

Choosing to be a Community of Faith

4.15.18

Mark Series

Message 24

Mark 6:1–6 (NIV)

6 Jesus left there and went to his hometown, accompanied by his disciples. ² When the Sabbath came, he began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard him were amazed.

“Where did this man get these things?” they asked. “What’s this wisdom that has been given him? What are these remarkable miracles he is performing? ³ Isn’t this the carpenter? Isn’t this Mary’s son and the brother of James, Joseph, Judas and Simon? Aren’t his sisters here with us?” And they took offense at him.

⁴ Jesus said to them, “A prophet is not without honor except in his own town, among his relatives and in his own home.” ⁵ He could not do any miracles there, except lay his hands on a few sick people and heal them. ⁶ He was amazed at their lack of faith. Then Jesus went around teaching from village to village.

1. It takes a lot to amaze Jesus.

A. That makes sense.

1. Jesus is the King of the Universe.
2. He was there and part of the process that created all that has been created.
3. Jesus understands and sees things at a level that we can’t comprehend.

4. So when Scripture says that “Jesus was amazed”, we should take notice.

B. Only twice is Jesus said to have been amazed by something.

1. One instance, found in Matthew, Jesus is amazed by a Roman centurion’s faith (the only time someone’s faith is said to have amazed Jesus).

2. The second occurrence was Jesus’ amazement at the lack of faith of the people in his hometown of Nazareth.

3. These two snapshots give us a picture of how believers can amaze and please God.

Hebrews 11:6 (NIV)

⁶And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.

C. Most of us here today are here because we want please God.

1. We want to do what is right and we want God to be happy with us.

2. And the Bible says that the only way we can please or not please God is through faith.

D. This morning we want to look at a community of people who claimed to follow God but rejected Jesus.

1. Their lack of faith left Jesus in amazement, but not in a good way.

2. **And if this first-century group of people left Jesus in amazement for the wrong reasons, is it possible for us to amaze Jesus with our lack of faith today as well?**

2. Nazareth was Jesus’ hometown.

A. Jesus was born in Bethlehem.

1. His family then became refugees in Egypt for a few years.

2. But it was Nazareth where Jesus had grown up.

a. It was in this small town that Jesus ran around with his brothers and sisters.

b. It was in this small town that Jesus would attend synagogue with his father and work in his father's shop.

B. The people in Nazareth believed they knew everything about Jesus.

1. Familiarity can breed contempt.

2. And the people in Nazareth were familiar with Jesus' upbringing, family, and story.

3. Familiarity doesn't have to breed contempt but can also produce wonder.

a. Somethings never get old:

1. One of my favorite things about substitute teaching is listening to kids play on the playground.

2. For a child, playing is a form of worship as they explore and enjoy what God has put before them.

b. As a pastor, watching you grow in your faith never gets old.

c. Looking into my wife's eyes, hearing a good musician, and enjoying a good meal never get old.

d. We all have things in our lives that, the more we are exposed to them, the more we enjoy them.

4. This is the way it should be with Jesus.

a. Our sense of wonder should not diminish the more we are with Jesus.

b. But the community in Nazareth had no room for a fresh revelation of Jesus and it led them to reject the One who had come to heal and save.

c. That brings us back to the topic of "unbelief".

3. Unbelief calls into question the revelation of Jesus.

A. This unbelieving community couldn't see Jesus in a new light.

1. They could see his siblings.
2. They had heard the voice before.
3. They refused to hear the Gospel, to feel the Spirit, to experience the power that came from this familiar voice.

B. The unbelievers in Nazareth questioned Jesus' identity, the source of his power, and His motives.

1. They couldn't see the Messiah standing in front of them.
2. Their vision for the person and power of God was clouded by unbelief.
3. The greatest person to ever visit their city was rejected out of hand because of unbelief.
 - a. The same Jesus that caused demons to tremble, that made the lame walk, the blind see, calmed raging storms, and gave life to the dead couldn't do anything in Nazareth due to the unbelief and dishonor there.
 - b. Scripture says Jesus could do no miracles there, except heal a few sick, because of their lack of faith.

C. Jesus had come to that community to do what He had done in every other community.

1. But the atmosphere and culture of the community were such that Jesus was hindered from fulfilling His mission there.
2. Think about it:
 - a. People that should have been healed that day, went home still sick and crippled.
 - b. Families that should have been restored stayed the same or worse that day.

c. Those that could have believed upon Jesus and been saved from their sins, left still mired in their sin.

3. This is the effect of unbelief in a community of people.

4. Nazareth's unbelief was not its only downfall.

a. Just like Faith and Love go together, unbelief has an inseparable counterpart also.

b. It is called dishonor.

4. There can be no faith where there is no honor.

Mark 6:4-6 (NIV)

⁴ Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not without honor except in his own town, among his relatives and in his own home." ⁵ He could not do any miracles there, except lay his hands on a few sick people and heal them. ⁶ He was amazed at their lack of faith.

A. Jesus clearly connects Nazareth's unbelief to their refusal to honor Him.

1. Honor is to place value on something or someone.

a. When we honor someone we consider them worthy of respect, reverence, and awe.

b. The Old Testament word for honor is "heavy" which has the idea of an entourage of people carrying the possessions and riches of their leader.

c. Honor is so important that the 5th commandment tells us to honor our parents, by showing them the respect and reverence worthy of their position.

d. A child is to "make heavy" their parents by carrying respect, reverence, and awe for them.

2. Honor is a BIBLICAL value that was absent in Nazareth.

a. They allowed their exposure to rob Jesus of the honor he was due and worthy of.

b. HE had done nothing to deserve this disrespect, and yet this is how He was treated.

B. This is a problem because faith proceeds from honor.

1. We show honor to those we believe in.

a. A culture without honor cannot be a culture of faith.

b. You can't honor God if you dishonor those God has put in your life.

c. The Bible gives many examples of God blessing those who show honor and punishing those who sow dishonor.

2. Biblical demonstrations:

a. David refused to dishonor King Saul and experienced the protection of God and His blessing.

b. David's son Absalom refused honor to David and died a terrible death.

c. Capernaum honored Jesus and saw miracles.

d. Nazareth displayed dishonor and received nothing.

e. In God's Kingdom, Love, Faith, and Honor cannot be treated as separate entities.

f. They are all necessary ingredients to experience the power of the Kingdom of God in our world.

C. The discussion of honor is relevant because our culture is losing all sense of honor.

1. What is acceptable behavior today was unheard of and shameful 20 years ago.

a. I was shocked the first time I had an elementary age kid look me in the face and tell me, "you can't make me".

b. The issue of honor isn't only a child issue but an adult issue.

c. I was once part of a church that had a history of treating its leaders and community with disrespect and dishonor.

d. And I have seen judgment fall upon that church and keep it from growing and being blessed.

2. It is the responsibility of parents to model and teach the value of honor.

a. The responsibility does not begin with teachers, coaches, or employers.

b. It begins at home.

c. When adults dishonor presidents, bosses, teachers, and other adults we should not be shocked when our children do the same.

3. Our honor for the Lord will be reflected by the way we honor those in authority over us.

D. Honor isn't just about what we say or don't say.

1. The words of our mouths aren't always a true reflection of our hearts.

2. We call that lying and hypocrisy.

Mark 7:6-7 (NIV)

⁶ He replied, "Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you hypocrites; as it is written:

" 'These people honor me with their lips,
but their hearts are far from me.

⁷ They worship me in vain;
their teachings are merely human rules.'

3. We dishonor God when we refuse to believe that Jesus is who He says He is and will do what He says he will do.

4. Faith cannot blossom where dishonor has taken root.

5. The level of unbelief and dishonor was so high in Nazareth, that it says they "took offense at him".

6. When we hold on to things and try to fix them on our own, not only are we not acting in faith we are not honoring God.

5. The decision to be known for our faith is a community atmosphere.

A. A Church is often called a faith community.

1. A group of people brought together by a common faith.

2. But what if the shared character of the group of people is not faith but unbelief faith?

3. In Jesus' hometown there was a shared belief and faith:

1. Jesus couldn't possibly be who he said he was and he couldn't do what he claimed to do.

2. They were united not because of their faith but their unbelief.

B. How are we going to be remembered?

1. It is my hope we will be remembered as a group of people who believed God and ALL his promises.

2. It is my hope that we will be viewed as believers in the Great Commission,

a. a commission that led them to buy a building that was too big, to take on a mission that was impossible, and dream dreams that were ridiculous.

b. For a year and a half, people have doubted us: We can't afford this, we can't fill this, we won't survive. And yet, here we are by the grace of God.

c. Because of the 60 people or so who chose to follow God and his leading, all of us here are benefiting.

d. What would have happened if we would have acted in unbelief and fear instead of faith and trust?

e. How many of you believe your life would look radically different if it wasn't for a group of people who took a step of faith to move to this location?

3. The choice to live by faith has ramifications beyond me, myself, and I.

a. Literally, the eternities of others depend on us being obedient.

b. Those in Nazareth refused to believe and missed out on what Jesus wanted to do there.

C. When we choose to be known as a people of faith we see the blessings and provisions of God.

1. Over the last year and a half we have benefited from one miracle after another:

a. When we left the old building, our attendance that last month was pushing 60.

b. Our 6-week average right now is 153.

c. Lives are being changed every week by the love of Jesus and that isn't stopping anytime soon!

2. During this building project, we have seen God save us 5k by sending St. James A/G to help us hang drywall.

a. God provided us with a team of people from Lee's Summit who, in a day and a half, did what had been bid at or around 15k.

- b. Passion A/G gave us our first soundboard, Sedalia A/G gave us our first coffee bar.
- c. A missionary paid for all of our drywall material and a little extra and put in the rough electrical.
- d. Then we found a finishing crew that could start within a week when others were months out.
- e. When God's people choose to walk by faith and not by sight, God miraculously provides for HIS building and for His people.
- f. God HONORS faith.
- g. When we respond to God in faith, He responds by doing more than we ever could accomplish on our own.
- H. And now it is time for us to believe once again to see this work of God finished.

(What I am about to say may seem weird for a sermon. It isn't what I usually do. But I felt strongly that this was the weekend to make this known so we can agree in prayer and in faith. Nothing catches God by surprise. No obstacle surprises God. Not only that, I truly believe that the Lord directs sermon series, like this one, to introduce concepts at the perfect time so we may practice what we hear the Scripture say).

6. Before us is our very own Nazareth moment where we must decide to either trust God or to react in unbelief.

A. We are believing that, very soon, we will be seating over 260 adults in our new sanctuary.

1. Imagine with me:
2. 260 adults and a few children scattered in the new sanctuary.
3. 40-60 kids in the new kid's wing.
4. 10-15 babies and toddlers in the nursery.
5. That puts a Sunday morning to around 310-340 people.

6. That growth comes with a step that I did not see coming.

B. The current A/C units that are on the other side are not designed to handle that many people in that size of a room comfortably.

1. What we need to get ready for the people the Lord is going to send is a new 15ton A/C unit.

2. While we are at it, it is wise to also install mini-splits (wall-mounted a/c and heating units) for each of the new classrooms, offices, and nurseries so we can heat and cool as needed.

3. These new units will pay for themselves pretty soon because instead of running two of the large 10-ton units on top, we can control each room separately as needed.

4. We have put these out to bid, sought wisdom and council, and have a company ready to provide what we need.

5. What we don't have is the cash to fund the full project.

C. Before I tell you the dollar figure, I want you to activate your faith in Jesus who is our provider. Receive this news with faith, not unbelief.

1. The project comes to \$46,000.

2. When I first received the bids from two different companies, I was in shock.

a. I felt betrayed, overwhelmed, and fearful.

b. I sought the wisdom of a couple of our elders, and I have prayed.

c. I have shared this info with just a few and refused to make it public until I was ready to approach you in faith and not fear.

D. Through this, here is what I am learning from the Lord.

#1. Just because you encounter an obstacle does not mean you have made a mistake or have sinned.

- a. Sometimes the obstacles before us are ways to practice faith in Jesus.
- b. We should view obstacles as concrete opportunities to practice a tangible faith.

#2. Obstacles build communities:

- a. Obstacles can build Communities of Jesus believing, Spirit-filled believers or
- b. Communities of doubters, complainers, and murmurers.
- c. In Numbers 13 the Lord led Israel to the edge of the promise land and they sent ahead twelve spies. (This was the Lord's idea).
- d. 10 saw the obstacles, the giants, and the fortified cities and despaired.
- e. 2 saw the obstacles, the giants, and the fortified cities as opportunities for God to display his glory.
- f. This was a test to see if Israel would trust the Lord
- g. Instead of faith, the people chose unbelief and suffered 40 years in a wilderness that was not meant for them.
- h. I refuse to worship on this side of that wall for one day longer than necessary because we chose unbelief.

#3. Refusal to share your burden or obstacle with other believers is a symptom of fear.

- a. Fear says, "don't tell anyone" and "don't be a burden".
- b. Fear keeps us from joining together in faith because we fear being judged, rejected, or wrong.
- c. Fear keeps us in anonymity and separates us from tapping into the power of a faith-filled community.
- d. One of the many things the Lord is teaching me is that I was not created to do this alone.

1. Over the past few weeks, I have had several in this community come to me and speak life into me.
2. Some have warned me about the dangers of doing this alone.
3. Another couple spoke to me about the importance of keeping my wife and marriage a priority in life.
4. Don't let fear guide your decisions, your relationships, or your prayer life.
5. Don't let obstacles determine if you are having a good day or not.
6. If you believe that Jesus loves you, and that He has the power to do what He has promised, then we can give him ALL of our problems and obstacles in faith and with honor.

7. Closing: We are all called to be people of faith.

A. This morning we have an opportunity to believe God for what He has promised.

1. Some of you need healing and I want to pray with you.
2. Some of you have big decisions ahead of you, we want to pray with you and agree for wisdom and direction and favor.
3. Others have loved-ones who need Jesus.
4. Before we pray as a body of believers for a financial miracle for the church, I want to pray with you as individuals.

Altar time

B. Prayer for provision for the church.