



READ MARK 6:1-29

Pursue

- This week in our text, we will watch various people receive or reject the gospel/Jesus. First, we see Jesus' hometown reject him in unbelief. While initially astonished by Him they end up offended by Him. They "know" Him, His family, His history, His town even, and they conclude that nothing special can come from them. They are so familiar with his humanity that they can't wrap their minds around his divinity. But in Jesus, the Son of God, the Servant King, both humanity and divinity are found. They reject Him in their unbelief, and He does not do a mighty work among them because of it.
 - Where might you struggle with unbelief in your life, maybe even in partial ways (Mark 9:24)? Where might you need to embrace Jesus rather than reject Him?
- In our text this week we see another literary sandwich of Mark. It begins with the sending out of the disciples (v.7-13) and ends with the disciples' return from their mission (v.30). Sandwiched between these stories is the story of John the Baptist's death.
 - Jesus sends His disciples out with His authority to proclaim the gospel and heat among the Jewish people. He instructs His disciples to take the same items the Israelites took with them in the Exodus story, but Jesus has them leave behind other provisions so that they are dependent ultimately on God but also on the people with which they are sharing the good news. This is for a specific reason, their reception or rejection of the disciples serves as a kind of living parable of their acceptance or rejection of the gospel - the call to believe in Jesus and repent.
 - In your life God has placed you in specific places and with specific people to be ambassadors of the Kingdom of God. How might you grow in boldness knowing Christ has given you His authority? How might you grow in dependency on Him in that ministry?
- Mark then depicts the tragic death of John the Baptist. While much can be learned from this story we will look at two things today. First, this story serves as a foreshadowing of Christ's death.
 - What similarities do you find in this story and Jesus' trial and death?

Second, this story serves as a foreshadowing of what the disciples can expect as they go out in the image of Christ to be proclaimers of the gospel. They too will face rejection and for many even death. This is true of Jesus' followers even today. There is a worldly cost to following Jesus but an eternal reward.

- Can you think of time you standing firm in the gospel was costly? How did God prepare and sustain you?
- Is there a circumstance you are in today that is difficult to proclaim the gospel because you could face rejection, persecution, etc.? How can your group support, pray, and encourage you?

Practice

- **OPTION 1 | Fear of Man.** In the story of John the Baptist's death, we see that Harold was more fearful of man's rejection would mean for him than what rejecting the gospel would mean for him. This is similar to Pilate's in the story of Jesus' death.
 - In what ways does the fear of rejection keep you from sharing the gospel or living a gospel-rich life before others? Spend time in group in confession and prayer for one another. Discuss what walking in repentance in these areas will look like.
 - In what ways has God worked in and through you when you have stepped out in trust and obedience to share the gospel? If you faced rejection because of it, how has God ministered to you in that rejection?
- **OPTION 2 | Followers & Enemies Chart.** Our Bible Study classes received this document, and this could be a great tool to use throughout our study as well. Throughout Mark, we will see two main types of people: followers of Jesus and enemies of Jesus. While the narrator will not often explicitly label someone as a follower or enemy, the reader can use the actions or responses described in the text to determine if someone is a follower or enemy. Use this linked chart to keep track of the characteristics of both types of people and how they specifically respond to Jesus. Use this list as an opportunity to consider your own character and actions: Which category do you think best describes you? Where might God be calling you to repentance or growth?

Proclaim

- Earlier in this series, we encouraged people to develop a 15-second testimony. Have each group member share who they are hopeful to share that story with in the next few months.