



**A BETTER
WORD**

THE GOSPEL OF MARK

A Study Through the Life of King Jesus | with Pastor Nick Gatzke

Unbelief and Rejection

Mark 6:1–13

THE BIG IDEA

God overcomes unbelief through those who depend on him.

SERMON SUMMARY

Jesus returns to his hometown at the height of his reputation and finds no welcome — only questions that slide from astonishment into cynicism. As Jesus taught with authority they asked, “Where did this man get these things? What is the wisdom given to him?” As he healed the sick, they wondered “How are such mighty works done by his hands?” But then the tone changes, as the people express their unbelief saying: “Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary?” In a world where sons were named for their fathers, that was not a description but an accusation of illegitimacy. The Son of God stood in front of them and they decided he was ordinary. The problem was not familiarity; it was unbelief.

Mark sets that rejection beside the sending of the Twelve. Jesus sends them out two by two with authority over unclean spirits and strips them of provisions: no bread, no bag, no money. If they had nothing to rely on, they had to rely on God. They were to stay in the first house that received them, and to shake the dust from unbelieving villages as a warning meant to bring repentance. And many repented. God overcomes unbelief through those dependent on him.

DIGGING DEEPER

1. The synagogue crowd asks five questions in verses 2–3, beginning in amazement and ending in offense. Read through them in order. Where does the tone shift from honest curiosity to cynical accusation?
2. Calling Jesus “the son of Mary” was a deliberate insult in a culture that named sons for their fathers. What does that phrase reveal about what the town had already decided — and how does John 1:10–11 describe the same tragedy?
3. Verse 5 says Jesus “could do no mighty work there.” Given that he had already done greater miracles in harder places, what is actually being described — a limit on his power, or his response to settled unbelief?
4. Satan’s first words to Eve were a question: “Did God actually say...?” That was an accusation wearing a question’s clothing. Jesus had already warned, “Pay attention to what

you hear” (Mark 4:24). When you bring your own questions to Scripture, how can you tell which kind you are asking?

5. Jesus sent the Twelve out with no food, no money, and no change of clothes, so that dependence would be the only option left. Where have you built enough backup plans that you never have to depend on God? What would depending on him look like this week?

LIVING IT OUT

We live in an unbelieving world, and that can feel discouraging — until you remember whose job it is to change a heart. You cannot crack a hard heart or take the blinders off someone’s eyes. Only God does that. Your assignment is not to be persuasive enough; it is to keep depending on him and keep going.

Heart Check: Do you come to God’s Word with a disposition inclined toward belief, or one quietly inclined toward unbelief? Is there someone you have written off as too far gone — and have you started praying like it?

This Week: Name one person you have stopped expecting God to reach. Pray for them by name every day this week, and take one dependent step toward them: a text, a meal, an honest conversation.

REFLECTION & PRAYER

“And he marveled because of their unbelief. And he went about among the villages teaching.”

— **Mark 6:6**

Ask God to guard you from the kind of cynicism that hears his Word without receiving it. Then ask him for courage to depend on him as you carry the gospel to people who may not want it yet.

Your Prayer:

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