

Mark 6:1-6a

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[0 : 00] Let's read together Mark chapter 6. I'm going to read verses 1 through the first half of 6. So the text officially for today is 6, 1 through 6a, the first half of 6.

I really don't appreciate the way they broke this up with their number headings, but that's okay. So we're going to go through 6a. He went away from there and came to his hometown, and his disciples followed him.

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?

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. And Jesus said to them, A prophet is not without honor, except in his hometown, and among his relatives, and in his own household.

And he could do no mighty work there, except that he laid his hands on a few sick people and healed them. And he marveled because of their unbelief. Let's pray together. Father God, we thank you today for the person and the work of Jesus Christ.

[1 : 12] It is because of what you accomplished by him on our behalf that we have any desire even to come together today and to learn from your word. Lord, we thank you for your word. We thank you that it is the perfect instruction and guide for holiness, that it is sufficient and it is inerrant.

And we thank you for the gospel of Mark, that it is an account of Jesus' life, and for the aim to which Mark wrote it, and that was to make us disciple-making disciples.

Father, the things that can be learned from Scripture we know cannot be applied to our hearts unless this is a work done by your Spirit. And so we ask that that would be the case today, that you would make us keen to listen, to hear, to understand.

But more than that, to have these truths pressed into the very being of who we are, that we might live accordingly in response to them. I pray, Father, for the ability to not be distracted today.

And I pray that you'll give us grace in helping the children to be quiet and to allow that for us. And we pray this in Christ's name. Amen. So, as we come to the beginning of chapter 6, we're coming off of a rather magnificent story.

[2 : 25] Really two stories that kind of reside together. A story within a story, or a story that interrupts another story that's happening. And that's the raising of Jairus' daughter, a daughter of 12 years old that died as Jesus was going to heal her.

As well as the healing of a woman with a 12-year discharge of blood. And both of these things are shown to us as great examples of faith and show to us the power of faith, or I think more accurately said, the power of the God of faith.

We see these people believing and Jesus doing magnificent things on their behalf as a result of their faith. And now we see Jesus traveling back to his hometown, which would be Nazareth. And we see a great display of unbelief, which is also very powerful. In fact, unbelief is eternally powerful.

A familiar text, John chapter 3, verse 16, and we're going to read through 18. For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish, but have eternal life.

[3 : 37] For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. And here we are, verse 18. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.

Unbelief has great power. It brings upon us condemnation. This condemnation is spoken of. Matthew chapter 13, verse 41 and 42. The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will gather out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all lawbreakers, those who don't believe, and throw them into the fiery furnace.

In that place, there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. So unbelief has great power, eternal power, that fixes for us a place of wrath.

In fact, Jesus spoke of hell much more often than he spoke of heaven as a warning against unbelief. Now, we've seen up to this point in Mark, a mixed response to Jesus and his teaching. We've seen some wonderful, beautiful responses of faith. We've seen some unbelief already. And we've seen a mix of that, maybe where we don't really know. Like, is this faith or is this not?

[4 : 52] An example of that would be these great crowds that were following him, seemingly responding to who he is. But we've seen a bit over time, and we know historically that there were very few converts after Jesus' crucifixion and his subsequent resurrection.

So most of these people were following around to see the show. They just wanted to know what next magical thing this man was going to do. And there's these mixed responses that we see. Another account of that is John 12, verses 42 and 43. Many even of the authorities believed in him. But for fear of the Pharisees, they did not confess it, so that they would not be put out of the synagogue.

For they loved the glory that comes from man more than the glory that comes from God. So you see again this kind of mixed response of faith. Both belief but unbelief as well.

A non-devotion to who Jesus Christ is. In Romans 11, verse 20, Paul tells us that branches of Israel have been cut off because of their unbelief.

[5 : 56] And we then get the glorious truth that as Gentiles, we can now be grafted in as a result of their unbelief. But nonetheless, they're cut off because of their unbelief.

And then Paul tells us in Romans 10, verse 13, as Gentiles, we get to treasure this. We get to wrap our arms around this great truth that for everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. So you see all throughout the New Testament, particularly in the Gospel accounts, this juxtaposition of faith and unbelief. John's Gospel is particularly full of it.

That we might believe that Jesus is who he says that he is. And that we may not just say, we're sure Jesus is the Son of God, but we might place saving faith in him.

Regenerative faith in him. That we might see that he is the solution to our great problem. That we are damned and he is our salvation. This week I came across a wonderful quote from a man that may surprise you that it came from.

[7 : 01] From John Calvin, the reformer who many of us tack a belief system onto. Listen to what he said. No man is excluded from calling upon God. The gate of salvation is set open unto all men.

Neither is there any other thing which keeps us back from entering in, save only our unbelief. Those who are not found, who are not counted amongst the saints at the end of all things will have nothing to blame but their own unbelief.

And we see here this remarkable half of a verse. The first half of verse 6. Jesus' response is that he marvels.

He wonders, some of your translations may say. He just can't believe their unbelief. He marveled because of their unbelief.

This is the only place in the New Testament we see a record of Jesus marveling at anything except one other case where he marveled at the faith of the centurions in Matthew chapter 8, Luke chapter 7.

[8 : 10] We see lots of people marveling at him, right? Lots of marveling, lots of amazement, lots of astonishment as people observe Jesus Christ. This is the only other place besides the faith of the centurion that we see that he marvels as a result of their unbelief.

We can see chapter 5 verse 20 of Mark that the people, these Gentiles, marveled at what the man who had the legion cast out of him had to say about the work, the mercy that Christ had shown him. In chapter 1 verse 27, we see people amazed, chapter 2 verse 12 as well, and then astonished in chapter 1 verse 22, as well as in our text today, chapter 6 verse 2, which I'll address a bit more momentarily.

Astonished, marveled, amazed, astonished. But here that turns around and Jesus just cannot believe their unbelief. Now, this return to Nazareth is not the first time he's gone back to his

hometown since the beginning of his ministry.

His ministry was located primarily in Capernaum. That was kind of his center of operation. We've seen him in Mark so far along the Sea of Galilee. We've seen him cross over it.

[9 : 23] He's going to do it again. He's kind of jumping around in this area, bringing about, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God. But this is not the first time he goes back. It's the first account in the gospel of Mark, but we see it again, or we see it for the first time in Luke.

So please turn to Luke chapter 4 verse 16 with me. And let's look first at the first time he returned to help us kind of set the stage for his second return to Nazareth.

Luke chapter 4 verse 16. We'll do a little bit of jumping around here, but begin reading in verse 16.

And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and as he was his custom, went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day. And he stood up to read, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written.

And there's this prophecy that he reads that is the prophecy of the year of the Lord. And he then sits down and says, in verse 21, Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.

[10 : 30] This is a shocking thing that he was saying. He was saying to these people, I am the Christ. I am the anointed one of God. Verse 22, And all spoke well of him, and marveled at the gracious words that were coming from his mouth.

And they said, Is not this Joseph's son? They didn't know who he was. They marveled. They thought, This is very fascinating. He's saying this good stuff is coming.

But they didn't believe. They didn't place saving faith in him. And we know this because, verse 23, he says, Doubtless you will quote to me this proverb, Physician, heal yourself.

What we have heard you did at Capernaum, do here in your hometown as well. They looked for a sign. They wanted him to do another thing, perform another miracle, to show that he was who he was.

They did not believe. And then he goes on to make, and I wish we had more time to speak on it today. I spent a lot of time this week trying to fully understand this, but he makes a rather scathing accusation of them in the following verses.

[11 : 34] Without breaking down the history of that for you, scathing accusation that he makes of them. He says to them, You don't believe. The gospel will pass from here. You won't receive it, is essentially what he said. And look how they turn on him.

Verse 28, When they heard these things, all in the synagogue were filled with wrath. A very strong Greek word. And they rose up and drove him out of the town and brought him to the brow of the hill on which their town was built, so that they could throw him down the cliff.

But passing through their midst, he went away. What that looked like exactly. But somehow or another, Jesus gets away from them murdering him, right? Ready to kill him for the things that he said to them.

This is his first visit back to his hometown, back to Nazareth. Now Nazareth, as you can see on a map, if you kind of have this picture in your head, Capernaum is on the northwest side of the Sea of Galilee.

Nazareth is southwest, about 25 miles away from where he's been. So he leaves this place. He goes on to do many things. We find back in Mark chapter 6 that he returns.

[12 : 44] This time with the disciples. We see this in verse 1. About a year later. This is the approximate timeline. About a year later, he returns.

Now Nazareth was a little town. A very insignificant town. There's no record of it anywhere in the Old Testament at all. We only see it. It only has any significance because it's Jesus' hometown. Otherwise, it wouldn't even exist in the history books. A town of about 500 people by scholars' best estimation. A little town. I don't know what a town of 500 people looks like.

I can't even wrap my mind. I've lived in some small towns in my life, but 500 people is tiny. You know everybody in a 500-person town. There's no doubt about that. I have no clue how many people are here this morning.

I'm just going to guess a little over 100. So just put that picture in your mind, right? 500 people. We could all gather in the parking lot outside and mill around for a while and meet everybody.

[13 : 40] This few number of people. So here is the town who takes him out, wants to throw him down a cliff. About a year later, he returns. They would have known who he was.

There would be no mistaking. He wasn't wearing some kind of an elaborate disguise. He returns back to the town where he grew up, spent the first 30 years of his life, and where they had tried to kill him just a year prior to that.

Notice that there are no great crowds gathered. We don't know what day of the week he arrives, right? But he arrives, and then when the Sabbath comes. On the Sabbath, he goes to the synagogue, which is what you did in those days.

You went to the synagogue, and he was given opportunity to teach. There's no crowds gathered in this town, right? And as was customary of a rabbi, of a teacher, right?

He's given opportunity to teach. And I try to wrap my mind around why this may be the case. They tried to kill him a year prior, why they would even let him. The two things I can come up with is that they had heard of all the things he had done.

[14:39] We know, we saw back in chapter 3, that his family has actually come to Capernaum to try to take him away because they think he's insane. So certainly the news of what he was doing had reached Nazareth.

Maybe they had heard all the stuff. They just thought it might be worth hearing him out. They knew he was doing some miraculous things. They might want to hear him. The other possibility is that he just stood up and started teaching. And I like that one best.

I like that Jesus just stood up and took charge and started teaching. We don't know exactly what he was teaching, right? We see a response to the teaching, but we don't know exactly what it was that he stood up to say.

And here's where we see this shocking response, this response of unbelief that causes Jesus to marvel. And today I want to look, as we're looking at this response, I want to pull three observations from this text about unbelief.

Now, for us this morning, if you have placed saving faith in Christ, wonderful. Good. Right? You have faith.

[15:44] You don't have unbelief. You have faith. But now, as a disciple-making disciple, you have become the propagator of truth. You are now the one that's going to make other disciples of Christ.

And so it's important for us to see what unbelief looks like and what unbelief does, to understand it better. If you've not placed saving faith in Christ, you need to see yourself in this text.

You need to see how it is that you respond to the truth of the personal work of Jesus Christ. And I pray that you will believe today that your unbelief will turn to faith in Christ.

So firstly, unbelief clouds the mind. Unbelief clouds the mind. Who Jesus was had been made plain to them.

Who he was had been made plain to them. Jesus was the perfect fulfillment of all of the prophecies of who the Christ was to be. He had performed many, many miracles leading up to this time.

[16:50] Countless miracles. We see record here in Mark of him healing everyone. At the end of John, John says if you were to fill books with all of the works that have been done, you couldn't. There aren't enough books in the world to fill all of the works that have been done.

People have said that Jesus drove sickness out of Israel. Like it no longer existed at the end of his time. He worked many, many miracles.

And the options on the table for you to say that he does the work by Beelzebub as he was accused of doing back in chapter 3. Get that. I'm sure I'm getting that right. Yep. Chapter 3. Right. That possibility exists for you.

But he very clearly states that Satan can't cast out Satan. Right. He's clearly taught this. Right. So it had been made plain to them. John chapter 5 verse 36 says, But the testimony that I have is greater than that of John.

For the works that the Father has given me to accomplish, the very works that I am doing bear witness about me that the Father has sent me. By Jesus' own proclamation, the fact that he was doing the works is proof that God had given him the works to do.

[17:56] Again, John chapter 10 verse 37. If I am not doing the works of my Father, then do not believe me. But if I do them, even though you do not believe me, believe the works.

That you may know and understand that the Father is in me and I am in the Father. The works were meant to give validation to who he was, to the gospel, to the message that he was preaching.

He had made it abundantly plain. It wasn't that he walked around and did a little miracle now and then. People were gathering around him just to touch him and they were healed. He was, I mean,

just proliferated miracles.

He had made it abundantly clear. But unbelief clouds the mind. Again, the gospel of John chapter 8 verse 45. Jesus says, But because I tell the truth, you do not believe me.

Those who don't believe, those who have clouded minds, because he speaks the truth, they don't believe. We see the response here, which helps us understand how it is that unbelief clouds the mind.

[19:04] Verse 2, And on the Sabbath he began to teach in the synagogue. We're back in Mark chapter 6. 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?

Now you can very quickly read past the tone, but when you understand a little bit better the questions that they're asking, you would read it with a different tone, which I'll read to you this way in a moment.

But an example of this, when you see in verse 2, they said, Where did this man get these things? What is the wisdom given to him? The Greek word here is a derogatory word.

It's an expression of disdain. It'd be like saying, This fella, who's that guy? How did this guy get these teachings? That's the way they're saying this.

We get some further evidence of that with the way they qualify him as a teacher. But we could read this better. Where did this man get these things?

[19:59] What is the wisdom given to him? How are such mighty works done by his hands? This would be the tone. This was the questions that were running through their minds and the way in which the questions were running through their minds.

They did not believe in the teaching. Unbelief clouds the mind by distracting with the irrelevant. By distracting with the irrelevant.

Look at the questions they ask in verse 3. Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, and brother of James, and Joseph, and Judas, and Simon? Are not these his sisters here with us? And they took offense at him. Why does any of that matter? You've got a man that exists amongst you that has sailed across the Sea of Galilee and has spoken to the wind and the waves.

He said, peace, be still. And they obeyed him. Who cares who his dad was? Or who his mom was? Or who his brothers and sisters are? Why would it have mattered?

And on one level, we can certainly say, yeah, why? Why would it have mattered even a little bit? But for them, the importance of lineage was massive for them. Jewish culture, it really mattered where it was that you came from.

[21:07] And so, we see that the fact that Jesus is of the lineage of David is part of that. To help them to believe and help them to understand. But he wasn't clergy elite. He didn't fall into that category.

In fact, them calling him a carpenter here would have been to demean him. This is a term that applied to all types of tradesmen of the day. We assume that as he was a growing man, that he did work.

And he worked under his father and for his father. It's believed by this time that Joseph was no longer alive. But certainly, Jesus worked with his hands as a carpenter. There's some church history that suggests that he made plows and yokes.

It was his major production that he did. We don't know that to be sure. But this would have been a low position in culture. Nothing special.

Nothing fancy. Nothing to be esteemed. So, they're calling him a carpenter to demean him. How can this man get up and teach in this way when he's just a carpenter?

[22:09] And then they go on to call him the son of Mary. And this may not seem strange to you, but culturally, you called people by their father.

It would have been proper to say the son of Joseph. And some people have said, well, that may be the evidence that Joseph is no longer alive at this point. And would draw some connection between then his first visit.

As I read to you in Luke, they said, isn't this the son of Joseph? And then the connection here, isn't this the son of Mary? And that Joseph would have passed some time during that year. But, it still was customary.

Even when your father was dead to call you the son of your father's name. This was the custom. This was, it's known. It's historically recorded. So, to call him the son of Mary was likely another

slandorous phrase.

And it was very likely that in this little town of Nazareth, that the rumor had gone around and that everybody believed that Jesus was an illegitimate child. This is why they would have said, son of Mary.

[23 : 10] Who is this man? This carpenter. Son of Mary. Illegitimate child. You guys all know the word that our culture uses for that. This is what they were calling him as they said this.

John chapter 8, verse 41. Jesus is speaking to a group of scribes. Maybe the Sadducees. I can't remember for sure. Verse 41. He says, you were doing the works your father did. They said to him, this accusation. They said to him, we were not born of sexual immorality.

So, it would seem that this rumor had actually gone out from beyond Nazareth as well. And this is what was being said of Jesus. To relegate him. To knock him down.

We were not born of sexual immorality. Which is to say, you were. And we believe, Christ's family church believes, that Jesus was in fact born of a virgin.

[24 : 07] That Mary was impregnated by God. However, this is a bit of an aside. I want to step over just a little bit away from our text. I do want to say to you that I do not believe that Mary was a perpetual virgin.

And I was shocked how many people throughout history have believed that. I just couldn't believe it. It's a Catholic belief. It's a way in which they deify Mary in a sense.

To say that she never did have any form of sex with Joseph. Other children. The possible translation here, the Greek word for brother and the Greek word for sister, could mean cousin.

And it has been used in that way, although very rarely in any Greek literature at all. It's much more poignantly used to mean brother and sister. It would seem, I think from a plain reading of the text, that Jesus in fact had at least these four brothers.

And the Greek word here in the plural for sisters means more than two. So probably seven at least. So, if you're wondering whether or not you should have a good family, a big family.

[25 : 20] Let's take an example from the scriptures. Here's, way to go, Belinda and Brooke Solars. Right? So, this belief is fascinating.

And here's what I want to say to you about this. This is the aside to that. That we should be careful who we tie ourselves to in belief systems. Right? Like, we're a big fan of theology here.

We're a fan of historical theology. We think it's valuable and important to look at what the church has believed through the ages. There's a great weight in that. If you believe something different than the majority of Christians throughout the ages, you really should question that belief.

However, a lot of men that we really respect here believed in Mary's perpetual virginity. Martin Luther called her the ever virgin. John Wesley said, And John Calvin cautioned against impious speculation to wonder if she had ever had children in any other way.

So, we have to be cautious about that. We have to look at the scriptures. And we have to read them plainly. And look at the original text. And not hang our hat too often or too high on some of these men's theological pegs.

[26 : 40] If you will allow. Right? So, they make this continued accusation. Right? Right? This illegitimate child.

This carpenter. This lowly job. This illegitimate child. We know his brothers. James. Joseph. Judas. Simon. Aren't these his sisters? The sisters were probably present.

The seams in the language. That are here with us. How can this man be who he says he is? This man who a year ago came and claimed that he was the Christ. The anointed one of God. The one who would come and be Israel's salvation.

He probably made the same claim again. I would not assume that Jesus got up and spoke and caught anything mamby-pamby. He didn't do three steps to a better life. He got up and said, I am the Christ.

I have come and brought the kingdom of God. And here they are making this attack against him because of their clouded minds. Their unbelief. They just couldn't see clearly.

[27 : 38] 1 Corinthians 2.14. Paul gives us an expression of this. The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God for they are folly to him.

And he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned. They are spiritually discerned. So unbelief clouds the mind. It should be no surprise to us, beloved, when we share the gospel with our friends and our coworkers and our neighbors.

And it's hard to get them just to stop and even be a little logical sometimes. Right? Even just to spend a little bit of time considering the claims.

We shouldn't be surprised. Number one, unbelief clouds the mind. Number two, unbelief attacks the messenger. Unbelief attacks the messenger.

Verse 4 of chapter 6. Now Jesus here recognizes himself as a prophet, which is one who speaks on behalf of God.

[28 : 50] In this day, a prophet was one who was given words. New revelation was given to this man. We don't believe that prophets exist in this way any longer in this day. But new revelation was given to a man.

And that man came and spoke on behalf of God. Jesus here recognizes himself as a prophet. A prophet is not without honor. He's speaking of himself in that way. Others also recognize him as a prophet.

Shortly after his account in Mark chapter 6 verse 15, we see conjecture about who Jesus is. Verse 15 of chapter 6. But others said, he is Elijah. And others said, he is a prophet.

Like one of the prophets of old. In Luke chapter 7 verse 16. After healing a widow's son in a town called Nain. That's my best guess at that. Fear seized them all.

And they glorified God saying, A great prophet has risen among us. And God has visited his people. Luke chapter 24 verse 19.

[29 : 49] Jesus speaks to the disciples on the road to Emmaus. And he said to them, What things? They were speaking of things. What things? And they said to him, Concerning Jesus of Nazareth.

A man who was a prophet mighty indeed and word before God and all the people. People were recognizing him as a prophet. As he recognized himself. And he is, we know now, of course, so much more than just a prophet.

In fact, a little theology 101 for you. The offices that Christ fills are those of prophet, priest, and king. But the most beautiful way of summing that up, the most beautiful way of saying that he is prophet, priest, and king, is to say that he is the Christ.

He is the Christ. The anointed one of God. Mark chapter 8 verse 27 through 29. And Jesus went on with his disciples to the villages of Caesarea Philippi.

And on the way he asked the disciples, Who do people say that I am? And they told him, John the Baptist. And others say, Elijah. And others, one of the prophets.

[30 : 59] Verse 29. And he asked them, But who do you say that I am? This is Peter's classic, wonderful response. Peter answered him, You are the Christ.

And so Jesus makes this axiom statement here. This truism, if you'll allow such a word. A prophet is not without honor except in his hometown and among his relatives and in his own household.

He speaks in these concentric circles of rejection from the wider to the narrower. And this was largely true of the prophets that had preceded Jesus in this day.

And so he's just stating, It's almost as if he's saying, But of course. We see that he marvels at it, but he's saying, But of course. Why should I be surprised? This was true of the prophets of old.

And here I am now being rejected in my hometown and among my relatives and in my own household. His own brothers and sisters do not believe that he is who he says he is.

[32 : 01] And that's so hard for me. You have to have your judgment. Your mind has got to be in a cloud if you don't see that your perfect brother is not the Christ. I can't even imagine. I can't imagine what it would have been like to grow up with a perfect sibling, to live under that kind of a shadow.

They must have known, right? Their mother and their father would have told them about the amazing way that Jesus came into the world. That would have been a family story. They certainly would have been clear on that.

And we see back in chapter 3 that they thought he was crazy. Praise God. In Acts, we see that his family is gathered together and they are in fact counted amongst the disciples in that day.

But at this time, they did not believe. Prophet is not without honor. It means he's with honor except in his own town. Now, interestingly, this second time he goes back, you might say, why?

Why did he go back? The first time he was there, they tried to kill him. Like, why did he even go back and give them some second shot? Did Jesus really think that having been rejected the first time, that he would be received the second time?

[33 : 06] Was he not omniscient? Did he not know all things? Did he not know that this would be the encounter? And I would say to you, yes, he did. But there's a difference. The first time he went,

he was by himself. We see no record that anybody was with him.

He hasn't called the disciples yet, but there's a very key thing going on here in verse 1. And his disciples followed him. So now the twelve are with him. And they go with him now back to receive a lesson in rejection.

They go back to see exactly what that is going to look like. Why would he have done it otherwise? Why would he have done it if not to show them a lesson?

Look at what he does. The very next thing that's happening here is that he commissions them and sends them out to go propagate the truth, to go preach the good news of the coming kingdom. Right after this is when they split up and divide. He was preparing them for that. We get other accounts of that. John chapter 15, verse 18 through 20.

[34 : 05] If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own. But because you were not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.

Remember the word that I said to you. A servant is not greater than his master. If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you. If they kept my word, they will also keep yours. Jesus was the greatest example of this, of this type of rejection.

He pursued it all the way to the cross, to the most horrific of deaths. He displayed this for us. Why would we think we're better than our master? Why would we think that we won't be rejected when we go and speak the truth?

That people will just not believe us because we're telling the truth? I don't know why we would ever think that. The following account we see as a short, as Mark does, punchy account of sending out the twelve, we get a longer record of that same commissioning in Matthew chapter 10, verse 16 through 25.

Why don't you turn there with me while I try not to choke. I'm so ready to not be sick anymore.

[35 : 16] Matthew chapter 10, verse 16. We're going to read through verse 25. I want you to see this as a consistent teaching.

Jesus took them and showed them what it was going to look like and he also taught them on regular occasion. Behold, I'm sending you out as sheep in the midst of wolves. So be wise as serpents and innocent as doves.

Beware of men for they will deliver you over to courts and flog you in their synagogues and you will be dragged before governors and kings for my sake to bear witness before them and the Gentiles. When they deliver you over, do not be anxious how you are to speak or what you are to say for what you are to say will be given to you in that hour.

For it is not you who speak but the spirit of your father speaking through you. Brother will deliver brother over to death and the father his child and children will rise against parents and have them put to death.

And you will be hated by all for my name's sake. But the one who endures the end will be saved. When they persecute you in one town, flee to the next. For truly I say to you, you will not have gone through all the towns of Israel before the Son of Man comes.

[36 : 21] A disciple is not above his teacher nor a servant above his master. It is enough for the disciple to be like his teacher and the servant like his master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebul, how much more will they malign those of his household?

You see, he's telling them all these things are going to happen to you but for my name's sake, you're going to go before kings, you're going to go before governors, I'm going to give you words to speak to them for my glory. And then we see this important reality that for those of us who are in fact believers, those of us who endure to the end, we're going to be persecuted and we're going to stand up under it and we're going to keep going and we're going to keep pushing and we're going to keep preaching because we want to be like our master.

Because we want to look like him. You remember the parable of the sowers back in chapter 2?

Nope, 4. You remember the parable of the sower? The rocky ground where the sprout comes up? It sprouts up quickly but the roots aren't deep and when the sun of persecution comes out, it withers and dies. The one who doesn't endure to the end? The one who isn't willing to go and preach the truth and be rejected for it?

Very likely is that type of person, that type of receiver of seed, is not a believer at all. We must ask ourselves that question. You need to ask yourself that question in the situation.

[37 : 43] I am scared. I do not want to be rejected. Oh, I just got rejected and it's uncomfortable and I don't like it. I feel like such a dweeb right now. It's a strange word that popped into my head.

Am I truly a believer? You should ask yourself that question and I hope that you come out the other side of it with an emphatic yes. But if not, just repent and believe. Don't be surprised if you're not well received.

In fact, expect it and rejoice when it happens. Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew 5, verse 10, said, Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed, happy, joyful. Verse 11, Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

This is the great value of church. If we're out living this way, if we're being missional, if we're on task for God, people are going to be rejecting us. Praise God, by His work, people will also be receiving us.

[38 : 51] But they're going to be rejecting us. One of the great things about church is that we get to get back together and not be crazy together. We get to get back together and say, this is true. Let's open it up and let's receive it and let's relish it and let's sing songs at the top of our lungs proclaiming these truths together.

Okay, I can go back out and I can do it again. I'm encouraged now. I know that I'm not nuts. I know that you believe it and you believe it and you believe it. I can go back out and I can tell it again because I've been rejected all week. Here I'm accepted in the Beloved.

The apostles got the message. Acts chapter 5, verse 40 and 42. Being led by Peter, but the apostles here says when they had called in the apostles, they've already preached to them, really upset, the scribes and the Pharisees.

They sent them out. When they called in the apostles, they beat them and charged them not to speak in the name of Jesus and let them go. Then they left the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the name.

Now look at their continued response. So first of all, they're brought in and they're beat, right? They give a loving presentation of the gospel to these men.

[39 : 58] They send them out. They have a little, Gamaliel basically saves their life but they have this little conversation. Bring them back in. They beat them, charge them strictly to not speak in the name of Jesus any longer. They leave rejoicing they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the name.

And then verse 42, and every day in the temple and from the house to house, they did not cease teaching and preaching that the Christ is Jesus. Right?

They rejoiced to suffer and they went to go suffer some more and they kept on going and they kept on preaching. Beloved, it shouldn't be a surprise to us in this culture that we live in that we will be reviled.

Right? That we will be hated just like Jesus was hated. And do you want the joy? Do you want the kind of joy that comes from serving Him and being like Him?

I hope you do. I hope that you do. So unbelief clouds the mind. Unbelief attacks the messenger. And thirdly, unbelief limits the supernatural.

[40 : 56] And we'll close with this in brief. Unbelief limits the supernatural. Verse 5, And He could do no mighty work there except that He laid His hands on a few sick people and healed them.

It's interesting language, isn't it? And He could do no mighty work there. And it would seem that their lack of faith, their unbelief, right, somehow stopped His power.

That He ceased being powerful as a result. Right? Not the case. Right? The God of the universe that speaks things into existence by the power of His Word and holds them in their sway cannot be limited by man in that way.

And I like how John MacArthur put it. He said, It wasn't a power problem, but a purpose problem. It wasn't a power problem. It wasn't that He didn't have enough power to overcome unbelief. Praise God, He does that every day.

Right? I didn't believe in Him. He overcame my unbelief that I might believe in Him. Right? But it was a purpose problem. Right? Remember that the purpose of His miracles was to validate His message.

[41 : 53] And they had already rejected the message. Right? They had already rejected it. Not just once, but twice now, again. They not only didn't believe that He is who He says He is, but they were putting Him in a very low spot.

Right? So the purpose no longer was there for Him. They had already shown such a degree of unbelief that He marveled at it.

The record of Matthew, chapter 13, verse 58, says, And He did not do many mighty works there because of their unbelief. Mark, chapter 6, verse 10 and 11.

It's our following text. And He said to them, Whenever you enter a house, stay there until you depart from there. And if any place, which just means live in the house until you leave the city.

And if any place will not receive you, and they will not listen to you, when you leave, shake off the dust that is on your feet as a testimony against them. Right?

[42 : 54] What He's saying to them is teaching them to do the very thing that He has done here. Right? He didn't go in there and perform a bunch of miracles. He didn't try to twist and convince. They had already rejected Him. So He just said, Okay.

And He didn't perform miracles there. He's telling them to do the very same thing. If people won't receive you, they won't listen to you, when you walk out of the town, knock the dust off your sandals and move on. Right? Their unbelief has already condemned them.

Move on. Go to other listeners. Right? And we wrestle with that. I know that those of us who do ministry more full-time, Clay and I speak all the time about people that we may should cut loose and we're spending all this energy and time on and they just won't change and we're always in this sticking.

Do we stick it out? Do we keep pressing? Do we keep loving on them or do we shake the dust off our sandals and move on to people who will listen to the truth? Right? It's a great challenge here and what we're being taught is that as we're going to the ends of the earth and preaching the gospel, we've got a task ahead of us and we need to move and we need to go and Jesus felt that urgency here as He didn't continue to perform miracles.

Matthew 7, 6, He says it this way, Do not give dogs what is holy and do not throw your pearls before pigs lest they trample them underfoot and turn and attack you. So unbelief clouds the mind, unbelief attacks the messenger, and unbelief limits the supernatural.

[44 : 14] Get that unbelief chooses death and destruction, chooses sin, chooses the very denial of who we were created to be. It chooses Satan, chooses to be underneath him, chooses eternal and absolute separation from God.

John 3, 36 says, Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life. Whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him. This is miserable.

If you do not believe today, if you do not have faith in Christ, the wrath of God remains on you. You might enjoy some temporary pleasure of this world, but your end is destruction, and it is final, and it is absolute, and it is eternal.

Try to wrap your mind around that. Nothing in this world is worth eternal destruction and eternal separation from God. Faith, rather, chooses life and life everlasting.

Victory over death. The sovereign of the universe working all things for our good. It chooses joy and peace and comfort.

[45 : 21] It chooses eternal and absolute joy in God's presence. Romans 5.2 Paul writes, Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

That is what faith chooses. Faith chooses abundant, everlasting life now and forever. Believe, repent of your sin, and believe that Jesus is the Christ.

If you have done that today, you can with confidence know that when you stand before him, God asks why it is he ought to allow you into his presence.

You can say because of the person and the work of Christ. Nothing of my own doing, but I have believed in the person and the work of Christ. If you can say that confidently, then the lesson for you today is to not be surprised when people unbelieve, the way they respond, but yet, we are to preach the gospel.

We are to preach it far and wide. There is no other task given to us, beloved, that matters if we're not doing this.

[46 : 35] Hear me. We all know, we're all good in our sociological systems. We all know that the chief end of man is to glorify God and enjoy him forever. You want to know the primary way we do that?

We make disciples. We make disciples. It is the great commission. Let's pray together.