

A crown of thorns, made of dry, sharp, and tangled branches, is positioned in the upper left corner of the image. The background is a dark, textured wooden surface with visible grain and some faint, circular markings. The lighting is dramatic, highlighting the texture of the wood and the sharp points of the thorns.

**Mark 6:1-6**  
**Hometown Unbelief**

the **GOSPEL**  
of **MARK**

# Introduction

In reading the Bible, we find amazing stories of God and the things that He has done. What is often missed is the underlying theme of faith.

In Jesus' earthly ministry, he aroused the curiosity of the people, but not their faith.

This unbelief is seen in today's passage as Jesus returns to His hometown of Nazareth. Here we will find four characteristics of unbelief.

## Mark 6:1-6

Then He went out from there and came to His own country, and His disciples followed Him. <sup>2</sup> And when the Sabbath had come, He began to teach in the synagogue. And many hearing *Him* were astonished, saying, “Where *did* this Man *get* these things? And what wisdom *is* this which is given to Him, that such mighty works are performed by His hands! <sup>3</sup> Is this not the carpenter, the Son of Mary, and brother of James, Joses, Judas, and Simon? And are not His sisters here with us?” So they were offended at Him. <sup>4</sup> But Jesus said to them, “A prophet is not without honor except in his own country, among his own relatives, and in his own house.” <sup>5</sup> Now He could do no mighty work there, except that He laid His hands on a few sick people and healed *them*. <sup>6</sup> And He marveled because of their unbelief. Then He went about the villages in a circuit, teaching.

# Unbelief Obscures the Obvious

Mark 6:1

Then He went out from there and came to His own country, and His disciples followed Him.

Mark has just finished recording several amazing miracles performed by Jesus. He has declared the Word of God through His teaching, demonstrated His authority over nature and the spiritual realm. He has healed those suffering from various ailments and demonstrated His power over life and death.

Now Jesus and His disciples return to Jesus' hometown of Nazareth. This is where Jesus had spent His first 30 years of life. The people had watched Him grow up and knew Him and his family as carpenters.

# Unbelief Obscures the Obvious

Mark 6:2

And when the Sabbath had come, He began to teach in the synagogue. And many hearing *Him* were astonished, saying, “Where *did* this Man *get* these things? And what wisdom *is* this which is given to Him, that such mighty works are performed by His hands!

Luke 4:16-30 records a previous visit to Nazareth. There Jesus read a passage from Isaiah and identified Himself as the Messiah. Blinded by their familiarity with Jesus, they rejected His claim and attempted to kill Him.

As Jesus returns, He is invited to teach in the synagogue. On a human level, they knew Him very well. They also were aware that after leaving Nazareth He had been preaching and performing miracles causing wonder and amazement throughout Israel. Though they were interested to hear Him, their unbelieving attitude toward Him had not changed.

# Unbelief Obscures the Obvious

Mark 6:2

And when the Sabbath had come, He began to teach in the synagogue. And many hearing *Him* were astonished, saying, “Where *did* this Man *get* these things? And what wisdom *is* this which is given to Him, that such mighty works are performed by His hands!

Those listening were astonished by His teaching. Jesus’ teaching stood in stark contrast to that of the Pharisees.

The Pharisees paraded their knowledge of various interpretations of Scripture and desired the praise and adoration of the people. In contrast, Jesus taught with authority (He is the author) explaining the text so that people were directed to God.

# Unbelief Obscures the Obvious

Mark 6:2

And when the Sabbath had come, He began to teach in the synagogue. And many hearing *Him* were astonished, saying, “Where *did* this Man *get* these things? And what wisdom *is* this which is given to Him, that such mighty works are performed by His hands!”

Though they were shocked by the depth of Jesus’ teaching and the reports of His miracles, they were unmoved by unbelief. Rather than accept His claims of being the Messiah, they rather questioned the source of His knowledge. They talked among themselves saying, **“Where did this Man get these things? And what wisdom is this which is given to Him, that such mighty works are performed by His hands!”**

They knew that Jesus had not trained as a rabbi, yet His understanding of the Scripture was unparalleled which left them dumbfounded.

# Unbelief Elevates the Irrelevant

Mark 6:3a

“Is this not the carpenter, the Son of Mary, and brother of James, Joses, Judas, and Simon? And are not His sisters here with us?”

Rather than embracing the obvious, Jesus' former neighbors focused on the irrelevant, throwing up a smoke screen of unrelated information to justify their unbelief. They were astonished by Jesus' teaching and the reports of His miracles, but they refused to believe that Jesus was Lord and Savior.

They only saw a common craftsman with no specialized theological training. Their statement “Is this not the carpenter?” shows the limitations of their thinking. Their statement was irrelevant and a side issue to the truth at hand.

# Unbelief Elevates the Irrelevant

Mark 6:3a

“Is this not the carpenter, the Son of Mary, and brother of James, Joses, Judas, and Simon? And are not His sisters here with us?”

Normally a person is addressed in terms of their father. Notice they address Jesus as the “Son of Mary”. There are two possible reasons for this. One is that Joseph had died. The other is darker and may be a jab that Jesus was illegitimate.

By bringing up His occupation and His family, the people of Nazareth turned irrelevant issues into stumbling blocks to defend their unbelief.

They diverted their attention away from the truth in order to justify their rejection of Jesus. They had only known Him as the son of a local carpenter. Thus, they were unwilling to embrace Him for who He truly was – the Son of God.

# Unbelief Assaults the Messenger

Mark 6:3b-4

So they were offended at Him. <sup>4</sup> But Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not without honor except in his own country, among his own relatives, and in his own house."

The Greek term translated "offended" is the word from which we get the word "scandalize." It means "to snare" or "to cause to stumble". Jesus' words often offended people, especially those who prided themselves on their religious and intellectual standings. Jesus' message is not recorded, but we know that it both amazed and offended those listening.

Today, God's Word still offends. People do not want to hear about sin and that their achievements and good works are insufficient to gain them access into heaven.

# Unbelief Assaults the Messenger

Mark 6:3b-4

So they were offended at Him. <sup>4</sup> But Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not without honor except in his own country, among his own relatives, and in his own house."

Jesus' response was "A prophet is not without honor except in his own country, among his own relatives, and in his own house."

At this point, few in his hometown of Nazareth believed in Him. Even within His own family, both among his own relatives and in his own household, only His mother believed. Many people outside of Nazareth regarded Him as a prophet, but in his hometown, Jesus was rejected with hostility and antagonism.

# Unbelief Rejects the Supernatural

Mark 6:5-6

Now He could do no mighty work there, except that He laid His hands on a few sick people and healed *them*. <sup>6</sup>And He marveled because of their unbelief. Then He went about the villages in a circuit, teaching.

The unbelief of these people restricted the supernatural work of Jesus. To be clear, unbelief does not stop or diminish God's power. Rather a person's unbelief stands as a barrier to keep them from coming to Jesus.

There are different opinions with this verse. Jesus' miracles were proof that He was the long-awaited Messiah. Since these people had made up their minds and rejected Him, there was no reason to give them any more evidence.

There is a stewardship and growth principle here. When a person responds in faith to what God reveals, God reveals more. This brings the person to maturity and a deeper relationship with God. To reject God's truth either intellectually and/or by refusing to submit to that truth results in spiritual stagnation.

# Unbelief Rejects the Supernatural

Mark 6:5-6

Now He could do no mighty work there, except that He laid His hands on a few sick people and healed *them*.<sup>6</sup> And He marveled because of their unbelief. Then He went about the villages in a circuit, teaching.

Another explanation is that the unbelief in the region limited the amount of people coming to Jesus for healing. In contrast to the multitudes that came to Jesus in other areas, He only “laid His hands on a few sick people and healed them.”

The situation was such that even Jesus “marveled because of their unbelief.” These people had known Jesus from a child. They had watched Him grow up. Jesus would have been different from the other children as He never sinned. They should have known Jesus’ character and compassion, yet their familiarity with Him bred contempt.

# Unbelief Rejects the Supernatural

Mark 6:5-6

Now He could do no mighty work there, except that He laid His hands on a few sick people and healed *them*. <sup>6</sup> And He marveled because of their unbelief. Then He went about the villages in a circuit, teaching.

This last phrase carries a terrifying implication. The people of Nazareth rejected Jesus and as a result He turned from them and went elsewhere. **“He went about the villages in a circuit, teaching.”**

God is patient and works in the lives of people to draw them to Himself. I have also seen people who have been convicted of their sin but then rejected the light of God’s revelation. As a result, their hearts became cold and hardened.

## So What ...

If you witness, it is not uncommon to be confronted with these same characteristics of unbelief.

Unbelief blinds a person to the obvious. They are sinners and cut off from God, but God loved them so much that He sent Jesus to die on the cross and pay their debt.

People elevate the irrelevant. Unbelief attempts to derail the gospel conversation with a host of shallow questions and excuses.

Unbelief causes people to ridicule the messenger. I have been viewed as ignorant and naïve for believing the Truths of Scripture. If a person is unwilling to deal with the evidence, they attack the messenger (Charlie Kirk).

Unbelief becomes a barrier to keep them from coming to Jesus for a supernatural transformation. God is willing to save and adopt them into His family, but they are unwilling to come.