

# YOU CAN'T GO HOME AGAIN

## Mark 6:1-6

Thomas Wolfe wrote a novel entitled "***You Can't Go Home Again***". The book is about a man named George Webber. He is an author who has written a successful book about his hometown. When he returns home, he expects to receive a hero's welcome. Instead, he is driven out of town by his own friends and family. They feel betrayed by what he has written about them in his book. Webber is shaken by their reaction to his work and leaves his hometown behind to go find himself. George Webber discovered that those who know you best tend to respect you the least.

Here in Mark 6 we find Jesus returning home to Nazareth. He is going home again. Our Lord's return to His hometown does not go the way we might expect it to. After all, Jesus is something of a celebrity by this time. Huge crowds flock around Him everywhere He goes. He has gone throughout the countryside preaching, teaching, healing the sick, casting out demons, raising the dead and controlling the forces of nature. He has proven that there is something very special and very different about Him.

Remember how the last section of Mark from 4:35 to 5:43 featured four great miracles that demonstrated Jesus' power. After Jesus raises Jairus' daughter from the dead, 5:42 says, "**And they were overcome with great amazement.**" That kind of sums up the response of the people around Galilee to Jesus.

Now the famous hometown preacher comes back to Nazareth. Now Luke chapter 4 tells us that the last time Jesus was in Nazareth things didn't go too well for Him. He went to the synagogue and preached from **Isa. 61. (Luke 4:16-20)** In that service, Jesus proclaimed Himself to be the Jewish Messiah. The people of Nazareth rejected His message and tried to kill Him by throwing Him over a cliff! He left Nazareth and preached in other places in Galilee.

Jesus had no acceptance at all in His hometown, none, not even from His intimate family. His family's attitude is conveyed to us back in Mark 3:21, they thought He had lost His mind. They thought He was a maniac. For all that they knew, He grew up there for 30 years as a quiet carpenter and now, all of a sudden, He's catapulted Himself on to the public scene. He hadn't done miracles as such in Nazareth, but the word about the miracles was running rampant all over everywhere.

Now probably a year later, He returns to the very place He was so cruelly rejected. He wants to give His family, His friends and His neighbors another chance to receive Him and His message. That is grace! (Ill. I am amazed that God would give you and me one chance, much less opportunity after opportunity to believe in Him and His Gospel! Thank God for His good grace!)

When Jesus arrives in Nazareth, He is not greeted by anxious crowds. It seems that they ignored Him until the Sabbath Day came and they all went to the synagogue. I want to consider our Lord's visit to Nazareth today. What happened there has something to say to those who are saved and to those who do not know the Lord. What is of real interest is the people's unbelief concerning Lord's preaching and His person. Their unbelief cost them His power and His presence.

Follow along in your Bibles as I read **Mark 6:1-6**:

**1 Then He went out from there and came to His own country, and His disciples followed Him.**

**2 And when the Sabbath had come, He began to teach in the synagogue. And many hearing Him were astonished, saying, "Where did this Man get these things? And what wisdom is this which is given to Him, that such mighty works are performed by His hands!"**

**3 Is this not the carpenter, the Son of Mary, and brother of James, Joses, Judas, and Simon? And are not His sisters here with us?" And they were offended at Him.**

**4 But Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not without honor except in his own country, among his own relatives, and in his own house."**

**5 Now 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. Then He went about the villages in a circuit, teaching.**

Let's take a look at the events of that Sabbath Day visit to the synagogue in Nazareth. Let's notice the **ways** the people responded to the Lord and what their response cost them.

## **I. THE PEOPLE WERE SHOCKED BY HIS PREACHING (6:1-2).**

Verse 1, **"Then He went out from there and came to His own country, and His disciples followed Him."** It is clear from the rest of the verses that **"His own country,"** refers to Jesus' hometown. We know His hometown is Nazareth, Mark 1:9 tells us at the outset of His ministry that, **"Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee."** Again in Mark 1:24; 10:47; 14:67; and 16:6 all say that Jesus was from Nazareth.

Nazareth in those days was just a small village on a rocky hillside on the road to nowhere. It is so obscure that it is never mentioned in the Old Testament, the Jewish Mishnah, the Jewish Talmud, nor by the historian Josephus. The best guess is the town had about 500 residents, not exactly a booming metropolis. If you grow up for 30 years in a town of 500, you know everybody and everybody knows you.

This time Jesus is home, **"His disciples followed Him."** Why? Because they were going to learn a lesson about rejections. Because in verses 7-13 Jesus sends them out on their first trial run and they're going to experience rejection. So here is an opportunity for them to see it firsthand. This is not a private family visit. He came for public ministry. And the disciples come along as spectators to the rejection as kind of a preparation for what they're going to experience.

We don't read of any great crowds gathered here in Nazareth. People are not thronging Him just to touch Him. Instead verse 2 simply says, **"And when the Sabbath had come, He began to teach in the synagogue."** When Jesus began to speak, the people who heard Him were **"astonished"**. This word means *"to be seized with panic; to be struck with alarm."* We might say they were completely flabbergasted.

They immediately began to speak among themselves and talk about three areas of the Lord's ministry that amazed them. Again in verse 2 they said, **"Where did this Man get these things? And what wisdom is this which is given to Him, that such mighty works are performed by His hands!"**

**1. His Words** – When Jesus preached, He did so with grace and charm. His words were filled with divine authority. He did not speak like the local rabbis. When Jesus

spoke, He did so with authority. He left no doubt in the minds of His hearers that His words must either be accepted or rejected.

**2. His Wisdom** – When Jesus spoke, His words were filled with truth. The people heard Him declare old truths in new ways. They listened as He taught spiritual truth by using the common everyday things around them. While His illustrations may have called on the common, the truth He preached was anything but common. The Lord's wisdom left them shaking their heads in disbelief.

**3. His Works** – The Lord's fame had preceded Him to Nazareth. They had heard about the miracles He had performed elsewhere. They could not believe that a young man from their own town could do the miracles that were attributed to Him.

The people of Nazareth could not believe what they were hearing and from Whom they were hearing it. They heard what Jesus had to say and they were left with their mouths hanging open.

Our Lord's message still affects people that way. When you read the Bible and study the message of the Gospel, it can cause you to be astonished. Consider some of the claims of the Bible.

- **All people are sinners** – Rom. 3:10-20, 23; Gal. 3:22
- **All sinners are headed to a place called Hell** – Psa. 9:17; Rom. 2:8-9
- **There is only one way to be saved from sin and its penalty** – Acts 4:12; 1 John 2:23; 5:12
- **All other religions in the world are false religions and they all lead to Hell** – John 3:18, 36
- **The only way for anyone to be saved is for them to place their faith in a man Who lived, died and rose again from the dead 2,000 years ago** – John 14:6; 10:9

C. Those are amazing claims because they condemn much of the world to a lost eternity. When people in our day hear the claims of the Gospel, they react in anger. They reject the message and attack the messenger, just as they did in Jesus' day.

What do you think when you hear the claims of the Gospel? Do you rejoice in its truth, knowing that it has saved your soul? Or, do you hear it and reject its message, thinking you know a better way?

## **II. THE PEOPLE STUMBLER OVER HIS PERSON (6:3).**

As the people of Nazareth heard the message Jesus was preaching, they rejected His message because they thought they knew everything there was to know about Him. He had grown up among them and was one of their own. They had seen Him play there as a child; they knew His family; they thought they knew Him. They knew that He had never been to the divinity schools. They knew that He had no formal training. They knew everything there was to know about Jesus, or so they thought! To them, Jesus was just another boy from Nazareth. He did not deserve their respect. They saw Him as a common man!

They also knew His occupation. They call Him "***the carpenter***". A carpenter in those days did not always build houses. Typically, they built ox yokes and plows. Sometimes they would build things like tables, chairs, beds, etc. Sometimes, the word carpenter referred to men who could do anything from carving a plate to building a house. The people of Nazareth probably had things in their possession that Jesus had built for

them. They saw Him as a common craftsman. They looked at Him and said, “*You are no better than we are! Why should we listen to you?*”

We are told that they were “**offended at Him**”. The word “**offended**” is Skandalizomai...they were scandalized by Him. It was an absolute blasphemy in their minds that He would claim to be the Messiah, the Son of God. This is scandalous, this is the same word you’ll find in 1 Corinthians 1 where the gospel is a stumbling block, a skandalon to the Jews. Repeatedly the Scripture talks about how they stumbled over the reality of Jesus and over the gospel. This is adamant antagonism. Because these people could not explain Jesus, they refused to listen to Jesus. They could not see past the carpenter; and they refused to receive their theology from a common carpenter.

These people did what all people do when they cannot understand someone. They resorted to ridicule! Ridicule is the final refuge of a small mind! They called Him “**the son of Mary**”. This was never done in that society! A male was always referred to as the son of his father, even if his father was dead. To call a boy the son of his mother was practically to imply that his mother had played the harlot.

The people of Nazareth could not explain Jesus, so they reacted to His words, His wisdom and His works with contempt and unvarnished ridicule. Listen to the contempt in their voices in **verse 2** as they say “**Where did this Man get these things?**” these people could not accept what they could not explain!

This state of mind is still with us today. People reject what they cannot easily explain. When it comes to Jesus, there is much that cannot be explained to people’s satisfaction.

People seem to have little trouble with the manger scene. They seem to be able to accept a little, harmless baby lying in a manger. But, when you tell people that the little baby was born of a virgin and that He is God in the flesh, they can’t handle that!

People seem to have little trouble with Jesus going about from place to place preaching His message of peace, love and acceptance like some itinerant philosopher. But, when you tell them that He is the only Savior and that rejecting Him will lead to Him sending the sinner away into Hell, they can’t handle that!

People seem to have no problem with a dead Jesus hanging in shame on a cross. But, when you tell them that He rose again after He died and that He still lives today to save all those who will accept Him by faith, they can’t handle that!

If your concept of Who Jesus is stops with a baby in a manger or a dead man on a cross, you are missing the whole point! You must come to the place where you understand that Jesus Christ is the very Son of God, **John 3:16**. You must understand that He died for your sins on the cross and that He rose again from the dead, **Rom. 10:9**. You must come to a place where you turn from your sins, and believe on Jesus for your soul’s salvation or you have no hope of Heaven, **Rom. 10:13**!

There is much about Jesus, the Bible and the Gospel that I do not understand. I can’t figure out why He would love me. I can’t figure out why He would even care where I am going to spend eternity. I can’t understand how He was able to save me from my sins when I simply asked Him to. But, my questions do not stop me from believing! What I don’t understand does not prevent me from acting on what I do understand.

Here is what I know and believe to be the absolute truth:

- **Jesus Christ is God in the flesh – Phil. 2:5-8; John 1:1, 14**

- Jesus Christ was born of a virgin – Isa. 7:14; Luke 1:25-38
- Jesus Christ lived a sinless life – 2 Cor. 5:21; Heb. 7:26; 1 Pet. 2:22; 1 John 3:5
- Jesus Christ died for my sins on a cross on a hill called Calvary – 2 Cor. 5:21; 1 Pet. 2:24; Isa. 53:4-6; John 1:29
- Jesus Christ raised again from the dead three days later – Matt. 28:1-6
- Jesus Christ ascended back to Heaven and sat down at the right hand of God the Father – Heb. 1:3; 10:12
- Jesus Christ is coming back to this world to receive His people unto Himself, 1 Thes. 4:13-18
- Jesus Christ is the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords – Rev. 19:16
- Jesus Christ is the only Door to Salvation. He is the only Way into Life. He is the only Truth. Apart from Him, there is no hope, no salvation and no Heaven, John 14:6.

Is that what you believe? If it isn't, please do not allow the claims of the Bible cause you to stumble. Believe the message just as it is given and receive Jesus. Do not allow that which you do not understand to cause you to stumble and send you to Hell!

### III. THE PEOPLE SHUNNED HIS POWER (6:4-6)

The people rejected Jesus and they rejected His message. His response to their unbelief is in verse 4, **But Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not without honor except in his own country, among his own relatives, and in his own house."** To quote a common proverb, ***"familiarity breeds contempt"***.

The people of Nazareth, like people everywhere, took for granted what they had and wanted what they didn't have. They looked at Jesus and saw one of their own. They treated Him as a common thing.

Verse 5 tells us that **"He could do no mighty work there, except that He laid His hands on a few sick people and healed them."** Jesus was unable to perform many miracles there. Only a few sick folks were healed. What is this about? Was it a power problem? Jesus was and is absolutely sovereign. He could have done anything there that He wanted to do. He possessed the power, but He refused to demonstrate His power in the face of blatant unbelief. It's not a power problem, it's a purpose problem. What is the purpose of miracles? To attest to the truth, to lead people to faith. If you've rejected the truth, if you refuse to believe, there's no need for the miracles.

A few people came to Him in faith and those people received His help. The rest rejected Him and were rejected by Him. This is the ultimate disaster of unbelief, it literally shuts a person off from God. He can do nothing if you don't believe. They rejected their Messiah, they refused the message, thus they forfeited the miracles.

When Jesus saw the depth of their rejection, v. 6, **"He marveled because of their unbelief."** The word ***"marveled"*** means ***"to stand in wonder and amazement"***. Jesus is said to have "marveled" only twice. Both times His amazement was over faith. He marveled at the great faith of a centurion, **Luke 7:1-10**. Here, Jesus marveled at the lack of faith among His own people.

Jesus was amazed that these people had heard the truth, seen the truth and still turned a deaf ear and a blind eye to that truth. As a result, He left Nazareth, and there is no record that He ever returned there. Their rejection of Jesus was total and He abandoned them to their choice!

That is what the Lord does! He sends out a call for people to believe the Gospel and be saved, **John 1:9**. When people reject the truth of the Gospel and the message of salvation through Jesus, there is no more hope for them. He might call them again and He might not. Regardless, there will come a point where the Lord will call them no more and they are abandoned to their choice, **Rom. 1:18-33; Rom. 9:18-24**.

There is a word here for the church. Jesus shows up when we meet, **Matt. 18:20**. He desires to teach us truth and He wants to help us to grow. If we come to the house of the Lord expecting something from God, we will be amazed at what He can do. However, if we come with an “***I’ve seen it all and heard it all before***” attitude, we can expect nothing from the Lord.

William Barclay put it this way: “***There can be no preaching in the wrong atmosphere. The congregation is responsible for at least half of every sermon. In an atmosphere of expectancy, the least effort will catch fire. In an atmosphere of coldness or indifference, the most spirit-filled of sermons will fall flat.***”

If we don’t want Him here, Jesus will do what He did in Nazareth. He will leave and go elsewhere with His message and His miracles, **v. 6**. We can have what we want at this house of worship. We can have glory, power, the manifest presence of God and we can have worship. Or we can have cold, dead orthodoxy. We cannot have both!

Just as He did in Nazareth, He won’t force Himself on us here. We can have His blessings, or we can turn Him away. If we embrace Him, we will experience more of His power and blessings than we could ever imagine. If we don’t want Him here, He will go elsewhere! If we turn Him away, He will bless another church. I want Him to bless them and us too.

**Conc:** I am afraid that sometimes we Baptists have become a lot like the people of Nazareth. We are so familiar with the things of God, the message of the Bible, the crucifixion of Jesus, the burial and the resurrection that we are no longer moved by them. We are reminded of what Jesus did for and we say “***So what?***” We talk about the cross and no one cares anymore. Shame on us!

We have allowed our hearts to grow cold and calloused toward the things of God. Today would be a good day to get before the Lord and ask Him to warm your cold heart one more time. God goes anywhere faith wants Him, and unbelief is a killer, presumptions are killers, and we as God saints should be saying:

**'Pass me not, O gracious Saviour,  
Hear my humble cry:  
While on others Thou art calling,  
Do not pass me by'.**

Others here have never been saved. You have never embraced the death of Christ as your death. You have never confessed your sins and asked Him into your life. You need to come to Jesus today. You need to be saved.