a gospel whose language is simple and is easier to read than Luke or Matthew. Through using the historical present tense more than 150 times, Mark is able to help the readers identify more with the Jesus of the present rather than simply the Jesus of the past. The utilization of extended description and narrative by Mark draws the reader in and places us inside the action of the moment. Mark’s parenthetical statements further serve to help the reader to translate and grasp the magic of the moment and to paint a descriptive picture such as is seen in Mark 4:41 (NIV): “They were terrified and asked each other, ‘Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!’” Mark showcases eighteen miracles of Jesus and demonstrates how Jesus has absolute power over disease, disability, demons, and even nature. The gospel of Mark paints the picture with extraordinary vividness.

II. EXPOSITION AND APPLICATION OF THE SCRIPTURE

A. Declaration and Doubt at Home

(Mark 6:1-4)

AND HE went out from thence, and came into his own country; and his disciples follow him. And when the sabbath day was come, he began to teach in the synagogue: and many hearing him were astonished, saying, From whence hath this man these things? and what wisdom is this which is given unto him, that even such mighty works are wrought by his hands? Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James, and Joses, and of Juda, and Simon? and are not his sisters here with us? And they were offended at him. But Jesus, said unto them, A prophet is not without honour, but in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house.

Why did Jesus return to Nazareth (verse 1) when He already knew there were people with ill will there who meant Him no good? Instead of giving in to the natural human propensity for fear, Jesus refused to allow this trait to prevent Him from ultimately fulfilling His divine calling. Perhaps Jesus also had hoped that there had been a change in the hearts of the people of Nazareth since He had announced in the synagogue there that “the Spirit of the Lord” was upon Him (Luke 4:18) and that the message of the Gospel had somehow saturated the hometown society to the point of their embracing Him as their native son who had started from the bottom and now was operating a wide-ranging ministry. Sadly, such was not the case. The blatant distaste for His teachings and disrespectful disregard for His authority that was present when He was there the last time still remained. One can only imagine the hope and expectation Jesus may have had as He returned to the familiar place where He grew up to revisit the community of people who had known Him the longest.

In the synagogue (verse 2), Jesus preached the Gospel and expounded upon the Law and the Prophets. As He did so, the natural ability and spiritual skill that had existed at age twelve had been honed and heightened to a level and degree much higher than any other comparable individual before or since that time. Matthew 7:28-29 reflects a similar reaction when people heard Jesus speak: “When Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were amazed at his teaching, because he taught as one who had authority, and not as their teachers of the law” (NIV). They made the mistake of placing the same limitations on Jesus that they had placed on themselves. Perhaps they reasoned thusly, “I am not able to explain the Scriptures in such a profound manner and Jesus comes from the same place that I come from, so how can He possibly know more than I know being so much younger?”

The people from Jesus’ hometown fell victim to the problematic issue of comparison syndrome. This faulty line of reasoning short circuits our potential for progress. We can never reach our true potential when we continually compare ourselves to others, or when we compare others to ourselves. “If I become someone else, who will be me?” We were created as original, and the challenge of life is not to die as a copy.

Perhaps the people of Nazareth expected Jesus to follow in the same choice of occupation as His carpenter father (verse 3). They expected Him to limit Himself based on what His brothers James, Joseph, Judas, and Simon had accomplished. (The mere fact that Jesus had these four brothers and other sisters is evidence that

Joseph and Mary continued to have children.) That the people of Nazareth were shocked at the obvious capacity of Jesus demonstrated that they were probably unaware of the significance of the name of their city. The name “Nazareth” means “separated, crowned, sanctified.” This is exactly what their city’s most famous resident embodied. He was separated from everything that was ordinary. He was crowned at birth as Messiah, King of Kings and Lord of Lords. He was sanctified or set apart for a special mission in life: to give abundant life and to save the people from their sins.

The proverb quoted in verse 4 is also found in Matthew 13:57. We should recognize and give honor to people we may know and even to strangers because we never know how God may plan to use them to accomplish His purpose. Sadly, it is often one’s own friends and relatives who are the first to highlight one’s personal faults and the last to recognize one’s true greatness. Perhaps familiarity breeds contempt among people. Hebrews 13:2 (NIV) reminds us to “not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it.”

Since the people of the city of Nazareth had witnessed Jesus growing up and probably acting like any young boy would act, they assumed that they knew all about Jesus. What a lesson that is for us today; we should never assume that we know everything there is to know about Jesus. He is much too big and powerful to be boxed in by our limited thinking, traditions, and human parameters. A fresh take on this important lesson is provided by The Message Bible’s paraphrase of Isaiah 40:27-31: “Why would you ever complain, O Jacob, or, whine, Israel, saying, ‘God has lost track of me. He

doesn’t care what happens to me’? Don’t you know anything? Haven’t you been listening? GOD doesn’t come and go. God lasts. He’s Creator of all you can see or imagine. He doesn’t get tired out, doesn’t pause to catch his breath. And he knows everything, inside and out. He energizes those who get tired, gives fresh strength to dropouts. For even young people tire and drop out, young folk in their prime stumble and fall. But those who wait upon GOD get fresh strength. They spread their wings and soar like eagles, they run and don’t get tired, they walk and don’t lag behind.”

B. Jesus’ Power Is Limited

(Mark 6:5-6)

And he could there do no mighty work, save that he laid his hands upon a few sick folk, and healed them. And he marvelled because of their unbelief. And he went round about the villages, teaching.

Is it possible to limit God by our own limited thinking (verse 5)? When we think we know God too well we fail to leave room for God’s forever unknown aspects. We can hamper God’s progress by the overestimation of our own knowledge and by the presence of any level of doubt about God’s capability. According to Romans 14:23 (NIV), “Whoever has doubts is condemned if they eat, because their eating is not from faith; and everything that does not come from faith is sin.” Faith is an important factor for God’s power to be manifested. Faith activates the power of God like fire and air activate the power of heat. Our faith level depends on how much we are willing to trust God. The reason our spiritual lives sometimes seem to run out of gas is because they have run out of faith and are operating on fumes. Faith is that invisible force that changes

our course. If you could crystallize hope and hold it in your hand, that substance would be faith. Faith enables us to take something that does not exist and trust God to make it reality. Sometimes, we have to just “faith” it until we make it. Since God is invisible in the natural, our faith in Him affirms His existence and relevance in our lives. God shows appreciation by rewarding our demonstrations of faith. Faith is a process that combines the power of God’s great ability with the simple actions of childlike obedience.

There were not many things that could amaze Jesus (verse 6). But one of those things was not very complimentary and not a badge of honor or a thing to be desired. When considering His hometown of Nazareth, He was amazed at their lack of faith. The Nazarenes based their belief on false assumptions, and it is difficult to arrive at a correct conclusion when one’s basic premise is incorrect. The wind of doubt emanating from the Nazarenes figuratively extinguished the light emanating from Jesus’ candle in the community. It is frightening to ponder the fact that our seemingly innocuous but faithless attitudes or actions may unwittingly serve to stifle some of the work

that God is able to accomplish in our lives, our families, our workplaces, our schools, our communities, and our world. It is good that Jesus did not completely allow the unbelief, doubt, and lack of cooperation by the people to prevent Him from offering effective ministry to others who were open to receive it.

III. CONCLUDING REFLECTION

There is a natural tendency for some people to feel threatened when in the presence of excellence—those with superior knowledge or skills. If this happens, the change that needs to happen is not with the one who is excellent, but with the one who is mediocre. It is important not to allow negativity and disbelief to prevent one’s forward progress toward obeying the will of God. There will always be naysayers, but we must not allow their hollow voices to distract from our divine directions. Excellence is doing ordinary things in extraordinary ways. Anything worth doing is worth doing right with a spirit of excellence.

PRAYER

Lord, give us a spirit of excellence that we might represent You and attract more disciples to the kingdom of God. In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen.

HOME DAILY BIBLE READINGS

(July 13-19, 2020)

The Wisdom of Jesus

MONDAY, July 13: “Jesus Restores Leader’s Daughter to Life” (Mark 5:35-43)

TUESDAY, July 14: “Samaritans Testify to the Wisdom of Jesus” (John 4:27-29, 39-42)

WEDNESDAY, July 15: “All Wisdom Dwells in Christ” (Colossians 2:1-5)

THURSDAY, July 16: “Jesus Denounces Human Traditions” (Mark 7:1-8)

FRIDAY, July 17: “God’s Wisdom Trumps Human Commands” (Mark 7:9-15)

SATURDAY, July 18: “The Heart, Not the Stomach, Defiles” (Mark 7:17-23)

SUNDAY, July 19: “Jesus’ Wisdom Astonishes His Hometown People” (Mark 6:1-6)