

7<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost  
July 11, 2021  
Lincoln Heights Lutheran Church  
Mark 6:1-6

## **Rejected By His Own**

### **Mark 6:1–6 (NIV84)**

*Jesus left there and went to his hometown, accompanied by his disciples. <sup>2</sup> 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, that he even does miracles! <sup>3</sup> 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. <sup>4</sup> Jesus said to them, “Only in his hometown, among his relatives and in his own house is a prophet without honor.” <sup>5</sup> He could not do any miracles there, except lay his hands on a few sick people and heal them. <sup>6</sup> And he was amazed at their lack of faith. Then Jesus went around teaching from village to village.*

Dear Friends in Christ,

How much advice will a parent take from a toddler whose diapers they’ve changed too many times to count? How much advice will a grandparent take from their 6 year old grandson about driving? How much advice will parents take from their teenagers about relationships? After careful research and analysis I’ve determined that parents and grandparents take approximately zero advice on life from their children and grandchildren. Those children don’t have the wisdom that comes from years of life experience yet.

It is probably still difficult for parents to think of their full grown, adult children as having superior wisdom. When the adult child gives advice on life, it might be difficult to see anyone other than the child who thought it was a good idea to touch the cigarette lighter in the car with their thumb to see if it was hot. Just so you know, it was really hot and my thumb had little circles branded into it for some time.

So it isn’t a surprise that the people who knew Jesus when he was growing up have trouble believing that he is the Savior. Of course, they never saw Jesus sin for he never sinned, even as a child. But he was a child and they looked at him as the child they knew many years ago and they rejected him. Jesus was rejected by his own. But Jesus still went to those who rejected him.

### **Rejecting Jesus**

*Jesus left there and went to his hometown, accompanied by his disciples. <sup>2</sup> 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, that he even does miracles! <sup>3</sup> 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. <sup>4</sup> Jesus said to them, “Only in his hometown, among his relatives and in his own house is a prophet without honor.”*

There were certainly many who rejected Jesus throughout Judea. There still are many who reject Jesus throughout the world. But there is something different about the rejection of Christ by the people of Nazareth. These were his hometown people. As a small town, the people of Nazareth would have known everyone in town. Everyone knew Mary and Jesus and the rest of the family. But his hometown rejects him.

And many in town would have been related to Jesus. Both Mary and Joseph were from Nazareth so there would likely be cousins, aunts and uncles. The sisters mentioned would have married local Jewish boys and now there is extended family all over Nazareth. But even in his own house, his brothers did not believe in him. Perhaps, with the exception of his mother Mary, his relatives rejected him as the Savior.

Perhaps their thinking went like this: I remember Jesus sitting on his mother's lap. How could he be some great teacher now? I remember Jesus playing in the dirt, covered from head to toe. How could he be a prophet of God? I remember Jesus helping Joseph fix the steps at my house. How can that little helper be the one Prophet promised by God through Moses who would be greater than Moses? I have a table built by Jesus as he learned the carpentry trade from Joseph. How can the man who built my table be the Savior of the world?

Jesus is just a human like me so why listen to him? That is still the attitude of many in the world today. As believers, we take great comfort in the fact that Jesus is a human like us. Not only is God with us, God is one of us in Christ Jesus. But the sinful nature will use the humanity of Jesus as an excuse to not listen to Jesus. Some Christians may fall into the trap of thinking that Jesus was a man of his times and did not understand modern science and philosophy. Therefore, we can pick and choose what in the Bible to listen to and what to ignore as a product of ancient times not applicable to today. Be careful of this attitude of only thinking Jesus was a great human teacher whose ideas we can pick from. His Word is truth...all of it.

We believers must also watch for the trap of thinking we know lots about Jesus already. For such an attitude may lead us to not listening to the Bible carefully. "Oh, I know that one already. I can think about something else during this reading in church....Oh, I've read this before so I can skim or skip the devotion for today." Do you actually know Jesus so well that you reject the opportunities to learn more? Let me ask you one question. Can you name the brothers of Jesus without looking at Mark 6? Of course, this is a bit trivial. But God did include their names in the Bible. We must be careful about deciding what in the Bible is important and what is not. God put everything in the Bible for our learning and for our good. Who are we to reject any part of it or ignorantly ignore any of the Word of Christ?

When Jesus walked into a town and then into the synagogue to preach and teach, he was the Word bringing the Word to the people. The perfect Son of God preached the Word of God to the people. His preaching had authority because he is the author of Scripture. Jesus doesn't walk into our churches today in the same way as he did in Nazareth. Instead, Christ calls pastors through the congregation of believers to proclaim his Word. There have been several installations and ordinations at Lincoln Heights Lutheran. Pastors Knief, Fritze, Weishahn, Flunker, Zarling, Stuebs, Bender, Gunn, Frey, Schaser, Fix and Pfeifer have served at this congregation.

The problem with these 12 men is that they all had faults. If you didn't see any faults, you could have. They all had weaknesses. You saw the weaknesses and see them in the current pastor. They all sinned. You know it and many have seen the sins of pastors clearly. The faults, weaknesses and sins of the pastor can be used by our sinful nature as an excuse to stop listening to Jesus. Our sinful nature says that the pastor is just a sinner like everyone else so why listen to him? And on many things, our sinful nature is right.

My opinion about window replacement is just that, an opinion. My suggestion about what temperature to set the air conditioners is just that, a suggestion. My advice on how much of our offering to send to synod for use in missions is just that, advice. You can listen and then decide whether you agree or not. But when the pastor speaks the message of Christ as revealed in the Bible, there is no choice. We cannot brush it off or ignore it because it is just the pastor telling us

that Jesus is the only way to heaven. Jesus actually said that. We cannot brush it off when a pastor points out our sin. The Holy Spirit convicts us through the law, often spoken by a sinful pastor. You will like some pastors more than others throughout your life, but don't use your dislike of a pastor as an excuse to stop listening to the word of Christ spoken by the pastor. For that is not rejecting a sinful man, it is rejecting the holy Son of God.

### **Jesus Still Goes to Those Who Reject Him**

Jesus knew that the reaction of many in his hometown would be less than welcoming. Yet, Jesus still went to those who would reject him. Jesus still goes to people who will and who have rejected him today.

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Why would Jesus knowingly go into a town that would reject him? Maybe it was just for Mary, his mother. She had not rejected him and would not. Sure, she recently tried to cancel Jesus' public teaching ministry because he wasn't eating right and the Jewish leaders were being mean to him. But she still believed. Did he go to Nazareth just to ensure Mary of his forgiveness and encourage her?

What about his brothers and sisters? They did not believe in him as the Savior. But some of them would come to faith. At some point James is brought to believe that his brother Jesus is the Savior of the world. James becomes a leader of the Christian church in Jerusalem after Christ's resurrection. Would Jesus endure the shame of rejection in Nazareth just to save Mary and James? Of course. But he went to also save everyone who lived in Nazareth. There was no honor awaiting him by going, but he went to save those who reject him.

There was no honor awaiting Jesus at the cross, but he went to save all who have rejected him in any way. He endured the shame of the cross to take away the punishment we deserve for the shameful way we have received his Word in our lives. He forgives every time we thought we know better than Jesus. He forgives every time we ignored him because we've heard it all already. He forgives every time we rejected his Word because of who spoke it. Jesus went to the cross to save sinners.

And Jesus continues to go to us. His sacrifice for us was a one time event in history. It will not happen again. There is no need for it to happen again. But there is a great need for us to be reminded of it again and again. So Jesus comes to us with his sure promise of forgiveness after we have sinned to assure us that his payment is still valid for us. Jesus comes to us with his true body and blood again and again to assure us that he has not rejected us for our sins, but rather forgives us.

Friends, our Savior did not give up on us and will not give up on us. There are many in our communities who outwardly reject the only Savior. Let us not give up on bringing Jesus to them too.

Amen.