

**UNBELIEF AND THE NATURE OF GENUINE DISCIPLESHIP**

1) **Mark 6:1-4 - PEOPLE TEND TO UNDERVALUE THINGS WITH WHICH THEY ARE MOST FAMILIAR**

**"He went away from there and came to his hometown, and his disciples followed him. [2] And on the Sabbath he began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard him were astonished, saying, "Where did this man get these things? What is the wisdom given to him? How are such mighty works done by his hands? [3] Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary and brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon? And are not his sisters here with us?" And they took offense at him. [4] And Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not without honor, except in his hometown and among his relatives and in his own household."**

Familiarity may not always breed *contempt*, but it does easily breed *neglect* (and frequently, *indifference*). Nazareth had great responsibility when it came to Jesus because she had more *opportunity to see Him up close* than anyone else. How does this relate to what we have already studied about the *wayside soil* in **Mark 4:4** and **4:12**? What about **4:23-25**? - **"If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear." [24] And he said to them, "Pay attention to what you hear: with the measure you use, it will be measured to you, and still more will be added to you. [25] For to the one who has, more will be given, and from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away."**

We can so easily become hard-hearted in the areas where we *grow accustomed to hearing spiritual truth*. Also, renewal will most likely come when, through diligence and heeding the cutting edge call to repentance of the Holy Spirit, we *heed with more thought and care the things of which we are already aware, rather than some brand new truth*.

2) **Mark 6:5-6 - THE NATURE OF SIN IN HUMAN HEARTS**

**"And he could do no mighty work there, except that he laid his hands on a few sick people and healed them. [6] And he marveled because of their unbelief. And he went about among the villages teaching."**

**"He could do no mighty work there..."** These are truly amazing words. As great as the power of Christ was and is, it was limited by the human reception it received. Usually we don't think of Christ's power being limited in any way. This is why, whenever the church gathers, Christ must find a glad and warm welcome in our praise, worship and adoration. It's not a matter of Him needing to be emotionally stroked. Rather, these things prepare our hearts to receive all His work on our behalf.

The last part of **verse 3** says the people **"took offence at Him."** They recognized the wisdom of His teaching. They acknowledged the power of His miracles. Yet they refused to **yield** to Him as their Lord.

Most people don't see unbelief as the most punishable of sins. We tend to think of our guilt before God in terms of **actions** (lying, stealing, swearing, adultery, etc.) rather than the **attitude** that leads to all of these other sins. This is why most people on the street feel that they will be

alright at the judgment as long as they have been relatively moral. ***They don't see that the root of all other sin - the most punishable sin of all time - is to not believe in Jesus Christ and make Him Lord of their lives.***

This is the measuring stick by which men will be judged - **Mark 16:16** - "Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned." See also **John 3:36** - "Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him."

***Unbelief makes people deny the clearest evidence.*** In these first six verses we see the outworking of the truth Jesus stressed in **Mark 4:24-25** - "And he said to them, "Pay attention to what you hear: with the measure you use, it will be measured to you, and still more will be added to you. [25] For to the one who has, more will be given, and from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away."

As hearts become hard against the truth they have received, they will deny the clearest evidence. Nothing reaches them anymore. It is not lack of ***proof*** or ***evidence***. It is love of self and a refusal to allow God to convert and transform - **John 3:19** - "And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their deeds were evil."

### 3) **Mark 6:7-11** - ***THE TRUE PATH OF BEING A DISCIPLE BEGINS TO TAKE SHAPE***

"And he called the twelve and began to send them out two by two, and gave them authority over the unclean spirits. [8] He charged them to take nothing for their journey except a staff—no bread, no bag, no money in their belts— [9] but to wear sandals and not put on two tunics. [10] And he said to them, "Whenever you enter a house, stay there until you depart from there. [11] And if any place will not receive you and they will not listen to you, when you leave, shake off the dust that is on your feet as a testimony against them."

As far as we know this was the last time Jesus tried to minister in the Temple. The time was getting shorter now. Like Jesus, John too had been accompanied by disciples. But these men were becoming more than mere ***learners*** or ***followers***. They were now Jesus' ***emissaries***. Jesus began to unfold His plan of ***working through a committed band of ambassadors***. More ground could be covered that way. John had learners. Jesus trained ambassadors. Our own growth in discipleship will be stunted until we reach this point of commissioning and accountability to one another in the body of Christ. Independence is spiritual death.

### 4) **Mark 6:11** - ***THE PUNISHMENT FOR UNBELIEF***

"And if any place will not receive you and they will not listen to you, when you leave, shake off the dust that is on your feet as a testimony against them."

Notice how this same account is expanded in **Matthew 10:11-16** - "And whatever town or village you enter, find out who is worthy in it and stay there until you depart. [12] As you enter the house, greet it. [13] And if the house is worthy, let your peace come upon it, but if it is not worthy, let your peace return to you. [14] And if anyone will not receive you or listen to your words, shake off the dust from your feet when you leave that house or town. [15] Truly, I say to you, it will be more bearable on the day of judgment for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah than for that town. [16] "Behold, I am sending you out as sheep in the midst of wolves, so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves." Again, greater light

and opportunity bring with them greater accountability. Great care is needed here.

5) **MARK 6:12 - THE MESSAGE THEY PREACHED WAS TAILORED FOR THE KIND OF SIN FROM WHICH PEOPLE NEEDED DELIVERANCE**

**“So they went out and proclaimed that people should repent.”** People are guilty of unbelief when it comes to Jesus. This is the specific sin that the Holy Spirit wants to deal with first in their lives - **John 16:8-9** - **“And when he comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment: [9] concerning sin, because they do not believe in me...”** This is the same message Jesus Himself preached in **Mark 1:15** - **“The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.”**

It's probably important to note that the ambassadors weren't free to tamper with the message. They were only carriers, not composers. The church today may vary its ***means*** in communicating that message. But the content of the gospel isn't up for grabs.