

## Mark 6

**Read Mark 6:1-6:** The friends and neighbors who grew up with Jesus did not think of him as a special or gifted person. He was not considered to be a great teacher, healer, biblical authority or miracle worker until he went into full-time ministry. It says that he was mainly known as a carpenter. This scope of work may have included stone masonry.

We also know that Jesus was not really a good-looking or a popular guy.

*For He grew up before Him like a tender shoot, And like a root out of dry ground; He has no stately form or majesty That we would look at Him, Nor an appearance that we would take pleasure in Him. <sup>3</sup> He was despised and abandoned by men, A man of great pain and familiar with sickness; And like one from whom people hide their faces, He was despised, and we had no regard for Him. (Isaiah 53)*

Once Jesus started preaching, his giftings kicked in. That is generally the way that God's gifts work. They arrive as needed. Tools are not made for impressing people or entertaining yourself.

All of a sudden, Jesus was coming up with interpretations and stuff that none of the rabbis knew. He also taught with authority instead of deferring to some other teacher. Apparently in those days, the Rabbis did not go out on a limb, beyond their teachers or predecessors. Jesus was putting out *truth bombs* that made the mundane self-evident commentators of scripture embarrassed. He was regarded as very wise; especially when he was out of town. It is easier to accept the fact that a stranger is *an expert from afar*, more so than your own neighbor or relative.

**Read Mark 6:7-13:** The number twelve is frequently used in the bible to signify a government body or oversight group.

Sending them out in twos makes sense. They would be falsely accused, so two witnesses makes for a much better testimony than one. It also adds accountability in isolated and tempting circumstances away from home. Beyond all of that, the gifts of the Spirit place the greatest importance on what can bless the body of Christ, at large, rather than the solo saint.

In Jewish legal practice in Jesus' time (Second Temple period, influenced by Mishnah-era norms), testimony rules emphasized multiple witnesses. Key differences between one witness and two witnesses:

- Legal standing
  - One witness: Generally insufficient to establish most civil or capital claims. A single testimony was weak and usually not accepted for convicting, condemning, or transferring property.
  - Two witnesses: Considered the minimum reliable testimony for establishing facts, convictions, inheritance claims, property transfers, and most legal disputes (based on Deuteronomy 19:15 and later rabbinic interpretation).
- Burden of proof
  - One witness: Could prompt investigation or raise suspicion but rarely met the statutory burden to resolve a case.
  - Two witnesses: Met the biblical requirement ("By the mouth of two or three witnesses shall a matter be established") and created a presumption strong enough for legal action.
- Capital cases
  - One witness: Never sufficient.
  - Two witnesses: Required for conviction and sentencing; even then courts had strict procedures (cross-examination, warning—*hatra'ah*—prior to the act, and high evidentiary standards).
- Civil transactions (contracts, property)
  - One witness: Weak evidence; parties preferred written deeds or multiple witnesses.
  - Two witnesses: Accepted as establishing agreements, inheritances, and transfers when documents weren't available.
- Credibility and conflict
  - One witness: Easier to challenge; courts treated single-witness claims with caution.
  - Two witnesses: If they agreed, their testimony stood; if they conflicted, both could be disqualified depending on circumstances.
- Role in New Testament narratives
  - Jesus' teachings often reflect Jewish legal norms (e.g., Matthew 18:16 cites "two or three witnesses" for establishing a matter), and Gospel accounts sometimes treat single witnesses or solitary accusations differently than formal court testimony would.

Summary: Two witnesses carried the biblical and rabbinic weight required to establish legal facts; one witness was generally inadequate for decisive legal outcomes, serving only to prompt inquiry or support other evidence.

We are blessed when someone receives us in Jesus' name. It is a blessing to let people contribute, or house or feed any of the LORD's workers.

God wants us to look to him for our daily needs. Packing a lot of provisions will cut down on our prayer time and neediness. Our daily needs drive us to God. God wants to talk about our *daily manna*. Living on a short leash is probably the best way to have an active prayer life. It also gives the opportunity for others to meet our needs and share in the blessing. God does not need us to be his gospel agents, but it blesses us to participate. Likewise, with our support teams.

Here are several Bible verses that promise reward or blessing to those who support, care for, or partner with God's workers:

- Matthew 10:41-42 — “Whoever receives a prophet because he is a prophet will receive a prophet’s reward... And whoever gives one of these little ones even a cup of cold water because he is a disciple, truly I say to you, he will by no means lose his reward.”
- Luke 10:7 — “Stay in the same house, eating and drinking what they provide, for the laborer deserves his wages.”
- 1 Corinthians 9:14 — “In the same way, the Lord commanded that those who proclaim the gospel should get their living by the gospel.”
- Galatians 6:6 — “Let the one who is taught the word share all good things with the one who teaches.”
- Philippians 4:15-18 — Paul thanks the Philippians: their gifts are a fragrant offering, acceptable and pleasing to God, and he says they will be rewarded.
- 3 John 1:5-8 — John commends Gaius for supporting traveling brothers and urges believers to show hospitality to such workers, saying it is for God's work.
- Hebrews 6:10 — “For God is not unjust to forget your work and labor of love which you have shown toward His name, in that you have ministered to the saints and do minister.”
- Matthew 25:35-40 — Though broader, Jesus teaches that serving those in need (which includes ministry workers) is as serving Him; such service receives reward.
- Acts 20:35 — “It is more blessed to give than to receive.” (Paul quoting Jesus; encourages generosity toward workers and ministry.)
- Romans 15:24, 31 — Paul expresses hope to visit so that those who have helped him might have fellowship in the reward.

If you'd like, I can group these by theme (financial support, hospitality, hospitality to itinerant workers, divine remembrance/reward) or provide short explanations and context for each verse.

**Read Mark 6:14-29:** John the Baptist told Herod that he should not have his brother’s wife; so that created a *hatred looking for an opportunity*. She was a *climber* who dumped his uncle when he lost his rulership position. That is what you call *selling your body to the highest bidder*. People like that take no prisoners; and they carry grudges with no boundaries.

Yes. Extra-biblical sources and historical context (mainly Josephus and later historians) explain how Herod Antipas came to be married to Herodias and why that marriage was controversial:

- Josephus (Antiquities of the Jews 18.5–6; Wars of the Jews 2.169–170)
  - Herodias was originally married to Herod II (also called Herod Philip I), a son of Herod the Great by Mariamne II. That marriage produced a daughter, Salome.
  - After Herod II was divorced/removed from succession (Herod the Great sidelined him), Herodias later married Herod Antipas, tetrarch of Galilee and Perea.
  - Josephus frames the marriage as unlawful and scandalous because Herodias had married her half-uncle (Antipas) and because she left her first husband while he was still alive — a violation of Jewish marriage norms then and a political affront within the Herodian family.
  - Josephus reports that this marriage caused public outrage and damaged Antipas's reputation.
- Roman and political context
  - Marriages in the Herodian dynasty were often political: alliances, succession moves, and prestige mattered. Antipas's marriage to Herodias strengthened his local position but destabilized family alliances and offended Jewish public opinion.
  - Roman law didn't forbid such unions among client rulers, but Jewish religious law and social norms did, making the union especially inflammatory in Judaea.
- Jewish law and social norms
  - Levitical prohibitions (e.g., Leviticus 18) and rabbinic sensibilities forbade many close-kin marriages; marrying a brother's wife while the brother lived was seen as adulterous or incestuous by many Jews (hence John's public rebuke: "It is not lawful for you to have her").
  - The marriage violated expectations for royal comportment in the eyes of Jewish subjects and religious leaders.
- Political fallout and consequences
  - The scandal contributed to Antipas's unpopularity; combined with other political missteps (like his conflict with Agrippa II and failed dynastic ambition), it helped lead to his exile by Caligula around 39 CE.
  - Herodias is portrayed by Josephus as ambitious and divisive; her influence over Antipas and her role in court intrigues are emphasized.
- Sources and reliability
  - Josephus is the primary extra-biblical source for details; he wrote in the late first century CE and had access to Roman and local records and traditions, but his accounts reflect his perspective and political aims.
  - No contemporary Jewish sources survive that give a fuller picture; Roman administrative records are sparse. Archaeology sheds light on Herodian rule generally but not on intimate family matters.

If you want, I can quote the key Josephus passages (Antiquities 18.5–6 and Wars 2.169–170) in a translation, summarize differing scholarly views, or outline how this background helps explain the Gospel accounts.

Either way, John had been the main attraction. He had to step aside for featured attraction, Jesus. He did his part. In fact, Jesus was mistaken for John the Baptist who had been said to have risen from the dead. Some of John the Baptist's disciples became disciples of Christ, so that had to be a clear transition too.

*<sup>35</sup> Again the next day John was standing with two of his disciples, <sup>36</sup> and he looked at Jesus as He walked, and \*said, "Behold, the Lamb of God!" <sup>37</sup> And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus. <sup>38</sup> And Jesus turned and saw them following, and \*said to them, "What are you seeking?" They said to Him, "Rabbi (which translated means Teacher), where are You staying?" <sup>39</sup> He \*said to them, "Come, and you will see." So they came and saw where He was staying, and they stayed with Him that day; it was about the [ai]tenth hour. <sup>40</sup> One of the two who heard John speak, and followed Him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. (John 1)*

God honors his featured servant by clearing away competing voices. When it was time for the Holy Spirit to do a mighty work on earth, he waited for Jesus to leave.

*<sup>7</sup>Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you. (John 16)*

**Read Mark 6:30-44:** Jesus and his disciples were literally overrun with people seeking miracles and healings. It was hard for them to even rest and eat. Leaving the crowd illustrates Jesus creating ministry boundaries. Some people have an issue about ever turning your back on a need. You have to survive to live another day.

Feeding people is a way to fish for men. They will leave when they are offended by the word, but some will stay. God wants us to plan, but he also wants us to be in need to have to call on God. Otherwise, we would do it all ourselves.

**Read Mark 6:45-52:** Jesus would have to have used his supernatural vision to see men rowing hard out in the middle of the Sea of Galilee. The narrowest crossing is 4 miles. They would be at least 2 miles away at 3:00-6:00 PM. They were getting a workout and not getting anywhere. They were obedient to his direction. Not every fall or setback can be attributed to disobedience. I tend to fail forward. In other words, I must come to an end of myself as being the problem solver for God to rescue me.

Believers in the same boat are an image of the church. Either Jesus is in it, or it is just a service club.

**Read Mark 6:53-56:** Jesus was healing everybody who came to him. It caused a massive public stir. People were bringing sick friends and neighbors from everywhere. These same people called out for Jesus' death not too long thereafter.

*<sup>39</sup> But He answered and said to them, "An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. \*Matthew 12:39)*

*<sup>29</sup> And while the crowds were thickly gathered together, He began to say, "This is an evil generation. It seeks a sign, and no sign will be given to it except the sign of Jonah the prophet. (Luke 11)*