

At Home and Abroad

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Preacher: Chris Trousdale

[0 : 00] Father, we know that you do all things to the end, that your name might be lifted up, and that your power might be magnified.

! And you command us to do all that we do for your own glory. And so we come to you with needs and burdens, and we ask you to hear our prayers and to answer our prayers for the sake of your name.

Not so that we will simply be more comforted, not so that we will have our minds put at ease, or so that our bodies will be healed, or all the different things that we want.

Not for those things in themselves, but for you and for your sake. Because why? Why should those around us, why should non-believers look at us and say, where is their God?

Why? But for the sake of your name, do great and powerful things in us and through us. It's in Jesus' name we pray.

[1 : 26] Amen. Amen. Alright, if you have your Bible, then open up to the Gospel of Mark chapter 6. Mark chapter 6. We're going to read 13 verses this morning. And if you don't have your Bible with you, then the words will be up here on the screen.

Alright? So Mark chapter 6, starting in verse 1, I ask you all to stand as we read the Word together. Verse 1. 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 the brother of James, and Joseph, 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.

[2 : 39] And he marveled because of their unbelief. And he went about among the villages teaching. And he called the twelve and began to send them out two by two, and gave them authority over the unclean spirits.

He charged them to take nothing for their journey except a staff, no bread, no bag, no money in their belts, but to wear sandals, and not put on two tunics.

And he said to them, Whenever you enter a house, stay there until you depart from there. 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.

So they went out and proclaimed that people should repent. And they cast out many demons, and anointed with oil many who were sick, and healed them.

Father, I ask that you send your Spirit so that he would take your word and apply it to our hearts right now. In Jesus' name, amen. At the end of Mark chapter 5, last week we saw a display of Jesus' authority and power.

[3 : 47] His authority over disease, and his authority over death. In two stories that are just sort of intertwined. You have one story sandwiched in the middle of another story.

And in those stories, the power of Jesus is on display. But there's something else that's on display in those two stories as well. There's something else that Mark wants us to pick up on, that Mark wants us to even imitate, that we see in those stories.

And I mentioned it last week. And it is the faith of those who are the recipients of Jesus' workings of power. So you have the woman who has the issue of blood.

And after Jesus heals her, and he turns and finds out who exactly it is that's touched his robe and received his healing power, we are told that he was amazed, that he marveled at her faith.

And then as the story moves on, and Jesus moves toward raising the daughter of Jairus from the dead, when Jairus receives word about the death of his daughter, Jesus' word of encouragement and command to Jairus is, Do not be afraid. Do not fear. Only believe.

[5 : 00] So that in those two stories, the power of Jesus is the ultimate cause of the healing of the woman and the raising from the dead of the little girl.

But the faith of the people who came and requested the miracle came seeking help. The faith of those is instrumental in it. It's necessary. They have to believe.

Jesus marvels at this woman's faith. And because of her faith, his power had gone out of her. Jesus commands Jairus to believe. Don't be afraid. Don't lose heart.

Don't stop trusting in me so that he can go and perform the miracle. Now contrast that with what we see in this passage at the beginning of chapter 6.

In chapter 5, we see an example of the power of Christ at work through faith. In chapter 6, we see an example of faithlessness on the part of the people to whom Christ goes.

[6 : 00] So you see faith demonstrated in chapter 5. You see the absence of faith in chapter 6. Belief in chapter 5 and unbelief in chapter 6. And you begin to see more clearly in chapter 6 the connection between the going out of Jesus' power and the faith of those who need his power to work in their lives.

Before we look at the two stories though that we're covering this morning, before we look at the examples of faithlessness in there, I want us to see the context. It says in verse 1 that he went away from there and came to his hometown and his disciples followed him.

Now so far he has spent, in all of Mark's account, he's been in Galilee. We know from the Gospel of John that Jesus did a lot of ministry down in Judea in the south as well.

And we know that he went back and forth a lot. But Mark has sort of skipped over all of those parts about Jesus' trips down to Judea and down to Jerusalem except for his baptism. But Mark has so far focused not only on Galilee, but he's focused primarily on Jesus' ministry in Capernaum, right along the Sea of Galilee.

That's where his focus has been. And he's sort of detailed chronologically in order things as they've happened. So you see Jesus doing miracles there. Then you see him leave and come back.

[7 : 22] You see him teaching along the shore, crossing the sea, doing miracles, coming back across. That's sort of the story. And it's all been in fairly good chronological order.

But one of the things that you realize as you begin to read the Gospels more frequently is that the Gospels are not always in chronological order. I mean, if you just kind of look broadly at any one of the Gospels in the sort of big picture there in chronological order.

So you have the birth of Jesus, at least in two Gospels described. And then his beginning of his ministry with his baptism with John. And then you have his ministry in the middle.

And then you have a fairly detailed account in all four Gospels of the week leading up to his death and his resurrection. So sort of on the bird's eye view, all the Gospels are in chronological order.

All right. But then when you begin to zoom in, especially on this section in the middle, where it's just an account of the ministry of Jesus for those three to four years that he was doing ministry, it's not always in chronological order.

[8 : 24] In fact, a lot of it's not in chronological order. There are little sections like we've been in so far in Mark. There are little sections where several events are strung together in chronological order.

But there are a lot of things that are not in order. And sometimes that's confusing when we go to read the Gospels. But what we have to realize is that's how they wrote history back then. That's how they didn't write everything in the exact order.

They didn't feel the need to do that. That just wasn't the style of writing then. They usually would have a general broad frame of chronological order. And then they would group events in the life of a person almost topically.

All right. And I think that that's what Mark is doing here in chapter 6. Because we see Jesus in Capernaum and doing a lot of ministry in Capernaum. And now all of a sudden he's out of Capernaum. And then he's going to all of a sudden be back in Capernaum towards the end of the chapter.

So it's just sort of this back and forth. So I think that Mark has strategically taken the two stories that we're looking at at the beginning of chapter 6. And he's put them right here in his Gospel for a reason.

[9 : 29] They're not here just because it's the next thing that happened. They're here because Mark wants us to read what happens in these two stories in the context of what we just read.

And what we just read was all about faith. So now what we're going to read is about faithlessness and unbelief. And in reading about unbelief, we're going to learn a lot more about the kind of faith that we've seen demonstrated in chapter 5.

Does that make sense to you? You follow me there? By reading about a lack of faith, we're going to learn more about the nature of the faith that was demonstrated in chapter 5. So let's take a look.

Two stories that we have here. The first story actually demonstrates the lack of faith. The second story encourages us to have faith in the midst of people who don't have faith.

So the first story here. He went away from there and came to his hometown and his disciples followed him. So he's back in Nazareth. And we're told that on the Sabbath, he began to teach in the synagogue and many who heard him were astonished.

[10 : 35] So here it is. It's the Sabbath. And we've seen Jesus do this a couple of times already in Mark's gospel. This is his regular practice on the Sabbath day, wherever he is. He goes to the synagogue and he teaches.

That's what he does. And now he's doing it in his hometown. And they're amazed by his ability to teach. In fact, they ask three questions.

Where did this man get these things? In other words, I think probably that's the things that he's saying. Where did he come up with this stuff? Where did he get this stuff? Because we've known him his whole life.

When did he go to school? He didn't. He didn't go to the professional rabbinical training schools that the other rabbis went to. Paul, in fact, even talks about his own experience in being trained as a rabbi.

And how he went through the rabbinical schools. And he was taught by the premier teachers. And Paul had something worth bragging about in the Jewish world. Jesus didn't go through all of that training. So where did he get these things?

[11 : 33] What is the wisdom that's given to him? He's got a wisdom that he didn't obtain the way that our normal teachers, our normal Bible teachers obtain.

He's got wisdom that he didn't obtain in the same way. So where did it come from? And then last, how are such mighty works done by his hands? We know already that word has spread all over Galilee.

And we're going to see next week that word has spread even beyond Galilee, all the way down to the capital in Jerusalem. But word has spread all over Galilee because we've already seen his mom and his brothers and sisters.

They've made the trip earlier to come to Capernaum to try to calm Jesus down. To say, Jesus, you've got to stop doing all this stuff. People think that you're insane.

People are accusing you of having a demon. They come to calm him down. So obviously word has spread to his hometown of Nazareth. And he's here in Nazareth. And they've heard the reports.

[12 : 36] So they ask, how is he able to do all the miracles that we keep hearing about? How is he doing all of this? But then comes the shocker.

It says, is this not the carpenter, the son of Mary, brother of James and Joseph and Judas and Simon? We know this guy. And his sisters, are they not here with us? And it says, and they took offense at him.

They recognize his great teaching. They recognize his wisdom. They recognize his power at work. But their problem is, we know this guy.

He shouldn't be doing these things. He shouldn't be able to teach like that. He shouldn't know these kinds of things. He shouldn't have this kind of power. And they're offended by him.

They are, literally, it says that they're scandalized by him. They don't know how to take this. They don't believe in him.

[13 : 38] They don't believe in him.

Now, think about that statement. It's not saying that they have no faith whatsoever. I mean, these are good religious Jews.

They're in the synagogue on the Sabbath. They believe. They believe in the Scriptures. They believe in the Old Testament. They believe firmly in God.

They believe all the accounts that are described in the Old Testament about him. These are not people who don't have faith. That's not the issue. You see, I think that there's a danger that we might read passages like this and read it through the lenses of our culture and come to the conclusion that their main issue is that they just didn't believe and you've got to believe something. Because that's the mindset today. The mindset today is believe something. You know, be spiritual. Have something that you cling to and that you hang on to.

[14:50] But nobody wants to identify what that something is. Nobody wants to nail that down and say, believe in this. Believe in this truth or this set of truth. Believe in these things.

Nobody wants to do that. People just want to have sort of an amorphous kind of faith. And we would read a passage like this and conclude that the problem is that these people just don't have anything to latch on to.

They don't have anything that they believe in. And that's not the case at all. The problem is not that they don't have faith in general. The problem is that they don't believe in Jesus.

That's the issue. And we can even get more specific than that. The problem is not that they don't believe that Jesus can do the things that He claims to do. They're not disputing His power here.

I mean, they ask the question, how are such mighty works done by His hands? They know that He does the things that He's claiming to do. They know that He does the things that others are claiming that He's done.

[15:47] They don't lack faith in the power of Jesus. That's not the issue. Now contrast that with what you hear in a lot of churches today. There are numerous churches and ministries who say that the reason that you haven't received what you've asked for, or the reason that you haven't received Christ's power is because you don't believe in Christ's power.

You don't believe that He can actually heal you, so He's not going to heal you. But these people believe that He has the power to do it. It's not that.

It's not that they don't believe that Jesus has power. It's not that they don't believe that He has great wisdom. It's not that they don't believe that He's a great teacher. They acknowledge all of that.

None of that is the issue. The issue is they don't believe in Him.

And that makes all the difference in the world. You can acknowledge the power of Jesus. You can acknowledge the wisdom of Jesus. You can acknowledge the great teaching ability of Jesus. You can admire Jesus.

But if you don't trust in Him, none of it matters. That's their problem. Their problem is that they don't trust in Him.

[17:00] They look at Jesus and they see a man of power. But you know what else they see? They see Mary's son. They see the brother of James and Joseph and Judas and Simon.

And they know his sisters. And he may be able to do the things that he claims to do. But he cannot possibly be who he claims to be. And so they cannot believe in Him.

And Jesus says, Jesus marvels at their unbelief. He's amazed by it. I don't think that means that Jesus is surprised by it.

I don't think that Jesus didn't expect this. I think He did expect this. But I think this is a kind of amazement that you have when you know that something is going to be incredible.

You know that something is going to be big. You know that something is going to be impressive. But you've never seen it. You haven't yet seen it personally. So if you take a trip to the Grand Canyon, we've all seen pictures of the Grand Canyon.

[18:03] We know the Grand Canyon is big. I knew the Grand Canyon was really big. But the first time I went, or the only time that I went to the Grand Canyon and I stood there on the lookout and looked over the edge, I was just blown away with the size of it.

It didn't surprise me that it was big. I knew it was going to be big. But when you see some things for yourself, it's astonishing.

It's amazing. And I think that's what's happening here. I think Jesus, He knows that they're not going to trust in Him. He knows the depth of the hardness of their heart. But when He sees it with His own eyes, He's amazed by it.

And because of their unbelief, we are told that He didn't do a lot of mighty works there. In fact, Matthew is more specific. Mark says He could do no mighty work there and then says that He

marveled because of their unbelief.

The connection between their lack of faith in Jesus and Jesus not doing a lot of miracles there is not as clear in Mark as it is in Matthew. Because in Matthew, Matthew says that He did not do many mighty works there because of their unbelief.

[19 : 17] Matthew makes it very clear when he tells this story that the reason that Jesus didn't do a lot of miracles is because they lacked faith in Him. And we have to ask the question, does that mean that the power of Jesus is limited by our faith?

Does it mean that the power of Jesus is dependent upon our faith? Does our faith in some way add to His ability to do great things?

And I would say that the answer to all those things is no. There's two reasons why I would say that. One of them comes straight from the text here and the other just comes from the broader teaching of the Bible.

But I get from the text here that that's not the case because Mark highlights the fact that Jesus does some miracles there. It says in verse 5, He could do no mighty work there except that He laid His hands on a few sick people and healed them.

So Jesus is not unable to heal. He heals when He wants to heal when He's in His hometown. His power is not limited in any way.

[20 : 25] He still possesses the same power by which He raised Jairus' daughter from the dead. He has the same power that went out from Him when the woman touched the hem of His robe. He still possesses that power and He can distribute it sovereignly wherever He wants to.

But the normal means by which God exercises His power is through faith.

That's something we have to understand. The normal, regular, old avenue through which God channels His power is our faith.

It doesn't mean that He can't do things when we don't believe. It doesn't mean that He can't do things when no one believes. He created the world by speaking when there was no one there to believe that He had the power to create the world by speaking.

Right? The writer of Hebrews tells us that Jesus upholds the world by the power of His word. All things hold together in Him, Paul says. He does all that continually, constantly.

[21 : 32] That's not dependent upon whether or not we believe or anybody believes at all. He's always exercising His power in incredible ways. And we've probably all heard of non-believers who have been prayed for and they've been healed, but they didn't believe.

We've even heard, I've even heard stories of people who didn't believe in Jesus, but they prayed for something and they got it. How does that work when Jesus has to carry your prayers to the Father? Because God can sovereignly do things that He wants to do and not go through the normal channels and means that He uses. He can do that, but what we have to recognize is that 99.9% of the time, the way that God works and the way that He channels His power is through faith.

That's how He works. And in particular, that's how He works to save people. Nobody gets saved apart from faith in Jesus.

The power of Christ for salvation does not go to those who do not personally trust in Him. It doesn't go to people who believe that He's powerful. It doesn't go to people who believe that He's a wise, great teacher.

[22 : 51] It goes to people who trust in Him. That's how He works. The means of communicating the power of God is faith.

faith. But not only that, but the regular means by which faith is brought about is through the preaching of the Word.

Look what happens immediately after this. So Jesus does not do a lot of miracles. He's amazed by their unbelief. And how does He respond? He doesn't respond by closing Himself in.

He responds at the end of verse 6. It says, And He went out among the villages teaching. So how does Jesus respond to unbelief? He teaches. And He commands others to go out and teach and preach the gospel.

Take a look at verse 7. In verse 7 it says, He called the twelve and began to send them out two by two. And He gave them authority over the unclean spirits. He charged them to take nothing for their journey except a staff.

[23 : 58] No bread, no bag, no money in their belts, but to wear sandals and not put on two tunics. And He said to them, Whenever you enter a house, stay there until you depart from there. 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.

So, we're told, they went out and proclaimed that people should repent. Do you follow all that? Massive display of unbelief in Nazareth.

Jesus responds in two ways. He begins teaching all around Nazareth. All around. And then He sends His disciples out to proclaim the gospel of repentance.

repentance. That's how Jesus responds to unbelief. And then He teaches His disciples how they ought to respond to unbelief when they encounter it.

That's really what verses 7 through 13 are about. What do you do when you are in the business of trying to fulfill the Great Commission and you're rejected over and over and over again?

[25 : 08] That's why we're here. That's why we've started this church. That's what we're trying to do. We're trying to fulfill the Great Commission here in this community and anywhere else that God sends us. We exist to glorify God by making disciples of Jesus Christ.

That's what we're about. That's what we believe He's charged us with doing. And yet, people keep telling us to leave them alone when we try to talk to them.

Or doors get slammed in our faces. Or more often than that, you just get politely refused. Right?

That's how most people respond to the gospel today.

Just to politely refuse it. Probably the most deceptive form of unbelief in this part of the world is nominal Christianity.

What I mean by that is false Christianity. The easiest way to make someone stop sharing the gospel with you, at least in our culture here, is to tell them that you, oh, I've already been saved and I already believe that.

[26 : 15] Oh, I went to, I was baptized as a kid. I did this. I signed up. I did that. I took care of that. All of those sorts of excuses which boil down to this. I don't really want to hear the gospel.

I've got all that Christianity stuff behind me. It's taken care of. It's locked up. Now, I'd like you to leave me alone so I can move on. It is a very deceptive form of unbelief that masks itself as belief. Over and over in all these different ways, we will experience the rejection of the gospel. Just as Jesus did.

And Jesus gives us instructions on how to handle that. First, He sends the disciples out. He sends them out in pairs for a good reason. The Old Testament and the law requires two or three witnesses to bear testimony to the truth of something.

So He sends them out in groups of two so they can, according to the law, bear witness to the truth of the gospel. He sends them out though and then He gives them very specific instructions.

[27 : 23] Don't take a bunch of stuff. He says they can't take bread so they don't get to take their own food with them. They can't take their money bag or their money and all they get is a pair of sandals and a staff.

He says that they can't even take two tunics. What does that mean? It's essentially don't take an extra pair of underwear. Alright? They don't get to take really anything with them. But the bare essentials of what they need, all the things that He actually lists here are the exact things that you would normally take when you would go on a journey.

That's what they are. These are the kinds of things that you would take in this world if you were to go on a short trip and Jesus says don't take any of it. Why? Why would He give them these kinds of instructions?

Is this like a very literal thing that we're supposed to follow so that if we send out missionaries they can't pack any bags? They can't take a suitcase with them? Is that the point here?

Because it's what it sounds like. I think the point that Jesus is making is when you go in such a way that you don't have a backup plan.

[28 : 37] Go in such a way that you're not depending on anyone else besides God Himself to ensure the success of the mission.

Don't take all the things you would normally take. Don't be ready for a long journey. You go and you depend upon God to supply your need at every stage.

But of course that's not always going to happen. What's going to happen most of the time is that they are going to be rejected and so are we. And He says when you enter a house verse 10 stay there until you depart.

But if any place will not receive you and they will not listen to you so they won't receive the message of the gospel He says when you leave shake off the dust that is on your feet as a testimony against them.

In other words when you are rejected don't carry that rejection with you. Don't carry the problems associated with that location or those people with you.

[29 : 47] To shake the dust off of your feet in this time meant that you are completely divesting yourselves of any relationship with them. You're done. It's not going to hinder you.

It's not going to bother you anymore. It's as if you don't even want the dirt and grime of that place and those people on the dirtiest part of your shoe. You don't want anything to do with them. That's what Jesus says.

Jesus says you cannot be overly burdened and you cannot be concerned with the rejection that you're going to receive. It's going to happen. Just move on.

That's what you do in the face of unbelief. You don't get angry in the face of unbelief. You don't get mad at people who reject the gospel.

You just move on. It's not saying that we give up on people as soon as we share the gospel with them because my guess is that these disciples did what Jesus did and did later on what they would do as apostles.

[30 : 49] that they would go to a location and stay there for a while and minister in a particular location for a while because you don't show up and on day one everybody's converted.

That doesn't happen very often. Most of the time look at the ministry of Paul. Paul would typically stay in a city for about two years. That was typical for him. He would go and he would minister and he would preach day after day in the synagogue and then once his time ran out there he would preach day after day in the marketplace to the Gentiles.

So the point that Jesus is making here is not share the gospel with you and if they don't believe you're done with them. His point is that when they have completely rejected the gospel when they have fully turned their back on you don't be discouraged by that.

It's okay. It's going to happen. Move on. There are other people who need to hear the message. part of our problem I think sometimes is that when the gospel is rejected we assume that we're rejected and we become depressed and upset and we cocoon up and we just stop for a while.

Just give up sharing the gospel for a while. Most people after they're saved most people are in their most evangelistic mode for the first few months after they're saved and then it just sort of fades out.

[32 : 26] A part of that can be attributed to sort of emotions and those kinds of things but I think a lot of it is attributed to in the beginning they've experienced no rejection their faith is new and they want to share it with everyone but slowly but surely they get rejected rejected rejected the gospel is turned away and it doesn't take long before we close up and we're done.

So that when you talk to most people who attend church regularly and you ask them when's the last time you shared the gospel with someone most people don't have a clue when the last time was because it wasn't this week and it wasn't this month and it probably wasn't this year.

Why? There may be a lot of reasons but at least one of the reasons is because of the frustration of rejection and we don't follow Jesus' instructions. Jesus says it's going to happen and when it happens shake the dust off your feet and move on.

Move on to the next town move on to the next people and look at the result of this kind of style of ministry. Verse 12 So they went out and proclaimed that people should repent and they cast out many demons and anointed with oil many who were sick and healed them.

So great things happened through the disciples. What if they had been rejected in a town and just stayed there? What then?

[33 : 51] What if they were rejected and then they just went home? Then this report about them healing lots of people and casting, none of that would have ever happened. Jesus says in the face of unbelief, belief moves on.

You follow that? This is how the faithful respond to the faithless. We respond with resolve.

We respond with a determination to move on and continue to share the gospel. We have a difficult task in front of us.

Let's be honest about it. We have people who don't want to be bothered and we have to somehow tell them a message. Have you ever tried when you're shopping, let's say you're in the grocery store and you see someone and they drop something on the ground and they just move on and then you

pick up their item and sometimes have you ever noticed how difficult it is sometimes to get their attention?

If they're not turned around and looking at you, ma'am, ma'am, excuse me, ma'am. Because everybody wants to just move ahead and assume you're not addressing them.

[35 : 16] That's how it works in our world. And you've got to somehow get them to turn around and hear a message that they're not interested in hearing. And that's not easy.

And nine times out of ten, those that you get to turn around and hear the message will reject the message. And at that point we have a choice to make. We either give up and go home or we shake the dust off and we resolve to trust in God.

That's what this is about. Real, genuine faith in Christ doesn't give up. Real, genuine faith in Christ doesn't have a backup plan.

repentance. There's not another way to get this done than by going out and proclaiming a message of repentance. There's no other way to get this done. So that as a church, we can't have a backup plan for reaching the community.

In other words, we can't say, well, what gimmicks can we come up with so that people will want to come to our church? What sort of neat things can we do so that people will be talking and buzzing in the community and they'll want to come and see all the neat things that we do?

[36 : 41] I don't see that in Jesus' instructions to them. He tells them to go, trust in God, and proclaim the gospel. Those are simple instructions.

And that's exactly what he calls us to do in the Great Commission. go, proclaim the gospel, and know that he has all authority. It's very simple.

So that as a church, we can't be a church that's gimmicky. We can't be a church that's a church that will do anything to get the attention of people around us. We have to be a church that faithfully proclaims this message and never gives up on proclaiming this message.

That's true for you individually as well. You can't try to come up with all sorts of ways to impress your neighbors or to impress your co-workers and make them think well of you.

There are more people who have destroyed their witness for Christ while trying to get the attention of others than you would believe. How many people have wanted to feel accepted and one of the group and their justification for that is, well I want to have a witness among them and I want them to be able to listen to me so I'll do the things they do and participate in the things they participate or I'll not object in any way to all the things that they do and say that I know are not right and you find yourself ultimately in a compromised position with people and there's no way they would ever listen to you tell them anything about Jesus.

[38 : 17] There's not another means for reaching people. There's one way, there's no backup plan and if we trust in Christ to do what only he can do, we won't grow discouraged.

We won't quit, we won't close up, we'll shake the dust off and move on. Let's pray.