

## **A Savior who Empowers His Disciples** **Mark 6:1-29**

If the Roman Church, after hearing about the magnificence of this Jesus of Nazereth, this Suffering Servant Savior, asked the question, “Ok, then what are we to do as his followers,” the answer might sound something like this, “As your Savior does, so ought you to do.” If Jesus endures misfortune, pain, rejection, even abuse, so can you. If Jesus shares the good news, even in light of terrible circumstances, so can you. If Jesus sees the world, even a terribly mean world, through eyes of love, so should you.

We can see this in Mark 6:1-29. Mark arranges three historical events about the history of Jesus that shifts his attention away from Jesus alone to Jesus and his followers. At this point in the Gospel of Mark, we begin to see an accelerated rate of instruction directed specifically to the Lord’s followers. The Church in Rome, as well as every believer since, will see themselves included in this instruction. And, while there is one other very significant division in the gospel of Mark (1:1 – 10:52, The Service of the Suffering Servant Savior; and 11:1 – 16:8, The Sacrifice of the Suffering Servant Savior), this emphasis on discipleship can be seen in many places. For example, 6:7-13 describes Jesus sending out the 12 disciples to do as he does. 6:14-29, the story of John the Baptizer’s imprisonment and death, follows and seems to be incongruent with the rest of the text. However, the emphasis on preparing disciples returns at 6:30-44. The disciples return from their first preaching assignments to report all that had happened. Jesus wanted to take them away to a private place for debriefing, but the crowds followed. When Jesus indicated his compassion for the crowds, the disciples asked him to send them away on account of the fact that the crowds were hungry and in such need. However, instead of consenting to the request to have the people go find themselves something to eat, Jesus said to the disciples, “You give them something to eat!” The preparation of disciples was in full swing. For the Church in Rome and for you and I, the whole section, including John the Baptizer, is more than simple history...it is instruction. The history about John serves as an illustration. It strengthens the point of this section: Jesus did..., The 12 did..., John did..., The 12 continue to be pushed to do...now you do.

These teaching moments occur over and over. Here are a couple more:

7:1-23 The Pharisees asked Jesus (vs. 5), “Why do your disciples not walk according to the tradition of

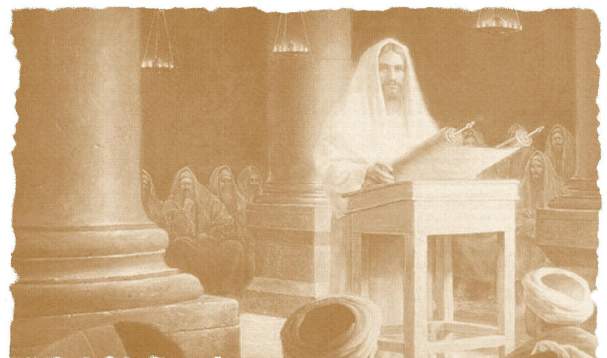
the elders, but eat their bread with impure hands?” The Lord’s answer, while easily deflecting the Pharisees attempt to create conflict, was more pointedly intended to teach his followers important principles. As the episode drew to a conclusion the disciples were still asking questions. Jesus answered (vs. 18), “Are you so lacking in understanding also?” He then explained in detail what he wanted them to understand. The Pharisees and the multitudes did not receive this level of instruction, but his followers did – and by extension so did the Church in Rome and so have you and I.

9:30-41 Here’s another. Check out this first section (vss. 30-32): “They left that place and passed through Galilee. Jesus did not want anyone to know where they were, because he was teaching his disciples. He said to them, ‘The Son of Man is going to be betrayed into the hands of men. They will kill him, and after three days he will rise.’ But they did not understand what he meant and were afraid to ask him about it.” And then we read this (vss. 33, 34): “They came to Capernaum. When he was in the house, he asked them, ‘What were you arguing about on the road?’ But they kept quiet because on the way they had argued about who was the greatest.” Wow, here is something that every believer must come to grips with and this is how Jesus did so (vss. 35-37): “Sitting down, Jesus called the Twelve and said, ‘If anyone wants to be first, he must be the very last, and the servant of all.’ He took a little child and had him stand among them. Taking him in his arms, he said to them, ‘Whoever welcomes one of these little children in my name welcomes me; and whoever welcomes me does not welcome me but the one who sent me.’”

There are many more of these passages, but for our immediate purpose the point has been made: as your Savior does, so ought you to do. So, let’s take a more careful look at our present text...

### **1. When disciples grow discouraged they need only look at the Savior.**

#### **Read 6:1-6**



Comment: Bible scholars are unanimous on understanding the questions contained in verses two and three as indicators that the people were ridiculing Jesus. One of the social taboos of that day was against anyone attempting to climb above his or her social status. This idea is behind the question, "Isn't this the carpenter?" In effect, the people were saying, "Isn't this the handyman who did odd jobs for us?" And when they mentioned Mary, they more than likely had the questionable circumstances of her pregnancy in mind.

This return to his home was about a year into his ministry. You may recall that at an earlier time his family members came to get him and claimed he was out of his mind (3:20,21). However, now time has passed, his fame is spreading far, and there can be no mistake that he is teaching amazing things and doing amazing things. One would expect cheering and festivities for the return of the home town boy who made it big. However, those who knew him best treated him with scorn.

Question: Why could Jesus not do anything great in his home town (see verse 6)?

Question: Since this does not mean that one's faith or lack of faith can cripple God's abilities do as he chooses, what do you suppose it implies?

Question: How much do you suppose the Christians in the Church of Rome, being blamed for all that was wrong in Roman society, could relate to what Jesus encountered in his home town? What might their rejection look like?

Question: What does it look like today for some people who receive Christ while their family members look on with dismay?

Question: So, if fully devoted followers of Christ who desire to give God glory encounter this kind of rejection should they be surprised? And what might they do about it?

Question: How does knowing that another's salvation is not dependent on your gospel presentation, but upon his or her belief make you feel? Would the same thing apply if we never share the gospel with them?

## **2. When disciples decide to serve they can expect both positive and negative results.**

### **Read 6:7-13**

Question: What positive results are listed in verse 13?

Question: What negative result is implied in verse 11?

Question: Read 1 Corinthians 2:5-9. While this passage illustrates a greater point, nonetheless it demonstrates something profound. How does its truth apply to what the 12 reported to Jesus?

Question: How does this apply to us individually? Corporately?

Question: Between these two passages is there anything to indicate that any of us are exempt from the process?

Discussion: Maybe now would be a good time to talk about some "evangelism fears." It might also be a good time to talk about how we might make evangelism seem much less daunting.

## **3. When disciples wonder if they are all alone in this adventure they might stop to reflect upon John the Baptizer.**

### **Read 6:14-29**

Comment: At first glance, as stated in the introduction, this history about John seems out of place. However when we see that it is immediately followed by Jesus taking the disciples apart for a debriefing (vss. 30-32), we can see that it not only amplifies on a very important person in the life of Jesus, but serves as a great illustration of what occurred both to Jesus and the twelve.

Question: Can you describe why or why not either one or a small group of the Roman Christians might have felt as though they were abandoned?

Question: Have you ever felt this way about your walk with God? Would you like to share it?

**Conclusion:** Praying about how each member of your Impact Group feels regarding their place in the Great Commission/Adventure might be a good way to end.