

FOLLOWING IN THE WAY:

The Gospel of Mark

In Your Own Country

MARK 6:1-3-

10/25/26



“When you go back to where you grew up, what do people still ‘know’ about you that stopped being true years ago?”



We face a conundrum. From our viewpoint, why don't people believe the message? It seems so basic and so good.

Why are people so blind to the obvious?

But that's because we think our experience is normal. We did so why not you? And then it frustrates us so we start to think, "just try harder, push more, teach more." Maybe they don't know enough so we lengthen Bible studies. Or we start to resort to manipulative tricks.

One guy running around out fellowship about 40 year ago developed a Bible study method of asking leading questions. And then if people were still resistant, he would get everyone quiet and then quietly sing an invitation song.

Preachers do crazy things just to get people down the pews and many of them, overcome with emotion, don't stick.

It still begs the question. Why don't people believe that Jesus is the Christ and follow him...just like us?



But one reason is not are able to believe. They may not have enough information. Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God, as Paul says.

I have taught people who had no exposure to the gospel except for a few church services which they found confusing because the preacher used terms that were foreign to them and assumed a level of knowledge that person didn't have. So you have to go back to the very beginning and not assume any knowledge or conviction of the Word of God. May have to start with how did we all get here and do I with evidences, not text at first.

And some have not made a journey far enough. They know little but need time to develop that. A baby is not born in a month but in nine. When they come early, things are still developing. (Harrison)



But others know and simple do not want to.

These are harder for us. We don't understand it so we try to "press our case." We think we have to make sure they believe.

Much violence in our world has been done in the name of Christianity trying to impose the truth on those who don't want to hear it. And we tend to double down our efforts the more resistant people are.

But is that what Jesus wants us to do?

“He said, “Go and tell this people: “ ‘Be ever hearing, but never understanding; be ever seeing, but never perceiving.’ Make the heart of this people calloused; make their ears dull and close their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts, and turn and be healed.”” (Isaiah 6:9–10, NIV)

I keep returning to this verse. Jesus has used it already to tell why he taught in parables. If you are not ready to hear, he did not tell them the message, only the story.

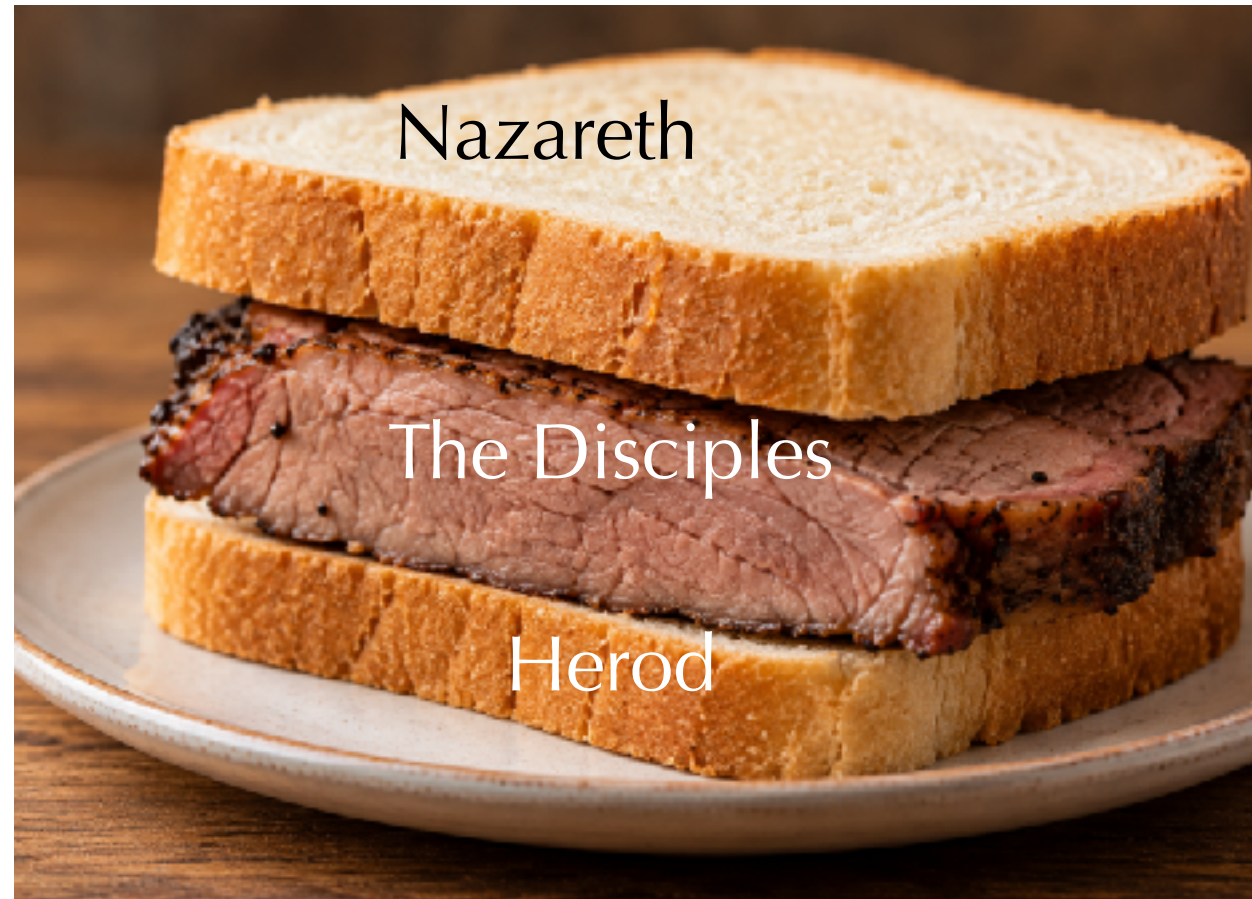
But Isaiah, when he is called to become a prophet is given grim news. Not everyone pays attention to you.

Some might have eyes but don't see. They have ears but don't hear. The reason is not physical equipment but spiritual resistance. It is something that in today's lesson we will see in full glory.



Mark 6:1-30 A Sandwich Passage

Mark 6:1-30 is a sandwich passage. It has two similar issues with a different one in the middle.



As way of overview, on one side is Jesus' teaching at the synagogue at Nazareth and the reception he got there.

On the other end is Herod Antipas and his response.

But in the middle you find the disciples and what they do with the message.

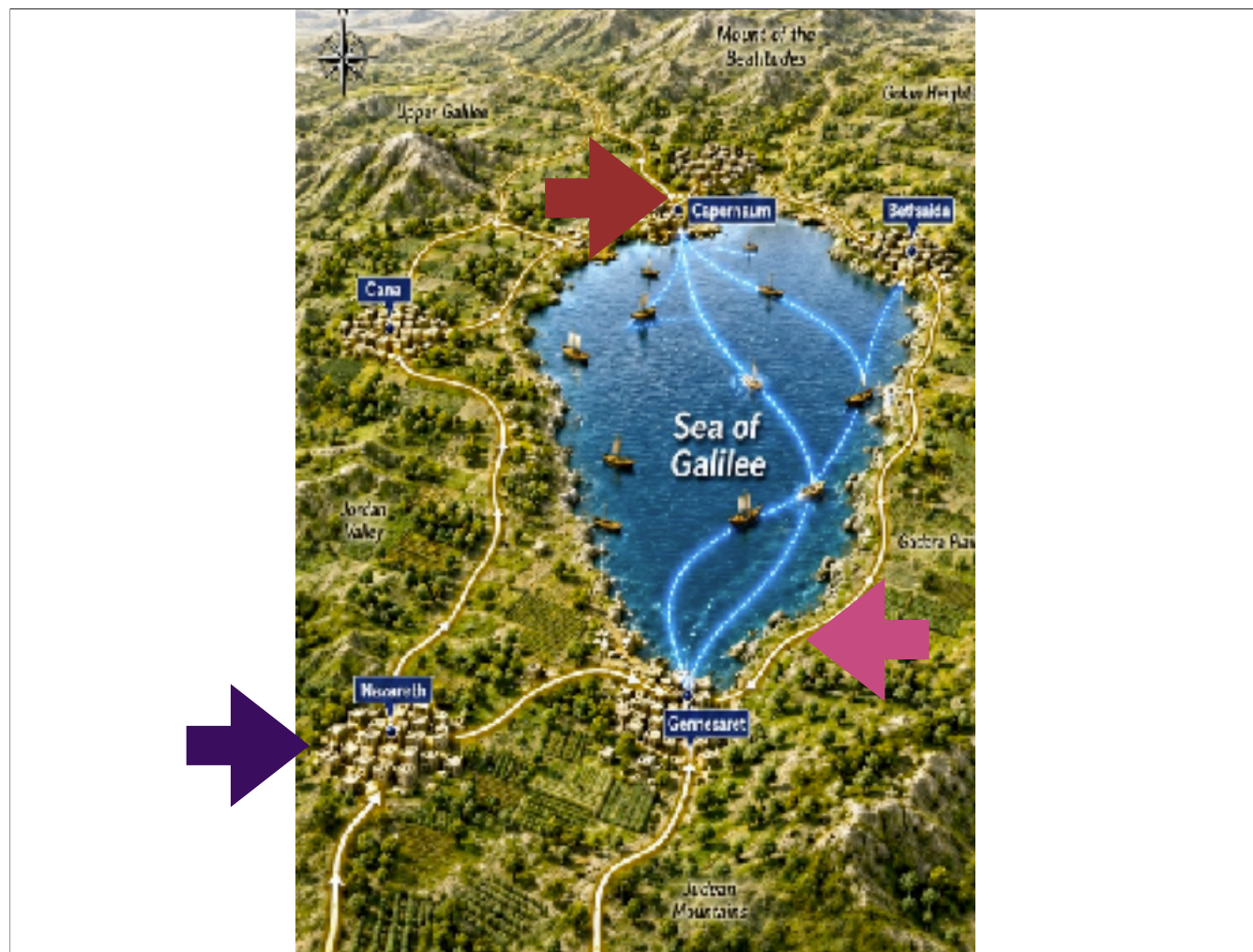
The question for us is where are you in this meal?



Nazareth

The chapter starts with a visit to Nazareth.

Nazareth is the home town of where Jesus grew up. Since Joseph and Mary returned from Egypt due to the threat of Herod the Great, Nazareth was where Jesus was raised, where he went to synagogue. From what we can tell, somewhere in this period of time, Joseph must have died and his mother and brothers and sisters still lived in Nazareth.



Just to orient us on this map, Mark begins with Jesus preaching in the main city and synagogue in Capernaum on the north side of the Sea of Galilee.

Last week, he crossed the Sea through a fierce storm and came to the land of the Gaderenes, part of the ten cities of the decapolis which were less Jewish and more Syrian. (Today that area is called the Golan Heights and is the site of fighting.)

But then, you go southwest of the sea of Galilee and you come to Nazareth, a sleepy little village usually overlooked as being significant. When Nathaniel was told of Jesus, he made the snide comment of “can anything good come out of Nazareth.”

“Jesus left there and went to his hometown, accompanied by his disciples. When the Sabbath came, he began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard him were amazed. “Where did this man get these things?” they asked. “What’s this wisdom that has been given him? What are these remarkable miracles he is performing?” (Mark 6:1–2, NIV)



Synagogue at Nazareth

Mark tells he us goes to the synagogue he grew up in. In recent times, archaeologists have excavated old Nazareth and have discovered the synagogue. It is not certain but this is probably the same place Mark pictures.

When he is there, he speaks. Other gospel writers say his lesson was from a text in Isaiah (probably the text they were to cover that day) and Jesus applies it to himself.

“Jesus left there and went to his hometown, accompanied by his disciples. When the Sabbath came, he began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard him were *amazed*. “Where did this man get these things?” they asked. “What’s this wisdom that has been given him? What are these remarkable miracles he is performing?”
(Mark 6:1–2, NIV)

It says that the people were “amazed.” They took note of what Jesus said.

Now when you read this passage, you might assume they are on the cusp of believing him to be the Messiah.

What They Noticed

“Jesus left there and went to his hometown, accompanied by his disciples. When the Sabbath came, he began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard him were amazed. “Where did this man get these things?” they asked. “What’s this *wisdom* that has been given him? What are these remarkable *miracles* he is performing?”
(Mark 6:1–2, NIV)

And it might seem that way.

They noticed two things about Jesus. They noticed his wisdom, the depth of his teaching and things they had never heard before. While the who world preached with a bibliography and footnotes, Jesus didn’t. His lesson was fresh and insightful. That’s what gets and keeps people’s attention.

The second thing they noticed was his miracles. The sick were healed. I am sure the news of both the demoniac and Jairus’ daughter had reached them. People were talking about all of what Jesus could do.

Would you not assume this would sway them? It seems so transparent. If Jesus does these great things no one else can do, isn’t the natural conclusion is he more than he appears to be?

Response

“Isn’t this the carpenter? Isn’t this Mary’s son and the brother of James, Joseph, Judas and Simon? Aren’t his sisters here with us?” And they took offense at him.”
(Mark 6:3, NIV)

Yet, that’s not their response.

They start looking through the eyes of familiarity. Don’t we know his family? Carpenter. Son of Mary. Brothers. Sisters. All of this is very human.

He is the same kid who grew up here.



The Spiritual Barricade

And the form a barricade. It says that they took offense.

The word is our word for scandal. It is a trap or a net that catches people. It is something they cannot get loose of.

They were looking at the man Jesus and listening and watching his actions and they could not get past the idea that he is just like us.

One of the problems with life is the crab basket effect. A Maryland crab fisherman was collecting his catch of crabs and he put them in a basket without a lid. Someone asked him, “are you not concerned they will crawl out.? He said, “No, because when one starts, the others start to pull him back in so none of them gets out.”

The kept Jesus ordinary to keep them from believing.

They could not get over the ordinary to
see the extraordinary.

The problem was not what Jesus did but that they
could not see it.

The truth about Nazareth is they could not get over the ordinary.

It is said that familiarity breeds contempt.

The problem was another what Jesus did because it was extraordinary. It was that their spiritual blindspot would not allow them to see it. (Explain the blindspot illustration)



**People can see the truth and
not accept it.**

A key idea is that people can see the truth but not accept it. It is not lack of evidence but the inability to get over something inside of them.

“Jesus said to them, “A prophet is not without honor except in his own town, among his relatives and in his own home.” ***He could not do any miracles there***, except lay his hands on a few sick people and heal them. ***He was amazed at their lack of faith***. Then Jesus went around teaching from village to village.” (Mark 6:4–6, NIV)

Why "could not"?

The result of a closed mind is nothing can open it but themselves.

Ask the question.

It says that Jesus could not do miracles there. It wasn't that he lost the capacity or power. It is that he refused to do any because they would never see it as a miracle.



When people are resistant, nothing you show them or say to them will change...until they do.

Jesus knew that when people are resistant, nothing you show them or say to them will change them. They need to change themselves first. (It will happen to Jesus's brothers following his resurrection.)

*Jesus was amazed at their lack of
faith...*

Not angry

Jesus doesn't bulldoze people into believing.

Jesus's reaction is he was amazed at their lack of faith. He is perplexed. Why not? He knew but as he reflected he wondered why.

He wasn't angry with them. He did not berate them or scold them or wag his finger at them. He didn't tell them they would go to hell for that or threaten.

That's because Jesus doesn't bulldoze people into believing. He knows that true faith develops but cannot be imposed. Sadly, too much of Christian society wants to do the opposite. They demand compliance and force you to listen to what the gospel is. And the result will not be more belief but more stubbornness. (Our friends and their MLM business...the more he pressed the more angry I became.)

His Response

“He was amazed at their lack of faith. ***Then Jesus went around teaching from village to village.***” (Mark 6:6, NIV)

He did not change his ministry, only his address.

So what did Jesus do? He moved on. He went from village to village.

He did not change his ministry, only his address.



Herod
Antipas

On the other end is Herod Antipas. His father was Herod the Great, the Herod who executed the babies when Jesus was born. He is also the one who rebuilt the temple that would become central to the ministry of Jesus in the last half of the book of Mark.

“King Herod heard about this, for Jesus’ name had become well known. Some were saying, “John the Baptist has been raised from the dead, and that is why miraculous powers are at work in him.”” (Mark 6:14, NIV)

Herod, being the tetrarch of Galilee kept his eyes on the trends and one that caught his eye was Jesus. His fame was spreading. (Would he become a rival?) And he was listening to the gossip about what people thought of him.

Some believed it was the resurrected John the Baptist (who would create some issues). He knew of the miracles as well as the people in Nazareth. You cannot ignore something like this.

“King Herod heard about this, for Jesus’ name had become well known. Some were saying, “John the Baptist has been raised from the dead, and that is why miraculous powers are at work in him.” Others said, “He is Elijah.” And still others claimed, “He is a prophet, like one of the prophets of long ago.”” (Mark 6:14–15, NIV)

Herod noticed the miracles

He is driven by a guilty conscience.

Look at what was going on with Herod.

First, he noticed the miracles. He was not ignorant of Jesus.

The crowds were guessing but Herod took it as John come back to haunt him.



Herod

His wife Herodias had been his brother's wife.
After an affair, he dumps the wife he is married to, as does
Herodias

This was not an "accident."

"For John had been saying to Herod, 'It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife.'" (Mark 6:18, NIV)

Herod was not a good man or a moral man. Even though he was called the king of the Jews, he wasn't Jewish of mixed heritage.

He had wooed away Herodias from his brother Philip. This was done while he was still married so when he married Herodias he dumped his old wife.

Don't romanticize this. They did not fall in love or were each other's soul mates (which is what is the justification for adultery today). Instead, both were politically ambitious and each could get what they wanted from the other.

And John the Baptist with his preaching of spiritual purity could to turn a blind eye. He knew that a corrupt leader needed to be denounce and he did.

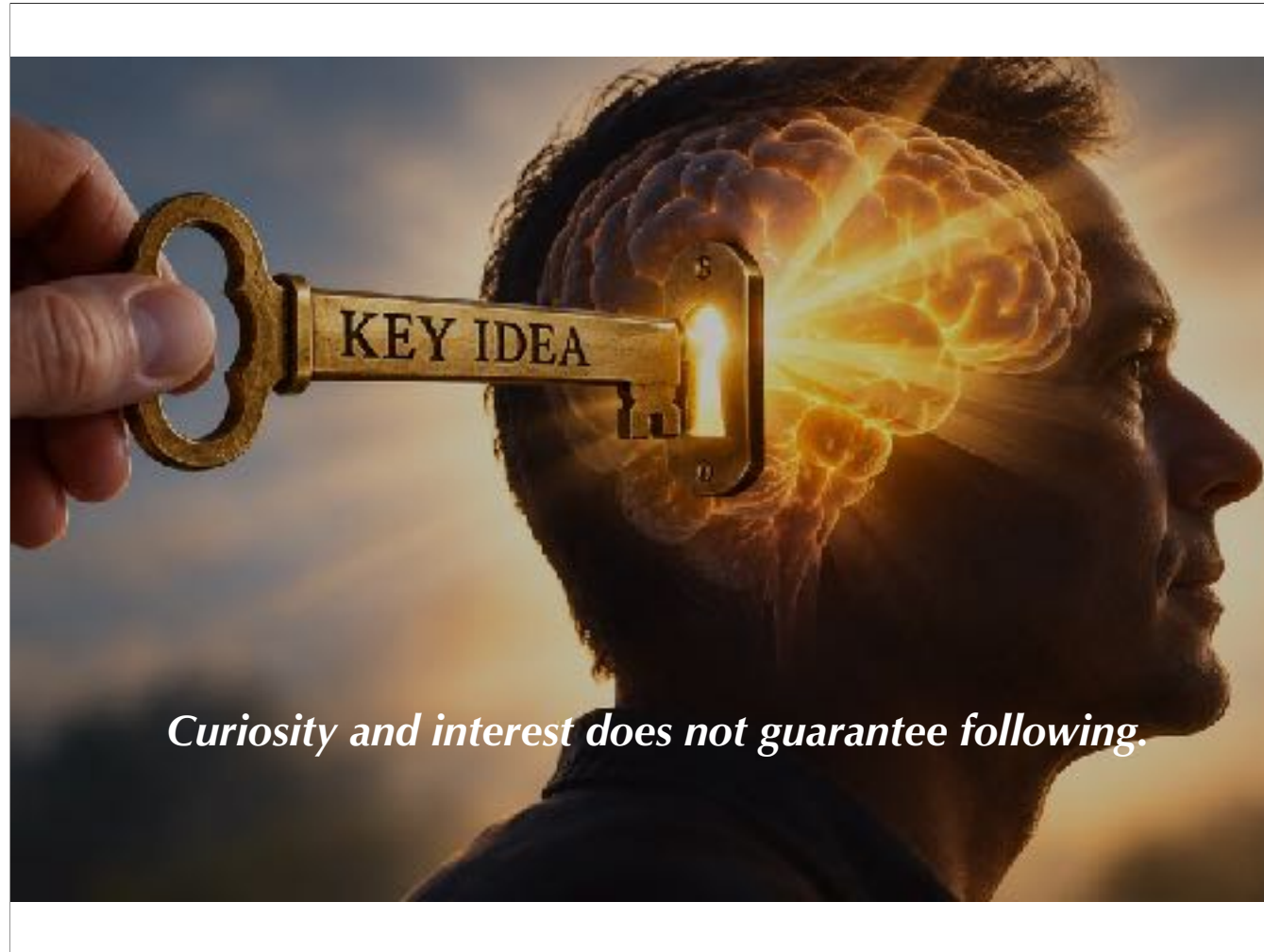
“because Herod *feared John and protected him*,
knowing him to be a righteous and holy man. When
Herod heard John, *he was greatly puzzled; yet he liked
to listen to him.*” (Mark 6:20, NIV)

Herod had an interesting take on John. He feared him because hurting John might cause a revolt so he became his protector. He didn't know what to make out of John but he liked to hear him speak...it must have made some sense to him.

And now, it is possible that he was transferring all of this to Jesus.



For that, he succumbed during a lust-filled drinking binge to the wishes of Herodias (through here daughter) to have the head of John the Baptist on a silver platter. It was a deed done to persevere ego and something he lived to regret.



Curiosity and interest does not guarantee following.

Herod is definitely interested. He has taken notice. He liked to hear John and we know he was intrigued and wanted to meet Jesus (as we will see later).

But interest is not the same as obedience.

The Bible study that ended when the person said, "I just like studying the Bible, I don't want to do anything else"

Just because someone is curious does not guarantee they will go any further.

In the middle of all of this is a different
response...the disciples

And then, in the middle of this sandwich is the response of the disciples.

“Calling the Twelve to him, he began to send them out two by two and gave them authority over impure spirits.” (Mark 6:7, NIV)

Mutual Support

Power with the task

Jesus sends them out two by two and invest in the the power over impure spirits. They are the extension of his ministry, a foreshadowing of what will happen.

In this Jesus does two things.

He provides mutual support. If you don't have someone, you can grow discouraged.

And he doesn't leave them impotent but gives them the tools they will need to reach people.

Both are still necessary today but in a different format.

The power Jesus gave is bestowed. It doesn't belong to them. They are stewards, not owners.

But it is important to understand that the power Jesus gave them was bestowed. It doesn't belong to them. They are stewards, not owners.

This will become an issue when we get to Mark 9.

“These were his instructions: “Take nothing for the journey except a staff—no bread, no bag, no money in your belts. Wear sandals but not an extra shirt. Whenever you enter a house, stay there until you leave that town. And if any place will not welcome you or listen to you, leave that place and shake the dust off your feet as a testimony against them.”” (Mark 6:8–11, NIV)

He gave instructions.

Take nothing. The word doesn't depend on what you have but what I give you. He did not want them to be dependent on others and therefore soften their message to be accepted. (It happens.)

Be content and not picky. You are not there for the comfort but for the work.

But what happens if people don't listen...as the other two stories show.



Leave it there....

(When people quit listening, stop pressing.)

He says to shake the dust off of your feet.

Let it there. It is a witness to their refusal. But I think there is something more important. For us, it is difficult to shake rejection. We grieve over it. But when you stomp your feet and leave, you are leaving that there and moving on.

When people quit listening, stop preaching.

“They drove out many demons and anointed many sick people with oil and healed them.” (Mark 6:13, NIV)

“The apostles gathered around Jesus and reported to him all they had done and taught.” (Mark 6:30, NIV)

So they did as Jesus said.

And at the end of the chapter they reported all that had happened.



Not all believe, or can.
When they don't move on.

Not all believer can. And the message is clear. Don't keep badgering. Move on. Don't be angry or bitter, just move on.

	Response	The test question
Nazareth	Amazed but offended	What about Jesus is too ordinary, too close or too demanding for me to trust?
Herod	Interested but unchanged	What truth have I enjoyed hearing without doing?
The Twelve	Sent and dependent	Where is he sending me, and what am I hanging on to that he told me to leave?

Review the chart, especially the test questions for ourselves.

Three Stances About Jesus

Admire, but stand against.

Curious, but stand afar

Faith, and stand with.

Remember that there are three stances about Jesus in our world today.

Some admire him but they will always stand against him because to do more means they have to obey.

Some are curious but will always stand afar off. Never move past the curiosity phase.

And then there are those who have faith and they stand with Jesus.

Who are you?