



Lesson 7 July 17th, 2020

The Wisdom of Jesus

Study Scripture – Mark 6:1-6

Background Scripture – Mark 6

Key Verse:

And when the Sabbath day was come, he began to teach in the synagogue: and many hearing him were astonished, saying, From whence hath this man these things? And what wisdom is this which is given unto him, that even such mighty works are wrought by his hands?

Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James, Joses, and of Jada, and Simon? And are not his sisters here with us? And they were offended at him.

Mark 6:2 & 3b

INTRODUCTION

Our Lesson Study today focuses on several important issues which have to do with the nature of life, the inability to see the truth and to cope with the issues of life properly, the weaknesses of the minds of people in the world, and man's general impotence.

Our focus therefore should really be on the critically important issue of belief and unbelief.

The most important decision that has to be made has to do with the acceptance or rejection of Christ or those that carry His word to the world. Every one of us is faced with having to stay where we are in the flesh and led by the flesh, or to listen to the call of the Holy Spirit who is exposing us to the ways of wisdom every single day.

We note first that you are looking at the events surrounding a second visit of Jesus to His hometown. We have been told previously where Jesus, His mother and His brothers, his family or friends, had on an earlier visit nearby “**went out to seize him**”. They thought that Jesus’ claims and work was so outlandish that He was “beside himself”. We read of this in Mark 3:21-35.

So the question comes to mind immediately about the identity of Jesus. We have heard about the opinions of secular rulers, religious authorities, the crowd that followed Him, the disciples, and family members. So after this study you will have to make or take some position as to who Jesus was.

The rather strange thing is that our Study is set in the context of Jesus' demonstration of His mighty power on both sides of the Sea of Galilee. He had done great things on the Eastern

Gentiles side and on the Western Jewish side and both Gentiles and Jews were amazed according to Mark 5. So when Jesus decided on this second visit to His hometown this was after amazing and great demonstrations of His power.

No one would have expected anything else but that the people in Jesus' hometown would have been proud of Him and would therefore have welcomed Him with open arms with a ticker tape parade. They should have welcomed Him with balloons floating and choirs singing and elaborate signs all over the place. All kinds of things should be done so that He would feel comfortable and all kind of miracles of healing done to benefit those that were sick in the village.

It is estimated that there were probably between 500 to 2,000 people in the village and its environs and so everybody knew everybody.

But we should also pay attention to the fact that in many communities there is a social system where everybody's status was fixed and when you were born it was determined who you were and who you would always be. If your family was considered to be honourable you would be honoured. If there was shame in your family, you would inherit the shame. So there would be negative perceptions of people because of their identification.

Note is a serious matter for Christians today tend to do exactly that. They do not, even though they will sing that we are all one in Christ, behave as if we are really are all one in Christ. So the same setup continues, and determinations made based on people's education, their family heritage, how they speak, the school they went to, their skin color, and on all kinds of other rather foolish things that are rather offensive to God. If a member of the church is considered to be of a low status manual labourer type, God help him or her. It is highly likely that they will never be given a senior position in the church.

But let us consider that that is not really the will or the way of God. The Holy Spirit will choose people and things that the world rejects as unworthy and elevate them. But though we know all the Scripture verses on that matter we simply generally ignore them. So maybe we are not much better than the people in Nazareth, Jesus' hometown.

This story is therefore written for us to examine ourselves and make the necessary changes under the direction of the Holy Spirit.

So then what do you think Jesus is and what does that make you? One writer makes a wise comment as he looks at our claim to be "in Christ":

"Does it mean new allegiances that supersede traditional country and family values? As you answer those questions, Mark is leading you into a confession of faith".

The context to this event therefore is of an amazing demonstration of power. Jesus had been approached by the ruler of a synagogue who had overcome his pride and the possible attacks on him, because he feared that his beloved young daughter would die. So he came, ignored



what people would say, fell down at Jesus' feet and begged Him to come to his home and heal his daughter. On the way we are told about the famous miracle of a woman with a flow of blood for 12 years and who had suffered tremendously and who had secretly she thought touched the hem of His garment and was healed. Jesus complimented her using a term for her not used elsewhere, and told her ***“Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace and be healed of your disease”***.

Then Jesus went on the journey to Jairus' house and when He found that the young girl had died, Jesus raised her from the dead.

So let us remember the tremendous pressure Jesus was under. Remember that earlier than this, Jesus' family member had travelled from Nazareth to Capernaum on the shores of Galilee and tried to rescue Him from the controversy Jesus had been involved in. So we should look with interest at what would happen as He went to Nazareth with His disciples. What kind of reception would He receive?

Note that Jesus was at the peak of His popularity. He had done and was doing great miracles. The crowds were following Him. People came to Him from everywhere.

This seemed to some to be a mark of success. People will think you are successful if you have a great following. But according to Mark this was a hindrance to Jesus' ministry, and He would soon have to stop speaking plainly to the crowd and speak in parable to them.

Remember therefore that popularity often awakens opposition. It led to physical exhaustion and Jesus had to retreat and rest across the Sea of Galilee. It led to a dimming of the light that He brought for the people were fickle in their response. Some even asked Him to leave their country when He healed the man with the demons and cast the demons out.

Note that Jesus always behaved wisely in every circumstance He faced, and we will see this in His visit to His hometown. We will learn from these what to expect from people. There will be some who would treat Messiah and His representatives with respect and honour, but there will be others, maybe the majority, that would be opposed to the presentation of the truth. So don't be surprised when you get the cold shoulder.

TEXT

Verse 1.

In the opening of this verse it indicates that Jesus left the neighbourhood of Capernaum and Christ made a visit to His own country, that is to say Nazareth; where He was educated, where He grew up with His family, and as such, He had a regard for and was willing it should partake of the benefit of His doctrine and miracles.. This is not a reference to where He was born.

At this point, it is important to know that Jesus faced some hostility with those people of Nazareth, from Him being despised as a carpenter and also due to the fact that His family was



not wealthy by any stretch of the imagination, but was possibly amongst the poorest, but more importantly due to the fact that He had obviously started His ministry at this point and was at time teaching in the synagogues (Luke 4:29).

This verse also makes mention of the disciples. At this point it is known that they had left everything to follow Jesus, and so went everywhere He went, which is a true characteristic of a disciple of Jesus.

As Christians we should already take note that if Jesus faced adversity with those He grew up with because of how He followed the Word of God, then we too shall at times face something very similar from those who are closest to us. But as Jesus did we must stay the course and do as God wills us to do.

The lesson for the disciples is clear. How far will we go for Christ? Will we really leave all to follow Him, or only do what is convenient at times? As Christians we will mature in the Spirit, so we don't have to worry about the mistakes we make along the way as we travel that path, but in opening ourselves to the Spirit this will allow us to understand what and how God wishes us to proceed in our lives to glorify His name.

Verse 2.

Nazareth was a different experience to Jesus, different from the other places He had gone, as we can see already that there seems to be no crowds of people flocking to Him, but He had to go to the synagogue to meet with the people. This already speaks to the attitude of the people in Nazareth and how they felt about Jesus, the man. It is clear they did not see Him as any great teacher and clearly not as the Messiah, or they would have sought Him out like people in other places. So know from this we should reject the many fanciful tales of what Jesus did when He was growing up.

As the Bible mentioned, He preached in their synagogue on the Sabbath day. He most likely came into town on some other day in the week, but remained without making Himself known. This implies that there had been no opportunity of preaching till they came together on the Sabbath day. However, when He did, he expounded a portion of the Scripture with great clarity.

As a minimum, the takeaway from this is that in religious assemblies, on Sabbath days the word of God is to be preached according to Christ's example. We give glory to God by receiving instruction from Him. We should as Christians constantly be asking ourselves, what do we do on the Sabbath day, or when we go to *church*? Is our conduct one that glorifies God? If it is not, we should take the opportunity to correct it, as it is part of our testimony to God.

Now we get into the truth about the perceptions of people closest to Jesus and how they saw Him in His duty to the Almighty God. It serves as an important lesson to Christians as when those of us who are called to a particular task to serve God, we too might face similar expressions of emotions from people who grew up with us, who might see us different from the way how strangers see us when we engage in the Word of God.



In His hometown, Jesus faced a crowd that wondered how He became so powerful in both word and works. Jesus left Nazareth as a carpenter. He came back as a rabbi, complete with a group of disciples. It isn't hard to see how the Nazareth locals would wonder, "What happened to Jesus?"

Despite their feelings about who Jesus of Nazareth was, they could not deny the very honourable fact about Him, that He spoke with great wisdom, demonstrated in His skill of explaining Scripture, the doctrine which He taught, and the miracles He worked. The wonder they felt arose from knowing Him from the beginning: He had lived long among them, had been employed in servile work, and they knew He had no learned education, which could only mean that this wisdom was given to Him,

The wisdom He spoke, that was given to Him and the mighty works that He did with His own hands were confirmation of the doctrine He taught. The people acknowledged the two great proofs of the divine origins of His gospel; the divine wisdom that appeared in the contrivance of it, and the divine power that was exerted for the ratifying and recommending of it; and yet, they could not deny the premises, they could not admit the conclusion.

From the simple to the complex, God has provided us, Christians and then others with all they need for salvation, but yet we still with all the proof and help, we deny God. This is the effect of the sin Jesus came to overcome within us all, to redeem us back to God.

We must remember that the Scriptures had predicted that the Messiah would come from humble roots for the root of Jesse would be reduced to a stump. Scriptures had also predicted exactly what Messiah the Servant of Jehovah would do. Jesus was doing exactly what Scriptures had predicted. So it should not be a great stretch to say that Jesus was Messiah. In addition these people would most likely have heard the testimony of John the Baptist.

But clearly it is true what one writer summed up as he looked at the entire account. He said: **"Limited views means limited lives. That is, if your view of life is so narrow and crabbed, so withered and shrunken as to include nothing but what you can see and feel and taste and smell and hear and reason, then your life is going to be horribly deprived and poverty stricken"**.

Verse 3.

So we are warned not to let foolishness and the root of bitterness spring up in us. Our view of life must not be limited to what is **"under the sun"** for wisdom tells us that is not what is right.

Note though that they ask the right questions.

Where did this man get all this?

What is this wisdom given to him?

What is it that such miracles as these are performed by His hands?



These are the right questions. But note that the answers that they gave to their own questions are extremely and horribly limited.

They (this might be more applied to the leadership in the synagogue in Nazareth) studied to disparage Him, and to raise prejudices in the minds of people against Him, notwithstanding.

All this wisdom, and all these mighty works, shall be of no value because He had a home education, had never travelled, nor been at any university, or bred up at the feet of any of their doctors.

This is clear by the people making the statement, *Is not this the Carpenter?* This was not meant as a compliment. In Matthew, they upbraid Him with being the carpenter's son, His supposed father Joseph being of that trade. Our Lord Jesus, it is probable, employed Himself in that business with His father, before He entered upon His public ministry, at least, sometimes in journey-work.

He would thus humble Himself, and make Himself of no reputation, as one that had taken upon Him the form of a servant, and came to minister. Consider how low our Redeemer did stoop, when He came to redeem us out of our low estate.

He has taught us to abhor idleness, and to find ourselves something to do in this world. A subtle lesson taught is that we should just not seek to take up with just mean and laborious employments, for the sake of livelihood, as it will inevitably lead to us indulging ourselves in sloth. But consider employment with purpose and allow us the opportunity for growth. Nothing is more pernicious for young people than to get a habit of sauntering. The Jews had a good rule for this—that their young men who were designed for scholars, were yet bred up to some trade. Paul was a tent-maker, that they might have some business to fill up their time with, and, if need were, to get their bread with.

He would thus put an honour upon despised mechanics, and encourage those who eat the labour of their hands, though great men look upon them with contempt.

The word carpenter was actually much broader than just one who works with wood. It had the idea of “a builder.” Jesus may have worked with stone as much as with wood, because stone was a much more common building material in that time and place.

It is wonderful to think that our Lord, of all the professions He could have been in, chose to be a carpenter. God is a builder, and He knows how to build in our lives, and He knows how to finish the job.

A few things Jesus learned as a carpenter:

- He learned that there is a lot of potential in a log.
- He learned it takes work and time to make something useable.
- He learned that the finest things are made from the hardest wood.



So for them in Nazareth, He couldn't be this powerful a man. He didn't deserve that position. So note what they did. As one writer said

“They took refuge in that final resort of all weak and small minds -- they ridiculed him. They took offense at him, and begun to discount all he had done and said: “He can't be anything, because we know him. We know his beginnings, his family, where he came from”.

But it is important to know that they did not know Him. They did not know the Scriptures. They did not know the Messiah even when everything was staring them in the face.

They were in fact demonstrating all that there is in fallen human nature.

The Son of Mary: This also was not a compliment. ***“The additional phrase ‘the son of Mary’ is probably disparaging. It was contrary to Jewish usage to describe a man as the son of his mother, even when she was a widow, except in insulting terms. Rumors to the effect that Jesus was illegitimate appear to have circulated in his own lifetime and may lie behind this reference as well.” (Lane)***

Yet another thing they upbraided Him with, was, the meanness of His relations; "He is the son of Mary; his brethren and sisters are here with us; we know his family and kindred;" and therefore, though they were astonished at His doctrine (v. 2), yet they were offended at His person (v. 3), were prejudiced against Him, and looked upon Him with contempt; and for that reason would not receive His doctrine, though ever so well recommended.

What might have been the outcome if they had not known His pedigree? Should that have mattered, hearing the message? Obstinate unbelief will ever want excuses. Shouldn't they have known the pedigree of Messiah?

The lack of mention of Joseph perhaps implies that he died when Jesus was young; Jesus probably stayed at home to support His family until the youngest children were old enough to support the family.

His sisters: We know that Jesus had brothers (Mark 3:31), but now we also learn that He had sisters.

Mary did not remain a virgin after she gave birth to Jesus.

They might even be implying that Jesus' brethren and sisters were ***“here with us”***, rather than being with Him and His disciples. If His own family members who knew Him best were not following Him, maybe He was not all He was made out to be. His family situation served as evidence against Him.

And they were offended at Him: These neighbors of Jesus were “too familiar” with Jesus. They knew little enough about Him to think that they knew everything about Him. They were foolish. They did not follow the ways of wisdom, understanding, and instruction given by Scripture.



Verse 4.

How did Jesus bear this contempt? He partly excused it, as a common thing, and what might be expected, though not reasonably or justly. A prophet is not despised anywhere but in his own country. There may be some exceptions to this rule and although many have gotten over this prejudice, the saying holds good, that ministers are seldom so acceptable and successful in their own neighbourhood, city or even country as amongst strangers. It seems more often than not, familiarity in the younger years breeds contempt, the advancement of one that was an inferior begets envy, and men will hardly set those among the guides of their souls whose fathers they were ready to set with the dogs of their flock. In such a case therefore it must not be thought hard, it is common treatment, it was Christ's, and wisdom is profitable to direct to other soil.

Jesus accepted rejection as the price a faithful prophet must pay, though it must have hurt Him badly to be rejected by friends and neighbors. Jesus had the model of the prophets like Moses, David, Isaiah, Jeremiah and all the prophets who were rejected by their own people.

As implied, every Christian must expect that this treatment is possible close to home, but we still have our duty to God to perform as Jesus did.

The important thing to note though is that while the people of Nazareth held onto a flawed picture of Jesus though what was clearly emerging was a picture of a powerful Messiah, Jesus refused to submit to this flawed conception of the people of Nazareth and He submitted only to the assessment of His heavenly Father and what He thought of Him. Jesus certainly did not bother Himself and confine Himself to their conception of Him.

So what then should we do when we are faced with a situation like that where people want to bend us to their flawed conception of what a believer in Christ should be? Should we behave like them? Should we behave to meet their expectations? Should we want to feel safe and appear to be what they want you to be or should you challenge them and their view of the world?

What does wisdom say? You certainly would understand that they would like to honour strangers more than Messiah. Jesus warned us that when false Messiah came people probably would flock to them. They may even have no problem following Anti-Christ. So we understand that familiarity does breed contempt and that people's fallen nature will steer them toward foolishness and away from the ways of wisdom. So we must treat them wisely and not stop carrying out the mission of the Lord.

We have to make people understand that their faith in Jesus is the only thing that will make them whole.



He did some good among them, notwithstanding the slights they put upon Him, for He is kind even to the evil and unthankful. His work was however limited in this climate of unbelief. In this sense, Jesus' power was limited by the unbelief of His countrymen.

This was in respect to God's principle of partnership with man. God may work with **no** belief, but not with *unbelief*.

Verse 5.

It is a strange expression, as if unbelief tied the hands of omnipotence itself. He would have done as many miracles there as He had done elsewhere, but He would not, because people would not make application to Him, nor sue for His favours. He could have wrought more miracles than He had done, but they forfeited the honour of having them wrought for them.

By unbelief and contempt of Christ men stop the **current** of His favours to them, and put a bar in their own door.

Despite all that transpired, He laid his hands upon a few sick folks, and healed them. Jesus is generous. This characteristic or virtue is becoming to the followers of Christ, who content themselves with the pleasure and satisfaction of doing good, though they be unjustly denied the praise of it.

Consider Genesis 19:22; and even it is said of God Himself for whom it was said, "So that the Lord could no longer bear, because of your evil doings," Jeremiah 44:22. Not but that He could if He would, but He would not; nor was it fit and proper that He should; the same is the sense here: besides, in Matthew 13:58 it is said, "He did not many mighty works there", He did not think it proper to do any of any great consequence, nor did He.

Wherefore no Jew or Gentile have reason to object to this doctrine of the divinity of Christ, as if there was a want of power in Him.

Christ is omnipotent, and He has given proof of His Almighty power, by the miracles which He has done and though He did no mighty work "there," yet He has done many elsewhere, which sufficiently attest the truth of His proper deity.

The emphasis lies upon the word there; though He did not work any considerable miracle in that place, He did in others; which shows, that it was not a defect of power in Him, that was the reason of it, but something else; and Matthew gives the reason of it, and says, it was "because of their unbelief". Their unbelief was not an over match for His power; He could have removed that if He had thought fit, but He did not do it; He, who is the author and finisher of faith, could have took away their unbelief, as the man that brought his dumb child to Christ, concluded He could; and therefore said to Him, "Lord, help my unbelief," Mark 9:24.

Christ sometimes required of the persons He was about to heal, faith in Him that He could heal them; and so did His apostles, Matthew 9:28. Not that faith contributed anything to the cure, but it was the way and means in which Christ was pleased to communicate His healing virtue:



besides, when persons applied to Him for healing, and expressed their faith in Him, it gave Him an opportunity of working a miracle for that purpose; but now these people did not so much as ask such a favour of Him, and so gave Him no occasion of doing any mighty work; for which reason it may be said, He could not, no opportunity offering: and moreover, seeing they disbelieved Him, and rejected Him as the Messiah, they were unworthy of having any done among them.

They had remained impenitent and unbelieving, as He knew they would; these would have been aggravations of their condemnation. Their punishment would be worst for that.

Verse 6.

Jesus was amazed at their unbelief. Our inability to believe God and trust Him is indeed amazing.

Jesus only marveled at Jewish unbelief and Gentile faith (Luke 7:9), and the woman at Samaria. Would Jesus marvel at your faith or your unbelief?

“Unbelief must needs be a monstrous sin, that puts Christ to the marvel.” (Trapp)

We never read that Jesus marveled at art or architecture or even the wonders of creation. He never marveled at human ingenuity or invention. He didn't marvel at the piety of the Jewish people or the military dominance of the Roman Empire. But Jesus did marvel at faith; when it was present in an unexpected place, and when it was absent from where it should have been.

Jesus did not let this rejection by His countrymen debilitate Him. Jesus got on with the business of teaching and ministry.

As we see with Jesus, if we cannot do good where we would, we must do it where we can, and be glad if we may have any opportunity, though only in the villages, towns or cities, of serving Christ and souls. Sometimes the gospel of Christ finds better reception in the country towns or poorer neighbourhoods where there is less wealth, and pomp, and mirth, and subtlety, than in the populous cities.

CONCLUSION

How do you form your impressions of people and arrive at what you can expect from them? Sometimes we can too easily make our assessments.

Do you do the same thing with Jesus?

Do you think that you are so familiar with Him that you can arrive at a final opinion of Him? Some form an opinion of Jesus based on what they have been taught, others base their opinion on what they have learned, or what they have experienced. They like the people in Nazareth think that they understand everything about Jesus and have Him pegged.



In so doing we are behaving exactly like those people in Nazareth because we form an opinion of Him so that we can safely make our way into the world, getting help from Him when we want it and keeping Him at arm's length when we don't want it.

If you are serious about Jesus and want to follow Him a good start is by admitting that your knowledge of who Jesus is, is incomplete even though you think you are familiar with Him. If you think you are really familiar with Him that will keep you from embracing more of who He really is and what He's doing in your life and in the world.

So reject your defence mechanisms and give up your old version of who Jesus really is and what He's doing. He knows that your old version of Him is probably not correct anyway and at best is certainly incomplete. Jesus will never conform Himself to your flawed and incomplete picture of Himself. He simply wants to help you to grow in your understanding of Him.

You might think that you have been saved and therefore you have total familiarity with Him and of His relationship with you, but you are certainly wrong. One writer comments and this comment will benefit you:

Many confine Jesus to the pages of history and allow him no influence over their lives. Some, in support of unbelief, point to all of those who were reared in the church but walked away from faith. If those who should know Jesus best, like his own family members (in the first century) and people reared in the church (today), shun him, then many conclude that he is not worth their time. Others, while believing him to be dead and buried acknowledge his wisdom like the people of His hometown and may even embrace parts of his teaching. Still others believe that God raised Jesus from the dead and submit their lives to his leadership ... For all of us who want to follow Jesus, we have to admit that our knowledge of him is incomplete, no matter how familiar we are with him. Sometimes, our familiarity with him keeps us from embracing more of who he really is and what he really is doing in our lives and in the world. We may even, like the people of his hometown, take offense at him-- or at least at the fuller picture of him that is emerging, and do all we can, when our defence mechanisms kick in, to hold on to our old version of who he is and what he's doing....

So let us be careful. We can't really see all that is in the vastness of God's vision. We will see things that appear to be a roadblock, things that bring crises in our faith. But when we are confronted with these what is our choice? Do we abandon Him, or do we seek to understand Him more fully?

So we will encourage you to seek a fuller understanding of who Jesus is. We will certainly be rewarded with many thrills when we follow Jesus into this world and into the new ways that He opens up for us.

So let us meditate on who Jesus is.



Let us remember the great things, the amazing things that He has done when He was on earth. Let us remember the great and amazing things that the Apostles achieved in their ministry and the things that have been done by many of His followers subsequently.

Let us remember the many things that Jesus has done in our lives so that we will not develop knees that knock and become weak. So we are exhorted to

“Strengthen the hands which hang down, and the feeble knee, and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be dislocated, but rather be healed”.

The old song writer reminds us to

“Count your blessings, name them one by one, and it will surprise you what the Lord has done”.

