

## REJECTION AND MISSION

### MARK 6:1–13

#### Monday – Big Picture Overview (Mark 6:1–13)

Jesus returns to his hometown of Nazareth, where he teaches in the synagogue on the Sabbath. The people who have known him since childhood are amazed by his wisdom and power, yet they take offense at him—“Isn't this just the carpenter, Mary's son?” Their familiarity breeds contempt. Jesus comments that prophets are honored everywhere except in their own hometown, among their own relatives, and in their own household. Because of their unbelief, he could do no mighty work there, except heal a few sick people. Amazed at their lack of faith, he moves on to teach in nearby villages. He then calls the Twelve and sends them out in pairs with authority over unclean spirits, giving them urgent instructions to travel light and depend on local hospitality. They go out proclaiming repentance, casting out demons, and healing the sick. These two episodes—rejection and mission—reveal both the tragedy of unbelief and the power of faith-filled obedience.

1. How do the two episodes—rejection in Nazareth and the sending of the Twelve—relate to each other?
2. What role does faith (or lack of it) play in both sections of this passage?
3. What does this passage reveal about the nature of Jesus' mission and ministry?

**Theological Prompt:** The kingdom of God advances not through worldly power or human acclaim but through faith-filled obedience, even in the face of rejection and with minimal resources.

**Practical Application:** Consider how God might be calling you to step out in mission despite obstacles, limitations, or lack of recognition.

**Prayer Prompt:** Ask God to give you faith to trust his power working through you, even when circumstances seem limiting.

## Tuesday – Prophet Without Honor (Mark 6:1–3)

The people of Nazareth knew Jesus too well—or thought they did. They knew him as the local carpenter, Mary's son, and brother to James, Joses, Jude, and Simon. They had watched him grow up, seen him working in the workshop, and knew his family. When he stood up in the synagogue to teach with extraordinary wisdom and power, their response wasn't wonder but offense. "Where does he get all this?" they asked, suggesting he had no right to such authority. Their question highlights the danger of familiarity: they couldn't see past what they thought they knew to recognize who Jesus really was. Jesus's proverb—"Prophets are honored everywhere except in their own country, among their own relatives, and in their own household"—captures a profound truth about human nature. Those closest to us often find it hardest to see God's work in our lives. The tragedy is that their unbelief limited what Jesus was able to do among them.

4. How does knowing someone's background or family sometimes prevent us from recognizing God's work in their life?

5. Why do you think the people of Nazareth took offense at Jesus rather than celebrating him?

6. What does the mention of Jesus' family (mother, brothers, and sisters) tell us about his humanity?

**Theological Prompt:** Familiarity can blind us to God's work—those who think they know everything about someone may miss seeing what God is doing in and through that person.

**Practical Application:** Examine whether you have dismissed or underestimated someone because you think you know them too well.

**Prayer Prompt:** Pray for eyes to see God at work in unexpected people and places, even among those most familiar to you.

### **Wednesday – Faith and Jesus' Power (Mark 6:4–6)**

Mark makes a startling statement: Jesus “could do no mighty work there” because of their unbelief. Matthew softens this to “he did not do many mighty works there,” but Mark’s version is more direct—their lack of faith actually limited Jesus’s power. This doesn’t mean Jesus lost his divine authority, but rather that God has chosen to work his healing power through the faith of his people. We saw this with the woman who touched Jesus’s garment—her faith became the channel through which healing flowed. Jesus marvels at the Nazarenes’ unbelief just as he marvels at the centurion’s great faith. The link between faith and Jesus’s mighty works is mysterious but consistent throughout the Gospels. God could simply override human unbelief, but he has chosen instead to honor human response, making faith the way his kingdom power flows into the world.

7. How do you understand the statement that Jesus could do no mighty work there because of their unbelief?

8. What does this passage teach us about the relationship between our faith and God’s power to work in our lives and communities?

9. Why does Jesus marvel at the unbelief of Nazareth, and what does this reveal about the importance of faith?

**Theological Prompt:** God has chosen to work his transforming power through the faith of his people—faith becomes the channel through which divine power flows into the world.

**Practical Application:** Reflect on areas where unbelief might be hindering God’s work in your life or church community.

**Prayer Prompt:** Ask God to increase your faith and remove any unbelief that might limit his power working in and through you.

### Thursday – Sending Out the Twelve (Mark 6:7–9)

After facing rejection in Nazareth, Jesus immediately shifts to his mission. He calls the Twelve and sends them out in pairs, giving them authority over unclean spirits. This wasn't just practical delegation—it was a powerful symbol declaring that God's kingdom was breaking in. The Twelve symbolized renewed Israel, and their mission showed that the long-anticipated time had come. Their main task was to cast out demons, a sign that evil's hold was weakening and God's reign was advancing. Jesus's instructions were urgent and strict: take only essential supplies, no bread, no bag, no money—just a staff and sandals. These were not permanent rules for church life but emergency instructions for a specific, time-sensitive mission. Like messengers racing ahead of a king's arrival, the disciples were to move quickly, proclaim the kingdom, demonstrate its power through exorcisms and healings, and call people to repentance before the great moment arrived.

10. What is the significance of Jesus giving the Twelve authority over unclean spirits?

11. Why does Jesus send the disciples out in pairs rather than individually?

12. How do the austere mission instructions (no bread, bag, or money) reflect the urgency of their task?

**Theological Prompt:** The sending of the Twelve symbolizes God's kingdom breaking into the world—renewed Israel going forth with divine authority to announce and demonstrate God's reign.

**Practical Application:** Consider what it means to go on mission with minimal resources, trusting God to provide what you need.

**Prayer Prompt:** Pray for willingness to step out in obedience even when you feel inadequately equipped or resourced.

### **Friday – Hospitality, Rejection, and Results (Mark 6:10–13)**

The disciples' mission required radical dependence. With no bread, no bag, and no money, they relied entirely on the hospitality of those who welcomed them. Jesus instructed them to stay in whichever house received them, making that their base while in each town. This wasn't just practicality but a test of receptivity—those who welcomed the messengers welcomed the message and the King behind it. When a place rejected them, the disciples were to perform a solemn symbolic act: shake the dust off their feet as a testimony against that place. This gesture, used by Jews returning from Gentile territory, declared that those who rejected the kingdom had placed themselves outside God's people. It wasn't petty anger but prophetic warning—there was no time to waste on those who refused the urgent message. The disciples went out and did exactly what Jesus commanded them to do: they proclaimed repentance, cast out demons, anointed the sick with oil, and healed them. Their obedience showed that Jesus's authority was real and transferable, that the kingdom was indeed breaking into the world through his sent ones.

13. How does the instruction to stay in one house per town relate to the nature of their mission?

14. What does the instruction to “shake the dust off your feet” reveal about the urgency and seriousness of the kingdom message?

15. What does the disciples' successful mission (preaching, casting out demons, healing) reveal about Jesus' authority?

**Theological Prompt:** Jesus' authority is real and transferable—those he sends carry his power to proclaim, heal, and overcome evil, demonstrating that the kingdom has truly arrived.

**Practical Application:** Reflect on how you respond when people reject the gospel message—with patience or with recognition of the urgency of the times?

**Prayer Prompt:** Pray for boldness to proclaim the kingdom and wisdom to know when to move on from those who refuse to hear.