

## Bible Study Guide: Week of 6-28-2021

1. Read through the passage below
2. Read my notes and commentary
3. Read the questions at the end and ponder or discuss with others

Pastor Andrew

### Mark 6:1-13

[Jesus] left [Capernaum] and came to his hometown, and his disciples followed him. <sup>2</sup>On the sabbath he began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard him were astounded. They said, “Where did this man get all this? What is this wisdom that has been given to him? What deeds of power are being done by his hands! <sup>3</sup>Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary and brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon, and are not his sisters here with us?” And they took offense at him. <sup>4</sup>Then Jesus said to them, “Prophets are not without honor, except in their hometown, and among their own kin, and in their own house.” <sup>5</sup>And he could do no deed of power there, except that he laid his hands on a few sick people and cured them. <sup>6</sup>And he was amazed at their unbelief.

Then he went about among the villages teaching. <sup>7</sup>He called the twelve and began to send them out two by two, and gave them authority over the unclean spirits. <sup>8</sup>He ordered them to take nothing for their journey except a staff; no bread, no bag, no money in their belts; <sup>9</sup>but to wear sandals and not to put on two tunics. <sup>10</sup>He said to them, “Wherever you enter a house, stay there until you leave the place. <sup>11</sup>If any place will not welcome you and they refuse to hear you, as you leave, shake off the dust that is on your feet as a testimony against them.” <sup>12</sup>So they went out and proclaimed that all should repent. <sup>13</sup>They cast out many demons, and anointed with oil many who were sick and cured them.

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Our reading this week consists of two sections. The first (1-6a) describes Jesus’ return to Nazareth and the cold reception he gets there. The passage recalls Jesus’ earlier activity in Capernaum (1:21ff). Capernaum had become Jesus’ “adopted home” by virtue of his presence and ministry there, as well as his fame and acclaim among the residents of Capernaum. Here he returns to his actual childhood hometown. While the account here begins much like the account of Jesus’ teaching in the Capernaum synagogue, it quickly takes a turn for the worse. Rather than the crowds wondering about Jesus’ teaching authority as they had in Capernaum, the crowds in Nazareth call into question Jesus’ parentage—they call him “Son of Mary” and wonder “Where does he get all this?” This question may be insinuating that “all this” comes from someone other than Joseph, his father who would have been known to the crowds. Taken with the reference to “Mary’s son,” the crowds may be implying that Jesus was the child of Mary and another unknown person. The irony, of course, is that we the readers know that Jesus is indeed the Son of God—born of the Holy Spirit and Mary, not any earthly father. The crowds misidentify Jesus and misattribute the source of his amazing acts of power. Mark tells us they “took offense at him”—literally they were scandalized by him. *Skandalon* in Greek literally means “stumbling block”—Jesus’ teaching and presence causes the crowds to stumble. They cannot move past what they think they know about Jesus to see who he truly is. Interestingly, it is the sick ones of Nazareth who are able to experience Jesus’ power for themselves. Those who think they know everything about Jesus are stuck in their unbelief. Oddly, Jesus is astounded at their lack of faith.

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The second part of this passage is one of many gospel accounts of the sending out of the disciples. The work they do is not their own; rather, they are given a share of the authority Jesus has already demonstrated over the demons, unclean spirits, and forces of evil. Jesus' sparse packing list for his apostles emphasizes their need to rely on the welcome and hospitality of others. Two tunics, for instance, would have been useful for chilly nights. Instead of preparing for the worst, the disciples are to find their needs met in those who welcome their message of repentance and healing. This passage is linked to 6:1-6a by the common theme of acceptance or rejection. Jesus knows that just as Capernaum welcomed him, so will his followers find welcome in some towns. And he also knows that just as Nazareth rejected him, so his disciples would find rejection in some towns. Yet the gospel imperative is to go and proclaim good news and to heal and cleanse those who respond in faith.

**Discussion/Reflection Questions:**

- 1. Why do you think the crowds in his hometown refused to recognize and follow Jesus?**
- 2. What do you think Jesus would command us to take or leave behind if he were sending us out two by two to share the gospel today?**
- 3. How do you reconcile Jesus' command to shake off the dust of the feet as a testimony against those who reject the message of the gospel with Jesus' command to love others?**