

# Discussion Guide

WEEK OF 04.28.24

Series: Gospel of Mark

Text: Mark 6:1-29

**How to use this guide:** This discussion guide is designed to help you facilitate a conversation around the Bible text. Begin your discussion with prayer. Then, read this week's passage. Next, work through some of the questions together. The goal is not to ask every question, but to have a good, free-flowing discussion. Do your best to ask at least one question from each section (introduction, understanding, and application), but beyond that, let the Holy Spirit guide your conversation. Also, if you heard some point from the sermon that you'd like to discuss, feel free to add that to your group's discussion.

## QUESTIONS FOR INTRODUCTION

In the Hebrew family, the primary sources of spiritual, moral and educational values were the family who practiced and taught the Mosaic Law to their children and the place of worship.

1. How has your family influenced your current spiritual, moral and educational values?

### READ MARK 6: 1-6

1. In what three ways did the people in Jesus' hometown of Nazareth show their resistance to Jesus?
2. What did this group of people "know" about Jesus that people in other towns wouldn't have known? What impact might this have had on their disbelief?
3. Read Matthew 12:48-50. How does this scene in Nazareth (Mark 6:1-6) relate to Jesus' statement about His true family in Matthew 12?
4. Seeing the critical nature of the people of Nazareth toward Jesus, what can we learn from this passage about nurturing the Spiritual growth and leadership within our church?

### READ MARK 6: 7-12

1. What was the advantage of Jesus sending the disciples out? What can we learn from this?
2. Why did Jesus send the disciples out in pairs? Why do you think they were to go out with so little equipment?
3. Jesus' instructions had Biblical roots. What Scriptures support these instructions? Ex: Phil 4:19 and Duet 17:6. What other Scripture can be applied to accomplishing the mission God has given you?
4. What was the content of the disciples' sermons as they went out teaching? How can you apply Jesus' instructions to your ministry?

### READ MARK 6: 13-29

1. If this passage was a movie, what rating would you give it and why?
2. What does this passage say is the reason for John's imprisonment? Although there were several people involved in John's death, who do you consider the most responsible? Why?
3. John dared to stand up for what's right. When it comes to standing up for what's right, what do you do? Or when it comes to living a life that is obedient to God's Word, what do you do?

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

1. What did you learn from today's passages about God and your relationship to Him?

## QUESTIONS FOR UNDERSTANDING

## QUESTIONS FOR APPLICATION

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## COMMENTARY

## MARK 6:1-29

**6:1-2.** Jesus' hometown was Nazareth. The words "He began to teach" assume Jesus was invited to do so. Unlike Luke (Lk 4:16-21), Mark did not focus on the content of Jesus' teaching. In Galilee Jesus regularly taught (Mk 1:21-22,39) or performed miracles (1:23-28,39; 3:1-6) in the synagogues. After His rejection at Nazareth, there is no record of Jesus entering a synagogue again. Synagogues are only mentioned again in Mark as places of hypocrisy and persecution (12:39; 13:9). As was true in Capernaum (1:22), people in Nazareth were astonished by Jesus' teaching.

**6:3.** This is the only place in the NT where Jesus is called a carpenter. The parallel in Mt 13:55 reads, "Isn't this the carpenter's son?" Luke 4:22 has, "Isn't this Joseph's son?" A carpenter was a craftsman in wood and stone. Son of Mary may hint at Jesus' supposed illegitimacy or indicate that Joseph had died (no mention is made of him in verse 4 or elsewhere in Mark but see John 6:42). When Jesus was young child, the Galilean city of Sepphoris, just four miles from Nazareth, was burned to the ground. Herod Antipas, tetrarch of Galilee, immediately set to rebuild the city. Because of the scarcity of trees in the area, it is very likely that Jesus worked with stone and learned the business of his earthly father, Joseph, who at this point, had probably passed away.

This is the only time Jesus' mother is mentioned by name in Mark. Jesus' brother James later became leader of the Jerusalem church and was killed on orders from the high priest in a.d. 62 (Josephus, Ant., 20.9.1). He authored the book of James. Judas probably was the author of the book of Jude. Joseph ("Joseph") and Simon are not named again in the NT (but see Jn 2:12; 7:5; Ac 1:14; 1Co 9:5). Jesus' sisters are not named, but the plural indicates He had more than one. As in other settings, Jesus' hearers were amazed, but theirs was amazed disbelief rather than a realization leading to belief. They had no explanation for Jesus' wisdom and miraculous powers. But whatever the explanation, they would not consider the truth. Instead, the crowd questioned Jesus' authority (v. 2), made disparaging remarks about His background (v. 3), and demonstrated a lack of faith (v. 6).

The people of Nazareth grew up with Jesus. They knew His parents and they knew Him as a boy. In part because of the puzzle Jesus represented in these people's minds, they would not believe Him. However, they could not honestly dismiss Him. In their confusion, they became angry, looking for someone to blame for their uncomfortable mental state. Familiarity truly did breed contempt.

**6:4.** Jesus used this self-applied proverb elsewhere (Jn 4:44). In Mark's version (cp. parallels in Mt 13:57; Lk 4:24) Jesus named three settings where a prophet is dishonored—in his hometown, among his relatives (referring to 3:20-21,31-35), and in his household.

**6:5-6.** Matthew treats He was not able not as a statement about limitations of power but as a statement of fact ("He did not do," Mt 13:58). The reason was the people's unbelief. Previously they were astonished at Jesus (v. 2). In an ironic twist, Mark alone ended the narrative (cp. Lk 4:25-30) with Jesus being amazed at them. What amazed Him was their "lack of faith." The people of Nazareth did not refer to Jesus by name but only as "this man," a sign of contempt. This is the third time Jesus went on a preaching circuit in Galilee (1:14,39).

**6:7.** He summoned the Twelve recalls 3:13. To send them out recalls 3:14. Authority over unclean spirits recalls 3:15. In pairs reflects common-sense wisdom (Eccl 4:9-10) and was Jesus' usual practice (Mk 11:1; 14:13; Lk 10:1), which was followed in the early church (Ac 8:14; 9:38; 11:30; 12:25; 13:2; 15:39-40). Jesus did not send out the disciples alone. He sent each one with a partner. This is most likely because the ministry can be joyful, exhausting, and often opposed. It is always helpful to have a partner with whom to share these experiences. A partner helps to keep us accountable, encouraged, and humble. The practice ensured companionship and mutual support, and it fulfilled the **OT requirement of two witnesses (Dt 17:6; 19:15; 2Co 13:1)**. Jesus was extremely specific when giving directions to the Twelve as He sent them out for ministry. They were not only to go out; they were to go out and do a specific thing in a specific way. It is clear from Jesus' instructions that the Twelve were to learn, among other things, the importance of complete dependence on God in their service. "The Twelve" are called "apostles" after they returned (Mk 6:30).

Since the ministry of the disciples was similar to Jesus' in every way, then they must have also shared the physical fatigue that accompanied such demanding ministry. As exhilarating as their ministry opportunities were, they were also undoubtedly draining.

**6:8-9.** According to Mark, the disciples were to take a walking stick... belts... sandals... shirt. These were the same items God told the Israelites to take on their departure from Egypt (Ex 12:11). Matthew and Luke's accounts prohibited the walking stick (Mt 10:10; Lk 9:3) and Matthew also forbade sandals (Mt 10:10; cp. Lk 10:4). According to Mark, they were not to take bread, a travel bag... money, or an extra shirt.

**6:10-11.** The disciples were to stay in one home until they left a given town and not look for better lodging. If they were not welcomed, they were to shake the dust off their feet. Jesus elaborated more on this when He sent out the 70 (Lk 10:10-11), and it was the practice of the earliest missionaries (Acts 13:51; cp. Ac 18:6). As a testimony against them can be rendered "as a witness to them," signifying a call to repentance (cp. Mk 1:44; 13:9).

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One reason that Jesus may have instructed His disciples to stay in the same house is so that they could concentrate on making disciples of those who received them. The disciples concentrated on making disciples of others so that after they left, the message of relationships, not numbers. Jesus also did not want the disciples to linger where they were not wanted. There were too many other villages that needed the message of salvation to stay in one that didn't welcome the gospel anyway. It is possible that we could learn a little about moving on from fruitless arguments in our own time.

**6:12-13.** That people should repent was the content of their preaching, modeling the messages of John the Baptist (1:4) and Jesus (1:15). The ministry of the Twelve is summarized as preaching and teaching (6:30), exorcism, and healing. Anointing... sick people with olive oil is mentioned only here, in a parable in Luke 10:34, and in James 5:14.

The disciples went out and preached a message that called on the people to repent of their sins. We might think that the disciples preached "Hellfire and Brimstone" sermons, and some of them might have! However, calling people to repentance means that we preach and teach that we have fallen short of God's glory, that each of us are sinners, and that repentance toward God is our only hope for redemption. This is as much of a mercy ministry as healing the sick or driving out demons, because repentance is the only way we can be in good standing with God. Like the disciples, if we preach repentance, we will experience opposition. Even if we are merciful in how we share the gospel and loving in how we present the truth about sin, people will be upset with us as they were with Jesus. However, if we persevere in faith and humility, the Holy Spirit can do great things through His church. Jesus made disciples and sent them out to multiply His ministry—the church should make that its goal as well.

The apostles took healing of spirit and body to the neighboring cities. They carried out the command of Jesus. They brought first a message of repentance, forgiveness of sins, and the need for the people to turn to God. The second message was that of physical healing. God cares for the total person—body and spirit. God frees his people from sin that leads to death, and he frees them from the physical infirmities and demons that haunt their bodies and souls. Physical infirmities, poverty, and starvation are part of Satan's dominion. Therefore, we do well to fight against Satan by taking care of people's physical needs as well as their spiritual needs.

**6:15** *Elijah.* People expected Elijah to prepare the way for the end (Mal 4:5-6). Some Jewish people, especially among those who were aristocrats, believed that prophets in the ancient sense had ceased, though many other Jews did follow the promises of those who acted like end time prophets.

**6:17.** *Because of Herodias.* For political reasons, Antipas had married the daughter of the powerful Nabatean king Aretas IV. Herod Antipas tried to win Herodias, though she was married to Antipas's half-brother Philip. When he wanted to marry Herodias, his brother's wife, Herodias insisted that she would not marry a polygamist. Antipas set out to divorce the Nabatean princess. She fled to her father; and as a result, a political feud between the two areas developed.

**6:18.** *Not lawful.* Prophets often called God's people back to God's law, in this case Lev 18:16; 20:21.

**6:19.** *Wanted to kill him.* Herodias's behavior here fits the depiction of her character by the Jewish historian Josephus.

**6:22.** Herodias's daughter, Salome, was probably between 12 to 14 years old, and was perhaps already betrothed or married to Philip the tetrarch, when she was called on to dance. These parties often featured sensuous dancing, but typically members of the royal family were not called on to participate. The Herodian family, however was known for such excesses.

**6:24.** Archaeologists note that Herod Antipas' home, the fortress Machaerus, had two banquet halls; as in Greek banquets, the men and women dined separately. Thus, Salome "went out" after her dance.

**6:26.** "because of his oaths and his dinner guest." The ancient Mediterranean world deeply valued honor and abhorred shame; Antipas's public honor was at stake. As tetrarch under Rome, Antipas lacked the authority to give away any of his kingdom.

**6:27.** Because it was quick, beheading was considered the most merciful form of execution.