

# The Gospel of Mark


Part 19

## Offended by Jesus?

# TALKINGPOINTS WALKINGPOINTS

2024.4.7



A publication of  the adult discipleship ministry of Triangle Community Church.

**Talk** together about the glory of God's kingdom. –Psalm 145:11  
Love the Lord your God and **walk** in all his ways. –Joshua 22:5

Triangle Community Church aims to be a “transforming church”. We exist to be used by God as He transforms ordinary people into extraordinary followers of Jesus Christ. TCC believes not only that life-change is possible—but that it is to be expected. Growth is God's will for his people. But transformation does not happen by accident. It requires intentional, intelligent action. 1 Timothy 4:7 instructs you to “discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness.” Since “Talking Points, Walking Points” is intended both for individual reflection and for group discussion, questions vary in degree of vulnerability required. Generally it is best to begin group discussions with questions which involve less personal disclosure—but don't linger there. Be sure to “dive deep” too! The questions which require the greatest openness and honesty, as well as those in the section entitled “Digging Deeper in your Daily Quiet Time”, are perfect for private reflection.

## Questions for Reflection or Discussion

- What from Sunday's message interested you? ...made sense to you? ...confused you? ...intrigued you? ...upset you? ...encouraged you? ...and **why**?
- Read Mark 6:1-3. Notice the interesting phenomenon: they disdained him personally while being impressed by his wisdom and miracle-working power. **Why** do people resort to character assassination?

Look back at Mark 3:20–22. How did the following groups respond to Jesus, the miracle-worker?

- ① the crowds \_\_\_\_\_
- ② his own family \_\_\_\_\_
- ③ the religious leaders \_\_\_\_\_

Which of those responses have you had in the past? What is your current response to Jesus?

- Think about this scenario: Local boy returns to his hometown after winning a lottery worth \$65 million. **How** do you imagine he would be received—and **why**?

Now read Mark 6:4-6. Jesus has the ability to bless whomever he pleases with perfect health now and life eternal hereafter. Yet they disdained him and ran him out of town! Try to explain that.

Read how Romans 3:9-18 describes **all** humanity. How does this explain our response to Jesus?

- Pastor Doug concluded with the haunting observation that **the most important question** is whether or not **Jesus** finds **us** offensive! Have you ever wondered that about yourself? Tell us about it.

What hope does Psalm 7:11 hold out to us? How about Psalm 103:1–5 and Psalm 130:1–4? Do you see yourself in Hebrews 2:11? Will Jesus find **you** offensive?

## Sermon Summary Key Text: Mark 6:1-6

We are looking at the life of Christ as presented in the gospel of Mark, and in my mind, the key phrase in today's text is that the people of Nazareth took offense at Jesus (6:3). This word translated as "took offense" comes from the Greek word *skandalizo*, from which we get our word scandal. They were scandalized by Jesus; he evoked visceral rejection and hostility in them! Always and everywhere there is something about Jesus that people find scandalous. *"What is beyond dispute is that in the ministry of two or three years, Jesus of Nazareth attracted and infuriated his contemporaries, mesmerized and alienated the ancient world, unleashed a movement that has done the same ever since, and thus changed the course of history forever."* —John Paul Meier

In today's text, Jesus returned to Nazareth. Having grown up in this tiny town of 500, Jesus probably knew everyone. He spoke at the synagogue, leaving a distinct impression: "they were astonished, saying, 'Where did this man get these things, and what is this wisdom given to Him, and such miracles as these performed by His hands?'" (v. 2). They were surprised to hear him teaching like a rabbi when they knew that He lacked the official credentials of a rabbi! In their minds, He wasn't qualified to be a teacher. But think about it: Jesus was the only person who ever taught the Scriptures who had perfect theology, covering every area, and the only person who perfectly walked his talk. The greatest teacher who has ever lived was in their midst. The most moral person who has ever lived was in their midst. And they found that offensive!

They attempted to discredit Jesus with *ad hominem* arguments: "Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, and brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon? Are not His sisters here with us?" (v. 3) Carpenters and builders were not high on the social ladder. They were considered menial laborers. "What's this carpenter doing here, teaching us?" It is also very curious that people mentioned Mary, rather than Joseph? (Jews typically identified people according to their relationships to their fathers, not to their mothers.) Why mention Mary? Probably because they believed that Jesus had been conceived by Mary out of wedlock. "Isn't this man Jesus the illegitimate son of that immoral woman Mary? What is he doing up here teaching? He was disqualified at birth!" Then, they mentioned Jesus' siblings.

Now we don't know much about Jesus' siblings, but we do know that they were not believers (see Mark 3:21 & 31; cf. John 7:5. After his resurrection they came to believe in him). It is very possible that at this point, in the entire town of Nazareth, only Mary knew who Jesus really was! No one else believed. Perhaps you are the only Christian in your family, or the only Christian where you work. You know how difficult and isolating that can be—because Jesus has always been a very controversial figure. He offends people. He always has, and he always will (John 1:9-12). Every culture, in every historical time period, finds something offensive about Jesus. We see it here in Nazareth as the text clearly tells us that the people were offended by Jesus.

Jesus has always scandalized people. Jesus viewed himself as a scandalon, that is, as a rejected building stone (See Matt. 21:42; Mark 12:10; Luke 20:17) He once quoted Psalm 118:22 as a reference to himself (Matthew 21:42). This Jesus whom God appointed to be the cornerstone of His Kingdom program was rejected and hated by most of his contemporaries! And guess what? Nothing has changed. Jesus is still a scandalon today. Think about it. The world broadly and vehemently rejects who He is, what He demands, the allegiance he requires, and the morality he represents. Our woke popular culture today is diametrically opposed to who Jesus is and what he teaches. Our culture is openly hostile to biblical Christianity (each year Congress opens session in prayer—but did you know that they are no longer permitted to pray in Jesus' name?). But Jesus is to prayer as a stamp is to a letter; without Jesus' name, it won't get there! We come to the Father in Jesus' name, or we don't come at all!

Question: Is Jesus an offense to you? Are you embarrassed by Him? Do you push back, saying, "That is a hard teaching" (John 6:60, 66). Have you placed your trust in Jesus as your sin bearer—or do you take offense at him, as the people of Nazareth did? Our problem is that spiritual darkness does not like spiritual light (John 3:17-19). It reveals our sin, our selfish motives, as well as our self-righteousness. Everyone has excuses for why they don't embrace Jesus. But for most people, they are unwilling to see themselves as a sinner in need of a Savior. And that is a very hazardous place to be. We are not innocent before God until proven guilty. God has already declared us to be guilty. The people of Nazareth rejected Jesus. Please don't follow their example.

Mark adds a very curious detail about the result of Nazareth's rejection: Jesus could do no miracle there except lay His hands on a few sick people and heal them (v. 5). This doesn't mean that Jesus lost His power, that he became incapable of manifesting miraculous signs. Instead, it was a judgment of God on the town of Nazareth. God withheld His power from these stubborn, hard-hearted people. Jesus was astonished at the depth of their calloused unbelief (v. 6). There are different kinds of unbelief: there is skeptical but open-minded unbelief, and then there is hard-hearted, calloused unbelief. Jesus' neighbors in Nazareth refused to respond to the convicting work of the Holy Spirit in their lives. Jesus is a stumbling block to all of us; we all are God's enemies until we become his friends.

We are surrounded by people who want nothing to do with Jesus. They'll say, "I don't need Jesus. I'm doing just fine without Him." I can't think of a more foolish statement a sinful human being could make! There is nothing we need more desperately than Jesus, because he who doesn't have Jesus has no hope in this life or in the next. If you do not have Jesus, you have no hope. You do not want to be among those people who are embarrassed by the name of Jesus. The people of Nazareth had the Lord of glory in their midst for three decades and all they saw was the offense. Jesus was astonished at the depth of their unbelief. In the end, as a sign of God's judgment, Jesus could do no mighty works there. That was only the immediate temporal judgement on their unbelief. More importantly and tragically, a final, eternal judgement awaited them. But the question, "What is it about Jesus that offends you?" really isn't the most important question. The more important question is: What is it about you that most offends Jesus? After all, Jesus isn't on trial—we are (John 3:18)! All who are offended by Jesus in this life, will be in offense to him in the next life (Hebrews 3:12).

## Digging Deeper in Your Daily Quiet Time

**"Five Question Bible Study"** (see below) *is useful for studying any topic.*  
*Let's use it to explore "the offense of the cross"...*

**Monday**—Study 1 Corinthians 1:18-19.

**Tuesday**—Study 1 Corinthians 1:20-21.

**Wednesday**—Study 1 Corinthians 1:22-25.

**Thursday**—Study 1 Corinthians 1:26-29.

**Friday**—Study 1 Corinthians 1:30-31.

**Saturday**—Study Romans 9:31–33.

Need blank copies for doing more  
"Five Question Bible Study"?  
e-mail: [Dan.Clement.TCC@gmail.com](mailto:Dan.Clement.TCC@gmail.com)

### Five Question Bible Study

Bible Text: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_



What idea particularly strikes me from this text? [Note in which verse(s) it is found.]



What question does this text raise in my mind—and how would **this text** answer it?



What about Jesus Christ—his character and/or his redemption—relates to this text?



What action must I take as a result of this text? Be concrete and specific.



With whom will I share what I learned from this text? [and what was their response?]