

SERIES: **The Jesus Journey**
TITLE: **The Nazareth Syndrome** TEXT: **Mark 6:1-6**

Q: Have you ever looked for something that isn't where it should be? (Keys, phone....kids!)

We see Jesus looking for faith where it should be- yet not finding it

Mark 6:1-6 He left there and came to his hometown, and his disciples followed him. ²When the Sabbath came, he began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard him were astonished. "Where did this man get these things?" they said. "What is this wisdom that has been given to him, and how are these miracles performed by his hands?" ³Isn't this the carpenter, the son of Mary, and the brother of James, Joses, Judas, and Simon? And aren't his sisters here with us?" So they were offended by him. ⁴Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not without honor except in his hometown, among his relatives, and in his household." ⁵He was not able to do a miracle there, except that he laid his hands on a few sick people and healed them. ⁶And he was amazed at their unbelief. He was going around the villages teaching.

This passage is laid against the backdrop of the events of the previous chapter

- Mark 5: radical faith — demon-possessed man, sick woman, grieving father
- Mark 6: radical unbelief — and it comes from the people who *knew Jesus*

They didn't reject Jesus because they didn't know Him...They rejected Him because they thought they did.

Everywhere else Jesus is surrounded by crowds, but when He returns home, He doesn't get the same reception

Mark 6:1 He left there and came to his hometown, and his disciples followed him.

Jesus was born in Bethlehem but grew up in **Nazareth**.

It was a small town, roughly 200-400 people- nothing spectacular.

John 1:45-46 Philip found Nathanael and told him, "We have found the one Moses wrote about in the Law, and about whom the prophets also wrote—**Jesus of Nazareth**, the son of Joseph."

⁴⁶ **"Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?"** Nathanael asked. "Come and see," said Philip.

Most of the people of Nazareth were familiar with Jesus, they saw Him grow up

Luke 3:23 tells us Jesus didn't begin His ministry until He was 30, which means He spent the majority of His life here in this small village

So now you may have noticed, we have two different groups of people who know Jesus in two different ways: Those who grew up with Him, and those who are His followers.

And there's a simple yet profound cautionary lesson for us:

Growing up with Jesus is not the same as following Jesus

- Just because you grew up in church doesn't mean you're following Jesus (**my story*)
 - You may know the songs, the lingo, the stories- but *knowing OF Jesus* ≠ *knowing Jesus*
- Just because you didn't grow up in church doesn't mean you can't be a Jesus follower
 - Matthew & Zacheus were *tax collectors*, Paul hunted Christians- Jesus came for YOU

Q: ***Are you following Jesus or are you just familiar with Jesus?***

Mark 6:2-3 When the Sabbath came, he began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard him were astonished. “Where did this man get these things?” they said. “What is this wisdom that has been given to him, and how are these miracles performed by his hands? ³ Isn’t this the carpenter, the son of Mary, and the brother of James, Joses, Judas, and Simon? And aren’t his sisters here with us?” So they were offended by him.

Synagogue- where the Jews gather to read the Torah, sing and hear a qualified Jewish man expound on a text Jesus had attended this synagogue most of His life; may have even helped out in someways, but only now after having left home, begun His ministry, and returned as a Rabbi with a group of followers is He allowed to teach.

Mark doesn’t tell us what Jesus taught, but Luke tells us some of what He said, as He read from **Isaiah 61**.

Luke 4:16-21 He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. He stood up to read, ¹⁷ and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written: ¹⁸ “The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, ¹⁹ to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.” Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him. ²¹ He began by saying to them, “**Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.**”

Jesus is claiming to be the long-awaited Savior, and instead of rejoicing or asking clarifying questions, they make rhetorical questions meant to degrade His claims

V3- they were ‘offended’ = *skandalizómai* – they were scandalized

Even Jesus’ family had previously followed Him to Capernaum because they didn’t believe Him-

Mark 3:20-21 Jesus entered a house, and the crowd gathered again so that they were not even able to eat. ²¹ When his family heard this, they set out to restrain him, because they said, “**He’s out of his mind.**”

Notice the contempt in the questions they ask in **Verse 2**

And they follow that up with- “**Isn’t this the carpenter?**” (Grk. Tekton)- a worker of wood, metal or stone
William Barclay- “The people of Nazareth despised Jesus because he was a working man. To us that is His glory, because it means that God, when he came to earth, claimed no exemptions. He took upon himself the common life with all its common tasks.”

‘the son of Mary’- normally in ancient times, a person is identified as the son of their father, not the mother

-It may be meant as an insult, drawing back to the suspicious circumstances of Jesus’ birth (‘illegitimate’)

-It’s possible and likely that Joseph has died by this point, and by calling Jesus the son of Mary it shows their familiarity with Him and His family

If this is the case, it also helps explain at least part of the reason why Jesus waited until He was 30 years old to set off and do ministry- He had to support His mother and siblings

“...and the brother of James, Joses, Judas, and Simon? And aren’t his sisters here with us?”

They know enough about Him...or at least they think they know enough

This goes against the teachings of the Catholic church which teaches Mary’s perpetual virginity.

They claim in their catechism: “*The Church has always understood these passages as not referring to other children of the Virgin Mary. In fact James and Joseph, “brothers of Jesus”, are the sons of*

another Mary, a disciple of Christ, whom St. Matthew significantly calls "the other Mary". 158 They are close relations of Jesus, according to an Old Testament expression. 159"

But this goes against the rational reading of the text- the reason the people of Nazareth don't believe in Jesus is precisely because to them, He's just a normal guy from a normal family!

This also goes against claims of counterfeit gospels claiming Jesus was performing miracles since He was a child- again, the issue with them is that they KNOW His upbringing to be nothing special

The clash of the claim of His divinity with His humanity and humility was too much scandal for them

Luke 4:29-30 They got up, drove him out of town, and brought him to the edge of the hill that their town was built on, intending to hurl him over the cliff. ³⁰But he passed right through the crowd and went on his way.

Our culture loves the story of the underdog who came from nothing and had nothing yet pulled themselves up by the bootstraps and made much of themselves.

The scandal of the gospel is the *opposite* of that-

Jesus, being God, stepped down from His throne in Heaven and not only came into this world, but came by becoming one of us. He lowered Himself, descended into our humanity.

Jesus came not FROM, but TO, a humble family, a humble town, a humble trade

Isaiah 53:1-5 Who has believed what we have heard? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?

²He grew up before him like a young plant and like a root out of dry ground. **He didn't have an impressive form or majesty that we should look at him, no appearance that we should desire him.** ³He was despised and rejected by men, a man of suffering who knew what sickness was. He was like someone people turned away from; he was despised, and we didn't value him. ⁴Yet he himself bore our sicknesses, and he carried our pains; but we in turn regarded him stricken, struck down by God, and afflicted. ⁵But he was pierced because of our rebellion, crushed because of our iniquities; punishment for our peace was on him, and we are healed by his wounds.

This must have been a great lesson for Jesus' followers that were with Him- and it is for us as well-

If our Master was rejected, be encouraged when you are too for the sake of His name and when you suffer for following in His footsteps and living according to His word

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

The prophets before Jesus were rejected by their own people- Isaiah, Jeremiah, Amos

Jesus is the greatest prophet and to reject Him is the greatest rejection

This verse has echoes of application- we are hesitant to hear from God from those we are most familiar with

- Youth leaders and camp speaker
- Some would rather take the advice of a famous pastor, or spiritual guru over their local pastor
- Young men and women will listen to social media influencers about how to live their lives, all the while dismissing their parents' direction
- Spouses will listen to a podcast for marital advice but won't listen to their own husband/wife

Sometimes, we miss what God is saying—not because He isn't speaking, but because we're too familiar with the messenger.

Mark 6:5-6a He was not able to do a miracle there, except that he laid his hands on a few sick people and healed them. ⁶And he was amazed at their unbelief.

Only twice does the Bible tell us that Jesus was amazed.

- One instance is here, where He is amazed at the unbelief of the people.
- The other is in connection with a Roman military leader who believed Jesus could heal his servant without even coming to his house-

Luke 7:9 When Jesus heard this, **he was amazed at him**, and turning to the crowd following him, he said, "I tell you, I have not found such **great faith** even in Israel."

So He was not able to do many miracles there- *WHY? Did He lack power; was He literally unable?*

Jesus' miracles are SIGNS not SHOWS; they're meant to point, not to prove

In fact, when people demanded a sign, a miracle, from Jesus in order to prove himself, He would not give it

Jesus' miracles are a glimpse into the future, a glimpse into what the world will be like when satan is cast into the lake of fire and King Jesus brings healing and restoration to His people

Tim Keller- "Jesus' miracles were not magic tricks designed to prove how powerful he was, but signs of the kingdom to show how his redemptive power operates. His miracles always healed and restored and delivered people in ways that revealed how we are to find him by faith and have our lives transformed by him.. He could not do a deed that would not redeem"

By rejecting Jesus they rejected their own healing

Hebrews 11:6 And **without faith it is impossible to please God**, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.

This crowd did not want Jesus, so He went on searching for those who did have faith

Mark 6:6b He was going around the villages teaching.

Main Point: Jesus seeks to reward the faith of those who believe

"He didn't marvel at the piety of the Jewish people or the military dominance of the Roman Empire.

*But Jesus did marvel at faith – **when it was present in an unexpected place, and when it was absent where it should have been.**"*

Isn't it intriguing to think that we could amaze Jesus by our faith?

CALL UP WORSHIP TEAM

Jesus is still searching for those who will believe... will He find that in you?

Where do you need to trust Jesus?

For salvation?

For intervention; provision; healing?

COMMUNION

BULPEN-

They were familiar enough with one aspect of Jesus' nature, His humanity,
that they overlooked another aspect, His divinity

We need to be careful not to treat God as if He's only the humble servant that we forget He's Holy God.
We need to be careful not to treat God as only the King on High that we forget He's a friend who is near.

James would succeed Peter as the head of the church in Jerusalem

Judas (Jude) is the likely author of the book of Jude

The townspeople are not put off by what Jesus taught, or by His wisdom or even by His miracles; their issue with Him is has to do with His origin.

This text emphasizes the lowliness of Jesus is a stumbling stone for many

David Garland points out an interesting dance that has been unfolding between what the demons proclaim of Jesus and what the people question regarding Him:

Demonic Cry

1:24: "I know who you are-
the Holy One of God!"

1:34: "He would not let the demons
speak because they knew who he was."

3:11: "You are the Son of God."

5:7: "What do you want with me, Jesus,
Son of the Most High God?"

Human Question

1:27: "What is this? A new teaching-
and with authority!"

2:7: "Why does this fellow talk like that? He's blaspheming!
Who can forgive sins but God alone?"

4:41: "Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!"

6:3: "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?"

2 Corinthians 4:6-10 For God who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of God's glory in the face of Jesus Christ. ⁷ Now we have this treasure **in clay jars**, so that this extraordinary power may be from God and not from us. ⁸ We are afflicted in every way but not crushed; we are perplexed but not in despair; ⁹ we are persecuted but not abandoned; we are struck down but not destroyed. ¹⁰ We always carry the death of Jesus in our body, so that the life of Jesus may also be displayed in our body.

Illustration- The Ugly Duckling

The two previous encounters in chapter 5 are of two different people who had faith before seeing any miracle.
Now Mark contrasts against that, these people who even after seeing miracles still have no faith

*William Lane- "It is not Mark's intention to stress Jesus' **inability** when he states that he could perform no miracles at Nazareth. His purpose is rather to indicate that Jesus was not free to exercise his power **in these circumstances.**"*

What they had answers for prevented them from having faith in what they did not have answers for

Miracles don't produce faith, miracles are more often the result of faith (chapter 5)

Miracles are less the cause of faith and more the reward of it

They knew *little enough* about Him to think that they knew *everything* about Him.