

Mark 6 Adult Sunday School Bible Study

Theme: Rejection, Mission, Compassion, and Revelation

Big Question: *Who is Jesus and why do some believe while others harden their hearts?*

Mark 6 moves in a deliberate progression:

1. Rejection at Nazareth
2. Commissioning the Twelve
3. The death of John the Baptist
4. Feeding the 5,000
5. Walking on Water & Healings

Mark contrasts unbelief and faith, earthly power and divine authority, and spiritual dullness versus revelation.

1. Rejection at Nazareth (Mark 6:1–6)

Jesus returns home and is rejected.

Key Text

“Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary...?” (v.3)

“And they took offense at him... And he marveled because of their unbelief.” (vv.3, 6)

Greek Insights

- **“Astonished”** (*ekplēssonto*) struck out of one’s senses.
They recognize something extraordinary.
- **“Took offense”** (*eskandalizonto*) from *skandalon*, a trap or stumbling block.
Jesus becomes a scandal to them.
- **“He could do no mighty work there”** (*ouk edynato*) not inability of power, but relational resistance. Mark ties faith to reception.
- **“Unbelief”** (*apistian*) not intellectual doubt but refusal to trust.

Calling Him “son of Mary” is culturally unusual possibly diminishing His status.

Theological Emphasis

Familiarity can breed contempt.

They knew Jesus but did not believe in Him.

Discussion

- Why is Jesus often hardest to trust among those who “know” Him best?
- Where might familiarity dull our awe?
- What does it mean that Jesus “marveled” at unbelief?

Application

Unbelief does not limit Christ’s sovereignty, but it limits our participation in His work (cf. Hebrews 4:2).

2. The Sending of the Twelve (Mark 6:7–13)

Rejection does not stop mission.

Key Text

“He began to send them out two by two and gave them authority...” (v.7)

Greek Insights

- **Authority** (*exousia*) delegated power.
- **Repentance** (*metanoōsin*) change of mind/heart orientation.
- **Anointed with oil** (*ēleiphon elaiō*) ordinary means used for divine power.

They take:

- No bread
- No bag
- No money
- One tunic

This echoes Israel’s wilderness dependence (Exodus imagery).

Shaking dust off feet symbolized covenant judgment even toward Jewish towns.

Theological Emphasis

Mission requires:

- Dependence
- Partnership (“two by two”)
- Courage in rejection

Discussion

- What does radical dependence teach us about ministry?

- Why does Jesus pair proclamation and healing?
- How should we respond to rejection?

Application

Jesus empowers ordinary believers. Where is He sending you this week?

3. Herod & the Death of John (Mark 6:14–29)

Mark interrupts the mission story with John’s execution a “Markan sandwich.”

Why Here?

The Twelve preach repentance.

John preached repentance.

John was killed.

Discipleship includes suffering.

Greek Insight

Herod is “**deeply distressed**” (*perilypos*) same word used of Jesus in Gethsemane (14:34).

Herod fears men; Jesus submits to the Father.

Herod thinks Jesus is John “raised” (*ēgerthē*) resurrection language foreshadowing Mark 16.

Contrast

- Herod’s banquet → death
- Jesus’ banquet → life

Worldly power fears truth.

Kingdom power suffers for truth.

Discussion

- How does fear of people lead to compromise?
- Why does Mark connect mission and martyrdom?
- What pressures silence Christian witness today?

Application

Faithfulness may cost reputation or more. Courage flows from fearing God above man.

4. Feeding the 5,000 (Mark 6:30–44)

The apostles return exhausted.

Jesus says:

“Come away... and rest.” (v.31)

Yet the crowd comes.

Key Phrase

“He had compassion...” (v.34)

Greek Insights

- **Compassion** (*esplanchnisthē*) gut-level mercy.
- “Sheep without a shepherd” echoes Numbers 27:17, Ezekiel 34, Psalm 23.
- Verbs: took (*labōn*), blessed (*eulogēsen*), broke (*eklasen*), gave (*edidou*) same pattern as the Last Supper (Mark 14).
- **Groups** (*prasiai*) orderly rows like garden plots.
- **Baskets** (*kophinoi*) personal Jewish baskets.

Jesus first teaches then feeds.

Word precedes bread.

Theological Emphasis

This is more than a miracle of provision.

It is a revelation: Jesus is the true Shepherd of Israel.

The Disciples’ Problem

They ask: “How are we to buy bread?”

They think economically. Jesus thinks covenantally.

Discussion

- What does compassion-driven leadership look like?
- How does this mirror the Exodus?
- Why is teaching prioritized before feeding?

Application

Bring your “five loaves.” Christ multiplies surrendered insufficiency.

5. Walking on the Water (Mark 6:45–52)

Key Text

“It is I; do not be afraid.” (v.50)

Greek Insights

- “It is I” *Egō eimi*
Can mean “It’s me,” but echoes divine self-revelation (Exodus 3:14 LXX).
- “He meant to pass by them” (*parelthein*) echoes Exodus 33 (Moses) and 1 Kings 19 (Elijah). This is theophany language.
- “Hearts were hardened” (*peporōmenē*) spiritual dullness.

Mark adds:

“They did not understand about the loaves.”

The feeding miracle was a revelation of identity not just provision.

Theological Emphasis

Miracles without understanding lead to amazement not transformation.

Discussion

- Why does fear block recognition of Jesus?
- How does hardness of heart develop gradually?
- What did the loaves reveal about Jesus?

6. Healings at Gennesaret (6:53–56)

In contrast to Nazareth:

- They recognize Him immediately.
- They run to Him.
- They beg to touch His garment.

Faith is not about proximity but response.

Major Themes of Mark 6

1. Unbelief Limits Experience

Nazareth rejects.

2. Mission Requires Dependence

The Twelve go with nothing but authority.

3. Kingdom Faithfulness May Suffer

John’s death foreshadows the cross.

4. Jesus is the True Shepherd

He feeds, teaches, and rescues.

5. Revelation Requires Soft Hearts

The disciples see miracles yet misunderstand.

Closing Reflection & Prayer

- Where am I resistant like Nazareth?
- Where is God sending me?
- Do I trust Jesus as Shepherd?