

Session 6: Mark 6:1–29

SESSION GOALS

Every session has a point—what each participant should walk away from the discussion knowing, feeling, and doing.

Main Idea: Faithful following means doing what Jesus asks regardless of the worldly outcome.

Head Change: To know that following Jesus includes times of celebration and times of persecution.

Heart Change: To feel free from the burden of believing that we alone are responsible for someone else's salvation.

Life Change: To practically strategize how we may share the good news of Jesus.

OPEN

The phrase “No prophet is welcome in his hometown” originated with this passage. It relates to other sayings such as “Physician, heal yourself,” and “The cobblers’ kids have no shoes.” **What do these sayings have in common? In what ways have you witnessed one of them come to life?**

It's tough going home sometimes. Even the perfect son of Nazareth endured skepticism and ridicule. His hometown folks were so busy going through the motions that they missed the miracle right in front of them.

READ

Read Mark 6:1–29.

[illegible]

WATCH

Before viewing the session, here are a few important things to look for in Francis's teaching. As you watch, pay attention to how he answers the following questions:

How did the people in Jesus's time understand the nature of God?

Why was Jesus unable to do miraculous works within his hometown?

What is the role of faith in effectively living in obedience to God?

Show Session 6: Mark 6:1–29 (9 minutes)

DISCUSS

As a society, we tend to glorify our public leaders, whether political, religious, or entertainment stars. They seem larger than life sometimes. But they have parents, and often siblings, who knew them before fame. Old friends, too, can serve as a humility check.

Nazareth was a small town, and the residents remembered Jesus just fine. When he came back home to preach, they thought they really knew him. "Oh, it's Mary's boy." But then he began to teach them.

Read Mark 6:1–6.

How do his hometown people receive Jesus after he teaches in their synagogue?

In the video session, Francis made the point that it's easy to respond to this scene with the benefit of our hindsight. We're shocked that the crowds

would reject Jesus. Yet, the same situations occur all around us today. People hear the gospel and dismiss it rather than embrace it.

Note especially the end of verse 3: "And they took offense at him." The word for "took offense" comes from *skandalizo*, where we get our word "scandal." His words were scandalous to them.

[Note: For further study on skandalizo, see Go Deeper section 1 at the end of this session.]

Think about your own spiritual journey. When you encountered Jesus for the first time, how did you respond?

Maybe you met Jesus as a child through your parents, or someone introduced you to him as an adult. Whatever the situation, there was a time where you had to decide what you were going to do with Jesus's call.

Now think about the possible objections you might have had (or maybe still do have) to Jesus. What objections to Jesus would you expect someone to have today?

Part of the road of discipleship includes sharing in Jesus's mission. That means we're going to be taking his gospel to other people. We'll face the same rejections or acceptance that Jesus did.

What sort of opposition to Christ have you observed personally? Share your stories.

Now consider those opposed to Christ, or at least uninterested in him. In what ways does your relationship with him give you empathy and compassion for the lost?

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Read Mark 6:7–13, and as you read, look for details that mirror the way Jesus has already shown his disciples how to spread the message of the coming kingdom.

Jesus sends the disciples out two by two on a mission to spread the same message of repentance that John the Baptist did. The word "repent" (*metanoeo*) means to change your mind or purpose. The disciples were going out to exhort people to change their minds about God and their relationship to him.

What reactions does he prepare his disciples to face while they are out on the road? How are they to respond?

[Note: For further study on metanoeo, see Go Deeper section 2 at the end of this session.]

The disciples' message is the same one we hear.

**What role does repentance play in your life?
How did you “change your mind” about Jesus
when you first believed?**

In what ways do you continue to repent in order to remain close to your savior?

What does Mark 6:7–13 say to modern disciples? How would you incorporate the message of this passage into your faith conversations?

Jesus doesn't wait until the end of Mark to send the disciples out to spread the message of the kingdom of God. Regardless of where your relationship is with Jesus, you have a part to play in his mission in the world.

How can you practically live like the disciples did here? How would you engage someone in conversation about the picture of Jesus you've seen here?

Repentance can be a hard pill to swallow. It requires humility to change, to admit you were wrong. Our next passage reflects this through a flashback to King Herod who had heard John the Baptist's call to repent. Let's just say that he didn't respond well.

Read Mark 6:14–20.

[Note: For further study on King Herod, see Go Deeper section 3 at the end of this session.]

What got John in trouble with Herod in the first place? Why, despite the trouble, did Herod keep John around?

We've seen some poor reactions to those who shared the message of Jesus, but none so bad as Herod and his wife. When John declared their marriage a violation of God's law, it got him thrown in prison. Herodias even wanted him executed. Herod kept John around, though, because of the message he preached. It intrigued him.

Now read Mark 6:21–29.

What choice does John have in the matter of his life or death? Why does he die?

Most of us won't face an angry queen or a militant machete because of our faith in Jesus. But the question we have to answer with each moment of our lives is simply, "Would we die for him?"

following segments could fit in the Discuss section of the study guide.

But you can also use these sections as short devotionals to carry you through the week until your next group meeting.

1. Peek at the Greek: skandalizo

In Mark 6:3, we find a word that gives us insight into a crucial aspect of what happens when we share the message of Jesus with others. Mark writes that when the Jewish community in Nazareth heard Jesus teaching, they “took offense.” The Greek word is *skandalizo*, from which we get the English term “scandal.”

Throughout the New Testament, *skandalizo* often shows up to describe Jewish reactions to Jesus. Sometimes it takes the form of a noun and gets translated “stumbling block” (See Rom 9:33; 1 Cor. 1:23; Gal 5:11; 1 Pet. 2:8). Like Francis pointed out in the video session, the problem with the people of Nazareth was their unbelief in the face of Jesus’s teachings.

In a day and age where we're very hesitant to offend anyone, the true gospel is provocative—it always has been. That doesn't mean we should be divisive or impolite when we tell people about Jesus. But we *should* expect the message itself to come across like a scandal.

Reflect on occasions when you have talked about Jesus and faced resistance. What sort of setting were you in—with folks you knew, with strangers, in person or online, etc.? What objections did your listeners bring up?

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Why are we to persist in sharing the gospel despite opposition? What’s the point?

In what ways is your faith strengthened through uncomfortable faith conversations?

2. Peek at the Greek: metanoeo

One of the biggest reasons (if not *the* biggest reason) that the message of Jesus is off-putting to some is the issue of repentance. In 6:12, Mark says the disciples proclaimed that people should *repent*.

The word translated “repent” is *metanoeo*, which literally means to change one’s mind. In the Old Testament Hebrew, the word is *shub*, which means to physically turn around or turn back. If we take both together, repentance involves both our mind and our behavior. It involves turning our backs on all that is ungodly and turning to face what is pleasing to God—both literally in how we behave but also in how we think.

Mark makes repentance the hallmark requirement for salvation. No one can be saved without acknowledging their sin and clinging to Jesus.

What do we do with this information? The reason the gospel is so provocative is precisely because it demands change. Think about it—people might to turn to God when it would mean a change from bad circumstances. But if life’s good, why change at all?

Even for us who already accept the message, change is hard. Repentance is still hard.

Think about your own relationship with Jesus. How has it changed your mind about various beliefs? Certain behaviors?

In what ways has your faith in Christ changed your goals and hopes for the future?

3. Background: Which Herod is which?

King Herod plays a part in several New Testament narratives. But we must be careful to know which Herod the authors are referring to.

Herod the Great

Herod the Great ruled Judea during the time of Jesus's birth. His reign lasted from 37 BC to 4 BC; he was the king whom the magi met, and who had the boys of Bethlehem murdered in his search for the baby Jesus.

Imagine having that sort of father. How might his sons have related to Herod the Great?

Herod the Great had numerous wives and children. After his death, his kingdom was divided among three of his sons, the northern portion of Galilee going to his son Herod Antipas. Antipas is the Herod we meet in Mark 6.

Antipas

Years before, Antipas had fallen for Herodias, who was both his niece (the daughter of his late half-brother Aristobulus,) and his sister-in-law—wife of another half-brother, identified in Mark 6 as Philip. Herodias thus had married her half-uncle and, with Antipas, married another one. The Herodian family was complex, to say the least.

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**motivations? How can you move from seeking
your own glory to seeking God's instead?**

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