

UNBELIEF

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Mark 6:1-6

1. Jesus was raised in the village of Nazareth.
2. He had visited His hometown about a year earlier. Luke 4:16-30
3. On that visit He had gone to the synagogue and had selected and read a Messianic passage found in Isaiah 61:1-2.
 - a. After reading the passage and closing the scroll He declared, "Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in hearing."
 - b. Initially the people responded positively until Jesus confronted them related to their unbelief.
 - c. They became enraged by His comments and intended to throw Him off of a cliff, but He was somehow able to pass through their midst and go on His way.
- NOTE: God is able to protect His people.
4. Here we find Jesus back in Nazareth and back in the synagogue teaching.
NOTE: Isn't it wonderful that God is a patient and merciful God.
5. It is obvious that the people of Nazareth were aware of Jesus' ministry during the year He had been away.
6. This incident in the life of Christ illustrates some of the ways unbelief manifests itself in people's lives.

I. Unbelief does not take into account the power of God.

- A. Jesus had been raised in their midst, and they had a hard time understanding where His wisdom and His power to perform miracles had come from.
- B. On another occasion Jesus was teaching in the Temple and the Jews were marveling and saying, "How has this man become learned, having never been educated?" John 7:15
- C. A similar passage is found in Acts 4:13-14 in reference to Peter and John.
Now as they observed the confidence of Peter and John and understood that they were uneducated and untrained men, they were amazed, and began to recognize them as having been with Jesus. 14 And seeing the man who had been healed standing with them, they had nothing to say in reply.
- D. This passage suggests some questions we might ask ourselves.
 1. Do I really believe in the power of God?
 2. How is the power of God making a difference in my life?
 3. Is the difference the power of God is making in my life observable and obvious to others?
- E. Many years ago I wrote the following in my journal.
"Paul's doxology in Ephesians 3:20-21 should be a great encouragement to us as we pray. He wrote, 'Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us, 21 to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen.' If we can believe God for some spiritual progress in our lives, why not believe Him for great spiritual progress. If we can believe Him for some church growth, why not believe Him for great church growth. If we can believe Him for some resources, why not believe Him for great resources. Could part of our problem be little prayers based on little faith?"

II. Unbelief often focuses on the irrelevant.

- A. The evidence was overwhelming that Jesus possessed great power and wisdom.
- B. I believe that the evidence is overwhelming that Jesus is who the Bible clearly declares Him to be.
- C. The people of Nazareth chose to focus on what they knew about Him.
- NOTE: The idea that God could do such things through one of their own was inconceivable.
- D. For centuries every devote Jewish woman hoped that she would be the mother of the Messiah, but rather than rejoicing in what God had done in their midst they were offended by Jesus.
- NOTE: God's power at work in someone's life is often troubling to those in whose lives God is not working.
- E. People who do not want to respond to the Gospel can always find an excuse to reject or hide from the truth.
- NOTE: This reality is sometimes true in the lives of believers who do not want to deal with certain issues in their lives. **When convicted, rather than responding positively, they run.**
- F. Jesus dealt with this issue in His conversation with Nicodemus. John 3:19-21
- "This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil. 20 "For everyone who does evil hates the Light, and does not come to the Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed. 21 "But he who practices the truth comes to the Light, so that his deeds may be manifested as having been wrought in God."
- G. A genuine seeker may struggle with many questions, but he or she will accept and respond to the truth when God makes it clear.

III. Unbelief robs people of God's blessings.

- A. In Matthew's account of this incident we read, "And He did not do many miracles there because of their unbelief." Matthew 13:58
- B. Mark tells us, "And He could do no miracles there except that He laid His hands on a few sick people and healed them."
- C. God can do whatever He wants to do, but most of the time He chooses to work in response to faith.
- D. The writer of Hebrews wrote, "And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who (diligently) seek Him."
- E. Note Jesus' promise in Matthew 7:7-11.
- "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. 8 "For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. 9 "Or what man is there among you who, when his son asks for a loaf, will give him a stone? 10 "Or if he asks for a fish, he will not give him a snake, will he? 11 "If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give what is good to those who ask (beg, call for, crave, desire, require) Him!"
- F. Note also Jesus lament in Luke 13:34.
- "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, just as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not have it!"
- G. It is a sad thing when people cannot believe God related to what He wants to do in them and through them and their churches.

APPLICATION

1. Mark recorded that Jesus wondered at (was amazed by) their unbelief.
2. I wonder if Jesus is amazed by our unbelief.
3. In Luke 18 Jesus told a parable that was designed to teach that at all times His disciples should pray and not lose heart (not give up, grow discouraged, stop believing).
4. At the conclusion of the parable He asked, “However, when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith (the faith) on the earth?” Luke 18:8

NOTE: He was asking, “When I return will I find the faith that perseveres in prayer on the earth?”

5. Again let me share a few questions we might ask ourselves.
 - a. What do I want God to do in my life and in the lives of others?
 - b. What am I asking God to do?
 - c. Am I praying towards that end, and am I willing to be part of the process?
 - d. Are my expectations based on what has been, or what currently is, or what the Bible says can be or should be?