

Theme: The way of God's Kingdom and Word causes scandal and offense to many, but God calls His people to continue to proclaim the Gospel of the Kingdom and minister to push back the kingdom of darkness.

I. Intro - Erick Oklahoma on Route 66

- A. Photo of the mural of Roger Miller & Sheb Wooley
- B. They are famous and celebrated now, but usually on the way up such stars are 'getting above their raising!'
- C. We see this in Jesus' return to Nazareth

II. Rejection at Nazareth

- A. Jesus returns to his hometown of Nazareth to teach
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, that he even does miracles! Mk 6:1-2
 - 1. Jesus returns to his hometown (Nazareth)
 - 2. On Sabbath, He goes to the synagogue as always!
 - 3. He teaches - and as always the people are amazed!
 - a. We have seen this pattern many times in Mark
 - b. A new note - where did He get this wisdom?
 - c. He was not formally trained by a famous rabbi!
 - d. How can Jesus be so wise to teach like this?
 - 4. He also has a band of disciples - now He is the Rabbi and Master!
 - 5. They have also heard of all the miracles He has done and marvel at this.
 - 6. It sounds like this is going to be a triumphant return!

- B. A surprising twist: Nazareth is offended and rejects Him
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.
Mark 6:3

1. The humble human origins of Jesus

- a. He is not a rabbi - he is just a carpenter!
- b. He is not from an important family - we know them!
- c. We know his mother, brothers, and sisters!
- d. He did not get His wisdom from His family or trade - so how can this be? How can this mighty tree have come from such a small mustard seed?

2. Nazareth is offended and scandalized by Jesus

- a. Rather than rejoicing, they are offended/scandalized
- b. σκανδαλίζω - cause to stumble, fall; shock

As it is written: "See, I lay in Zion a stone that causes men to stumble and a rock that **makes them fall**, and the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame." Romans 9:33

- 1. Isaiah 28:16 prophesied that God's Stone would scandalize, bring offense, and people would stumble
- 2. This is the way of the Messiah and His Kingdom - it seems so ordinary that men reject it, and then they are scandalized and offended by its claims.
- 3. Those who refuse to trust and submit to God, His Word, and His Kingdom will often be offended by them.

Aware that his disciples were grumbling about this, Jesus said to them, "Does this **offend** you? Jn 6:61

- 1. Jesus' teaching offended the multitudes and they left
- 2. The disciples were grumbling and Jesus confronts them - will they be scandalized by the Messiah, His Kingdom, His methods?

But since they have no root, they last only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, they quickly **fall away**. Mark 4:17

1. Some “stumble/are shocked/scandalized” by the rejection of the Word & the persecution that follows
2. We want a God and Word that brings respect and power, but God’s ways and Word bring humility and persecution.

We preach Christ crucified: a **stumbling block** to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, ²⁴ but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. 1 Corinthians 1:23–24

1. The preaching of the cross is offensive foolishness to the unregenerate - and if disciples are not careful it can become a cause of embarrassment and offense to them as well!
2. But if we learn from Jesus, rather than being a foolish, weak scandal and offense, the cross is the wise, powerful, beautiful means of salvation!

3. The reaction of Nazareth to Jesus and His Word is a picture of the response of humanity at large to the proclamation of the Word of the Kingdom - it offends and scandalizes them.

C. Jesus’ Response To Being Rejected

Jesus said to them, “Only in his hometown, among his relatives and in his own house is a prophet without honor.” ⁵ He could not do any miracles there, except lay his hands on a few sick people and heal them. ⁶ And he was amazed at their lack of faith. Mark 6:4–6

1. He gives a proverbial saying about honor
2. Very similar to ‘familiarity breeds contempt’
3. They are offended because Jesus is exceeding His humble origins - He is gettin’ above His raising!

4. Jesus shows this familiarity in ever smaller circles - hometown, relatives, own house!
5. These people had longed for Messiah - but their familiarity with the actual Messiah has led them to be offended and scandalized!
6. Interestingly, Jesus does not do miracles because of their lack of faith!
7. Once again we see that God does not operate according to human standards! He will not meet their demands so that they can believe - for He has already done everything that was needed - and they have refused to believe!
8. The people of Nazareth see only a carpenter, only a son of Mary, only another one of the village children who has grown up and returned for a visit. If only God were less ordinary and more unique, then they would believe. The servant image of the Son is too prosaic to garner credulity. God has identified too closely with the world for the world to behold him, too closely with the town of Nazareth for it to recognize in Jesus the Son of God. Humanity wants something other than what God gives. The greatest obstacle to faith is not the failure of God to act but the unwillingness of the human heart to accept the God who condescends to us in only a carpenter, the son of Mary. James R. Edwards
9. The problem in Nazareth was not with Jesus, His Word, or His power - it was the stubborn refusal of the people to abandon their false desires and expectations and embrace the reality of God, His kingdom, and His Word.
10. This time Jesus is amazed - at their lack of faith!

III. Resurgence In the Other Villages

A. Jesus resumes teaching from village to village

And he was amazed at their lack of faith. Then Jesus went around teaching from village to village. Mark 6:6

1. Jesus does not let the rejection at Nazareth suspend His ministry!
2. Nazareth was unreceptive soil - so He simply continues to spread seed elsewhere!
3. This is what He taught in the parables over and over - most seed is rejected and unfruitful but He must continue sowing!

B. The mission surges forward - sending out the disciples

Calling the Twelve to him, he sent them out two by two and gave them authority over evil spirits. Mark 6:7

1. Far from being deterred by the rejection and offense others took, Jesus expands the mission!
2. He had called the disciples to that they would be with Him and He could send them out to preach, drive out demons, and heal the sick - and now He does just that! (See verses 12-13)
3. By situating these two incidents at this point in his Gospel the evangelist shows that unbelief is the context in which the Christian mission advances and that rejection is an experience common to the Lord and the Church. (William Lane)
4. The mission of proclaiming God's Kingdom and pushing back spiritual darkness does not depend upon the response of others but rather the command of God!

C. The disciples' actions (**After Hours - commission**)

They went out and preached that people should repent.
¹³ They drove out many demons and anointed many sick people with oil and healed them. Mark 6:12-13

1. The apostles fulfilled their commission - proclaim the Word, drive out demons, and heal the sick.
2. Right on the heels of the rejection at Nazareth the Kingdom surges forward, as the disciples of Jesus engage in spiritual warfare through Word and deed.
3. We will also pick up on this in the next section

IV. Applying the Word

A. Responding to the scandal of Jesus, His Word, & cross

1. Jesus, His Word, and His cross were a scandal and offense in His town, in the 1st century - and today!
2. Jesus and the Gospel did not meet the desires and expectations of many in that day - and now!
3. But the problem was never Jesus, His Kingdom, and His Gospel - it is our expectations, desires, and demands.
4. Many of us examine God and His Word looking for things we judge as unacceptable, but in reality God and His Word are the judge examining us!
5. Have you truly embraced Christ in faith - or like the people of Nazareth have you judged Him and demanded He conform to your expectations?
6. As a believer, I am tempted to two extremes because of the scandal of Jesus, His Word, and Cross

- a. When others are offended, we become offensive
 - 1. The Word of God and the Cross are offensive to sinful humans - we are not to be offensive in our behavior!
 - 2. The natural human tendency is to mirror the behavior of others - if they speak and act harshly - I will one-up them!
 - 3. Example: James and John in Samaria Luke 9:51-56 - let's call fire from heaven! Jesus rebukes them!
 - 4. We can never proclaim Christ by being unChristlike in our behavior! We can never push back the kingdom of darkness by words or actions that are more like the Kingdom of darkness than the kingdom of light.

- b. When others are offended, we compromise
 - 1. When others reject Jesus and the Gospel, and especially if they take offense, we are tempted to stop proclaiming God's Word.
 - 2. Even worse, I can be tempted to compromise my beliefs and behavior to be accepted by others.
 - 3. Compromising on the Word of God always leads to pain and destruction down the road.
 - 4. Example: Church in Thyatira Revelation 2:18-25 - compromising with "Jezebel", sexual immorality, idols - Jesus will cast on a bed of suffering, strike her children dead, etc.
 - 5. To be salt and light, we must remain distinct from the unbelieving world, and this will inevitably bring conflict. But if we compromise, we are abandoning people to the kingdom of darkness.

- 7. Which of these is the temptation for me right now?
- 8. The path of life and blessing is to be in the world but not of it, to sow seed, endure rejection, and keep sowing the seed. This is where life and blessing are found!

- 9. Remember 1 Corinthians 1:22-24
 Jews demand miraculous signs and Greeks look for wisdom, ²³ but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, ²⁴ but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. 1 Corinthians 1:22-24
- 10. When rejection comes do not take offense nor compromise - surge forward in mission!

B. The Table

- 1. The Table shows this same pattern!
- 2. Jesus would not compromise on God's Truth and was rejected and crushed!
- 3. But Jesus' blood speaks a better word than the blood of Abel, for it pleads for us!
- 4. Come receive grace and forgiveness!
- 5. Come cry out for the Spirit to empower us so that we might live and minister faithfully!

Rejection and Resurgence

Mark 6:1-13
 June 11, 2023
 Communion

1 Corinthians 15:58

Teaching keywords: Evangelism and missions; Kingdom of God; Christology; faith

Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain. 1 Corinthians 15:58

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, that he even does miracles! 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, “Only in his hometown, among his relatives and in his own house is a prophet without honor.” ⁵ He could not do any miracles there, except lay his hands on a few sick people and heal them.

⁶And he was amazed at their lack of faith.

Then Jesus went around teaching from village to village. ⁷ Calling the Twelve to him, he sent them out two by two and gave them authority over evil spirits. ⁸ These were his instructions: “Take nothing for the journey except a staff — no bread, no bag, no money in your belts. ⁹ Wear sandals but not an extra tunic. ¹⁰ Whenever you enter a house, stay there until you leave that town. ¹¹ And if any place will not welcome you or listen to you, shake the dust off your feet when you leave, as a testimony against them.”

¹² They went out and preached that people should repent. ¹³ They drove out many demons and anointed many sick people with oil and healed them. Mark 6:1–13