

### 3. Resisting A New Thing

*5 He could not do any miracles there, except lay his hands on a few sick people and heal them. 6 He was amazed at their lack of faith. Then Jesus went around teaching from village to village.- Mark 6:5-6 NIV*

*25 I assure you that there were many widows in Israel in Elijah's time, when the sky was shut for three and a half years and there was a severe famine throughout the land. 26 Yet Elijah was not sent to any of them, but to a widow in Zarephath in the region of Sidon. 27 And there were many in Israel with leprosy in the time of Elisha the prophet, yet not one of them was cleansed--only Naaman the Syrian." - Luke 4:25-27 NIV*

Jesus was amazed at the people's unbelief. He then refers them to Israel's lack of faith in Elijah and Elisha's day. Those who resisted when God was doing a new thing forfeited God's miraculous gifts.

*Do you personally find change difficult? What do you think are some reasons for resisting changes or new things that God might want to do? What has been most helpful in getting you to feel comfortable with change?*

#### WRAP-UP

As Jesus began His ministry and revealed His divine authority, He attracted both followers and critics—especially from His own hometown of Nazareth, where familiarity bred skepticism. When He returned there, the people who had known Him as a carpenter were shocked and offended by His new role as a teacher and prophet, refusing to accept that God could work through someone so familiar. This resistance echoes a broader spiritual truth: our expectations—shaped by past experiences or cultural norms—can blind us to the new things God is doing. Just as the people of Nazareth struggled to see beyond their limited view of Jesus, we too can miss divine opportunities if we rely only on what's familiar. Cultivating a close, discerning relationship with God through Scripture and prayer is key to recognizing His voice and embracing His plans, even when they appear in unexpected ways.

#### MEMORY VERSE

*And he did not do many miracles there because of their lack of faith. - Matthew 13:58 NIV*

Challenge – Allow Jesus to defy the boundaries you've set for Him. Invite Him to show you more of Himself than you've ever experienced. Then expect the unexpected.

### When Faith Becomes Too Familiar Gospel of Mark Ch. 5 - Week 3

#### INTRODUCTION

As Jesus began His ministry and displayed His divine authority, He gained followers and believers, but also critics and skeptics. Perhaps it is not surprising that some of the harshest criticism came from His hometown. In the opening verses of Mark Chapter 6 Jesus returns home to Nazareth, but He doesn't find a warm reception to His new role as teacher and prophet. If you were not raised in a Christian home, you may have faced the same response from those who knew you before you met Jesus. We need to be aware that the expectations of others, and ourselves, may get in the way of God's plans to move forward in a manner that are hadn't anticipated.

#### Ice Breaker

*Do you remember discovering that there were people in positions of authority who you knew as children (police officers, politicians, doctors)? Did you have difficulty trusting that they could handle their job?*

#### Key Passages

*4 Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not without honor except in his own town, among his relatives and in his own home." - Mark 6:4 NIV*

#### STUDY QUESTIONS

##### 1. But I Already Know You

When Jesus returned to Nazareth with His disciples, many people recognized Him. He had grown up there and His family were still their neighbors. So, when Jesus stood up to read in the synagogue, they were expecting to hear what they had always heard, or as Luke says, He went to the synagogue "as usual". But what they heard was not the usual.

*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? What are these remarkable miracles he is performing?"*

*- Mark 6:2 NIV*

*16 When he came to the village of Nazareth, his boyhood home, he went as usual to the synagogue on the Sabbath and stood up to read the Scriptures.*

*- Luke 4:16 NLT*

*54 Coming to his hometown, he began teaching the people in their synagogue, and they were amazed. "Where did this man get this wisdom and these miraculous powers?" they asked.*

*- Matthew 13:54 NIV*

When Jesus spoke, the people recognized that He was speaking with Godly wisdom and authority. The event is recorded in three of the gospels and all of them describe the people's reaction as "amazement". But that isn't necessarily a good thing. It can mean shock, panic or astonishment. In fact, they were shocked at what Jesus was doing because this wasn't the "usual behavior" of the Jesus that they knew.

*When you think of encountering Jesus, where do you expect to find Him? What is your typical interaction with Jesus like? Can you describe a time when you discovered Jesus in an unusual place or in an unusual way?*

*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. - Mark 6:3 NIV*

*18 "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, 19 to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." 20 Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him. 21 He began by saying to them, "Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing." - Luke 4:18-21 NIV*

Jesus had left the village of Nazareth a carpenter, but He returned as a Rabbi and prophet. Even though the people clearly understood His teaching and miracles were divinely inspired, they were not willing to see Him differently from the Jesus they had known before.

Mark tells us the people were offended by Jesus' reading of scripture. Luke gives us more detail about what exactly He said. Why would this offend the listeners? God doesn't always do "business as usual" but neither is everything unusual from God. When something unusual or unexpected happens in church, how do you decide if it is from God or not?

There is a balance we need when we are faced with the unexpected in spiritual terms. The first place to turn is directly to God. The more familiar you are with God's voice in your everyday life, the easier it will be to discern if "the unexpected" is aligning with Him. We can develop our discernment by spending time in God's word, and in prayer. Your relationship with Jesus is your best defense against deception and it can guide you in recognizing when God has something new for you as well.

## 2. Don't You See?

*4 Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not without honor except in his own town, among his relatives and in his own home." - Mark 6:4 NIV*

*23 Jesus said to them, "Surely you will quote this proverb to me: 'Physician, heal yourself!' And you will tell me, 'Do here in your hometown what we have heard that you did in Capernaum.'"*

*- Luke 4:23 NIV*

*19 See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland. 20 The wild animals honor me, the jackals and the owls, because I provide water in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland, to give drink to my people, my chosen, 21 the people I formed for myself that they may proclaim my praise. 22 "Yet you have not called on me, Jacob, you have not wearied yourselves for me, Israel. - Isaiah 43:19-22 NIV*

Spiritual blindness is not uncommon. Isaiah prophesied about it when he told the people that God was doing a new thing that they hadn't perceived. How does Jesus' visit in Nazareth parallel this passage in Isaiah?

The expectations of Nazareth were based on what was familiar to them, "Jesus the carpenter". They couldn't open their minds and hearts to Jesus the Rabbi and prophet.

*Which of Jesus' roles are you most familiar with? Is He your friend, comforter, healer...? Is it difficult to see Him in other roles such as judge, warrior king, Father or something else?*