

Mark 6:1-11, The Apostles' Maiden Mission: Preparation
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A. Overview

1. In the midst of a series of "boat trips," each with five parts:
 - a) Initial (usual) teaching
 - b) Trip out
 - c) (Usually) Miracle at the destination
 - d) Trip back
 - e) Miracle upon return
2. Each has a distinctive lesson to teach the apostles in preparation for their ministry apart from the Lord, usually grounded in the initial episodes. Ch. 4-5 began with the lesson on the four soils, and throughout we have a contrast between those who are healed (demoniac, woman, Jairus' daughter) and others (townspeople, the multitude, Jairus' household).
3. In ch. 6, they are sent out by themselves for the first time. Focus is on unexpected rejection and reception of the word.
 - a) 1-11 is the sending itself, with two parts: a *demonstration* by the Lord with his own townspeople, and verbal *delegation*. Unexpected rejection.
 - b) 12-30 is their own ministry. Unexpected timing re. Herod.
 - c) 31-56 is "supposed" to be a debriefing retreat, but turns into yet more ministry. Unexpected receptivity.

B. 1-6, Demonstrated

A specific episode to show them how rejection can come not only from the religious leaders (which we have seen several times already) but also from the masses (new here), and how to deal with it.

1. 1-2a, The Visit to Nazareth
 - a) Perhaps this visit was intended as a sort of vacation. Would thus balance the trip begun in 31. The Lord has been laboring feverishly; maybe he wants to stop back to his childhood home. He does not go there to teach, but he goes there, and when it is Sabbath, he teaches.
 - b) His disciples follow him, and indeed this episode provides them with an example that supports the charge he gives them immediately afterward. They need to learn that their lot will be not just spiritual victory, and opposition by those in religious power, but rejection by those most close to them.
2. 2b-3, The Public Response
 - a) Timing: Note from 2 that he only "began to teach" when they

introduced their comments. Mark is recording their murmuring in the background.

b) Content:

- 1) 3, they think they know all about him.
 - a> They knew his family as he was growing up; in fact, his siblings are still around.
 - b> They know him as "the carpenter," which is probably demeaning.
 - 1> Recall that rich men in the Bible are always portrayed as farmers, not tradespeople: Boaz, and Luke 12:18. The Lord's family had no such estate, thus they were of the lower class.
 - 2> Confirmed by the offering that Mary made in Luke 2:24, cf. Lev. 12:8, the exception allowed for the poor.
 - 3> No doubt some of those present were landed gentry, who may have hired the carpenter or his foster father at one time or another to work on their estates.
- 2) 2b, They cannot deny either the unusual wisdom with which he speaks, or the miracles that he does. This is not what one expects of a peasant of the lower class!
- 3) 2a, The natural question is, "Where did he get this stuff?" Where did he learn such striking ideas? Who gave him this power? They are clearly unwilling to acknowledge that he got it from God. The only alternative is that made explicit by the scribes in 3:22, Satan.

c) Impact: They were astonished (2) and offended (3).

- 1) Astonishment is not bad in itself; cf. 1:22 for the same response to the Lord's first message in Capernaum.
- 2) But they are offended that this peasant, one they view as an inferior and a servant, should now pretend to offer wisdom to them. They do not deny the wisdom or the miracles, but raise a smoke screen to keep from having to deal with them.
- 3) So today, people will on the one hand lament that children in school steal, and kill, and commit adultery, thus admitting the need for the Ten Commandments, while on the other hand they forbid the posting of those very commandments on some abstract grounds of "separation of church and state."

3. 4-6a, The Lord's Assessment

They judge him, but he also judges them, and in four ways:

a) 4, In Speech; seems to highlight his relation to OT prophecies and types.

- 1) The Lord presents himself as a prophet. Points to Deut. 18:15.
- 2) More than that, he is a "dishonored" prophet. "Without honor" is *atimos*, used (adj and verb) 2x in the LXX in Isa. 53:3 "despised."
- 3) This dishonor becomes more acute, the closer the fleshly relation is. Note the progression "country ... kin ... house[hold]." So the Jews in general have rejected Christ, while multitudes among the gentiles have come to trust in him. Cf. Moses and Joseph.
- 4) Thus indirectly answers their question: "I'll tell you where I got this wisdom and these mighty acts: I am the promised Messiah." This emphasis is more explicit in Luke's record, which notes that he started off by appropriating Isa. 61:1-2a to himself.

b) 5, In Action

- 1) He did heal a few, as their own comments acknowledge (v.2, present tense).
- 2) But he could not do striking works. Not just "would not," but "could not," because of their lack of faith. Over and over he himself reminds people that faith is an essential element in healings: 5:34 (woman with an issue); 10:52 (blind man); Lk 17:19 (leper); cf. Acts 14:9 (Paul heals a cripple), etc. Faith is an essential element in the application of the Lord's power to our lives. We do not diminish this in the least when we insist that faith is God's gift to us; it remains true that "without faith it is impossible to please him, for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him" (Heb. 11).

a> The Word of God teaches us our sin, and the availability of a solution.

b> The Spirit of God moves us to fear, repentance, and faith.

c> God's power changes our lives.

c) 6a, In Emotion

"He marveled." The word occurs six times in Mark; 5x of men's attitude toward Jesus, only here of him. What is marvelous is

not just that they do not believe, but that they disbelieve in the face of the evidence! They acknowledge his wisdom, and the power of his acts, and yet still reject him! NB: Don't swallow the line that people disbelieve for lack of evidence. The hardness of the human heart is such that they disbelieve even in the presence of evidence.

d) 7b, In Ministry

He does not continue in Nazareth, but makes the rounds of the villages. This will furnish an example for the apostles in the next section.

4. This is the third Synagogue story in Mark (cf. 1:21-28, 3:1-6). The previous two were in Capernaum. Note sequences:

- a) Reduction in the magnitude of his miracles, from casting out a Demon, to healing a withered Hand, to an unspecified "few sick folk."
- b) Increase in the opposition: from a Demon (who should be expected to oppose him), to the Pharisees (who will emerge as the villains), to ordinary but overly familiar People.
- c) His assessment of the audience
 - 1) ch.1, nothing explicit
 - 2) ch.3, angry over their hard hearts
 - 3) ch.6, marveling about their unbelief.

C. **7-11, Delegated**

Now he wraps words around the example.

1. 7, Empowered

- a) 7, They are explicitly sent out by him, with his authority. Not something they undertake on their own. It is a wonderful thing to be sent out by the Lord, but we must be sure that he is doing the sending and the equipping.
- b) "two by two." Even with this sacred anointing, they are not to go alone. Cf. Paul's example, teamed first with Barnabas, then with Silas. Eccl. 4:9-12.

2. 8-9, Equipped

- a) Authorized: a staff and sandals, the essential equipment for moving from town to town.
- b) Forbidden: their own provision, or the means for buying or carrying it. Implies that they are to be supported by those among whom they travel.
 - 1) Scrip = knapsack, bag for provisions
 - 2) Bread
 - 3) Money to buy food with.

- c) Contrast Paul's practice, working for a living, and refusing food from those with whom he stayed (Acts 20). Cf. Luke 22:35,36 for a possible hint at the shift.
 - 1) The apostles in the gospels are preaching to Jews, announcing the arrival of the Jewish Messiah. They expect to be received by those who are presumed to be their spiritual brethren. Cf. Elisha and the Shunemite in 2 Kings 4:8-10.
 - 2) The church's mission to the Gentiles makes no such assumption. We seek to move people from Satan's power to God's kingdom, and are explicitly commended for "taking nothing from the Gentiles" (3 John 7).

3. 10-11, Instructed

- a) 10, When you are received by one household in a community, be content there; don't try to "swap up" to a more prosperous one where the food is better or the bed more comfortable.
- b) 11, If you are not received, leave visibly. Let them know that you reject them in Christ's name just as clearly as they reject you. Illustrated in the Lord's visit to Nazareth:
 - 1) 4, They judge him, so he judges them.
 - 2) 6, He takes his message elsewhere.