

MARK: A Closed Door and An Open Window

5.11.08

"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. ⁷ And he called the twelve and began to send them out two by two, and gave them authority over the unclean spirits. ⁸ He charged them to take nothing for their journey except a staff—no bread, no bag, no money in their belts—⁹ but to wear sandals and not put on two tunics ¹⁰ And he said to them, "Whenever you enter a house, stay there until you depart from there. ¹¹ 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." ¹² So they went out and proclaimed that people should repent. ¹³ And they cast out many demons and anointed with oil many who were sick and healed them. Mark 6:1-13 ^{ESV}

"hometown"

Nazareth is in view here.

"Sabbath...teach in the synagogue"

Customary for rabbi's to teach on Scripture.

"astonished...offense...?" Strong words followed by 5 questions revealing their unbelief.

"Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary" Possible ref. to Joseph's death, illegitimacy.

"A prophet is not without honor, except in his hometown..." Familiarity breeds contempt.

"And he could do no mighty work there" Not that he didn't have power. Chose not to use it.

"And he marveled because of their unbelief" He was blown away. Strong word.

Primary Point of this Snapshot (v.1-6):

Despite all of His teaching and miracles, some still chose not to believe in Jesus. Consider your own situation—your persecutors and the Jewish community at large. Unbelief has consequences.

What Mark (God) Was Saying to Them (His Original Audience):

DON'T BE LIKE THESE PEOPLE! If you are, there will be (both eternal and temporal) consequences to *your* unbelief as well.

P: There is a connection between the work of God and our faith.

P: Our lack of faith can 'hinder' the movement of God.

Making Sense of Our Lack of Faith:

1. Our cultural slant toward skepticism.
2. Many of us have a potentially detached (academic) approach to our faith.
3. Many of us are *overreacting* to excesses of the 'name-it-and-claim-it' theology.
4. We simply overlook and take the power of Jesus for granted.

Question: Which of these would be my most common temptation?

What We Often Do:

1. Make rationalizations for our sin. ("Well, you know...")
2. We sit in judgment of others.
 - a. Both lead to less glory for God, diminished joy for us, & we may miss out.

What We Should Do:

1. Look at the Why behind the What—but not for too long.
2. Fall on Jesus. Cry out "I believe! Help my unbelief!" (Apply 'Double Imputation')
3. Pray for and seek to cultivate a 'posture of faith' (community & individuals)
4. Read the great 'faith stories' of the Old Testament, Gospels, Acts.
5. Tell each other 'Faith Stories' in Community Group.
 - a. Leads us to Gospel Humility/Renewal where we depend on God.
 - b. We are in a much better position to see God do what only God can do.

Question: Do I have a 'posture of faith' toward Jesus? Am I somehow hindering what God is wanting to do in my life (lack of faith, unconfessed sin, unreconciled relationship, etc.)?

Primary Point of this Snapshot (v. 7-13): Even unbelief cannot stop the Mission of Jesus. He uses a 'closed door' as an 'open window' of opportunity to extend his ministry through His disciples.

"two by two" Strength, safety, support, encouragement, accountability, community. In keeping with Jewish tradition of having someone to validate testimony.
"authority over the unclean spirits" Extending ministry through them. Kingdom authority.

P: The Mission is carried out most effectively in community.

"nothing for their journey..." Jesus wanted them to depend on Him and not their supplies.

P: In the Mission (and all of life), we should trust the Provider and not His Provision.

Question: How am I doing with trusting God and not His gifts today? What am I trusting in?

"enter a house, stay there until you depart" Protecting their reputation. Not house-hoppers.

"shake off the dust that is on your feet as a testimony against them." Jewish symbolism.

P: Just as Jesus was rejected, His disciples face rejection as well.

Question: Why do we get upset when people reject the Gospel? (Usually, fear of man. An "Idol of the Heart." "A "functional savior.")

Smashing Our Idols:

1. Repent (turn from our idols and trust in Christ) and Believe the Gospel!
2. Repentance should be a way of life.

"proclaimed...repent...cast out many demons...healed them" Word and Work!

P: The Kingdom of God is not just one of talk but power!

**Do I have a 'posture of faith' toward Jesus?
How Am I Doing Sharing My Faith in Jesus?**

Visit www.crossinglouisville.com for more helpful resources, including study guides on Mark.

Works Consulted: Expositor's Bible Commentary, Life Application Bible, MacArthur Study Bible, "True Spirituality by Steve Childres, Numerous Other Commentaries on Mark (Wallace, France, Edwards)