

Good morning, everyone. Take your Bibles, if you will, and turn to Mark chapter 6 with me. Mark chapter 6. We've come a long ways pretty quickly through Mark. We're gonna slow down a little bit today. Mark chapter 6, verses 1 through 6. The message titled today is A Gift Not Given. And so we're going to be looking together at Jesus's rejection, his actual second rejection at Nazareth. So if you're able, please rise with me in honor of the one who gave us this word. And I'll read the scriptures for us this morning. Mark chapter 6 verses 1 through 6 reads, And Jesus went out from there and came into his hometown, and his disciples followed him. And when the Sabbath came, he began to teach in the synagogue, and many listeners were astonished, saying, Where did this man get these things, and what is this wisdom given to this man, and such miracles as these performed by his hands? And is this man not the carpenter, the son of Mary, and brother of James, and Joseph, and Judas, and Simon? Are not his sisters here with us? And they were taking offense at him. And Jesus was saying to them, a prophet is not without honor except in his hometown, and among his own relatives, and in his own household. And he could do no miracle there except that he laid hands on a few sick people and healed them. And he was marveling at their unbelief and he was going around the villages teaching. Let's pray. Dear Heavenly Father, we glorify you today for the opportunity, the gift that you've given us in this body that we get to gather together in worship of you. We pray, Lord, that your word would pierce each of us, that we would understand your scriptures by the gift and teaching of the Holy Spirit upon our lives, and that we would apply these words as we move into the week, that we would be encouraged in your sovereignty, that we would know that you are the one in control of all things, that you are the one in control of salvation, and that we can glorify your name and your gracious gift your sovereignty. I pray, Lord, that you would remove any hindrances from me, any nerves. I am fully dependent upon you, and I pray, Lord, that you would display your grace in that. We pray, Lord, for all those that were not able to join us, that you would help them to heal, to feel better, and that you'd bring the body of those who are apart from it back together in the future. We love you and praise you in all that you've given us. We love you and praise you for your grace. And I pray that we will glorify you in all that we do. In your holy name I pray, amen. All right, you can be seated. So in this text this morning, we have a very small, is it not working? Hey guys, his audio is not working all of a sudden. We have a very small set of verses, almost in passing, if you're just reading through here, you go, okay, well at Nazareth, he wasn't accepted. And as I mentioned

a moment ago, this is actually the second time, and we'll take a look at the first time here in just a few moments, but it actually teaches much more than maybe at first glance we all would consider. So I want to set the stage for us, set the stage of where Nazareth is, kind of what it looks like from a physical perspective. And then we're going to move into what the narrative is teaching us between the interaction between Jesus and his hometown. Because there's a lot of things here that we need to understand that Mark is teaching us. Remember, we've come through five chapters now. Five chapters where we've been able to see the authority of Christ established. We've been able to see his miracles at work. We've been able to see his healings. And there's something that Mark has shown us through all the parables, through all the teachings, through all the miracles, is Christ's authority. Mark establishes Christ's authority, bar none. And so we're going to see here a group of people that were not given a gift. They were not given a gift of understanding. And so we're going to look at the way God's sovereignty works in the gift of salvation. So to set the stage a little bit here, he's returning to his hometown. This was a short trip to his hometown, or this short trip teaches us a lot more than, like I said, what we would normally have. And the physical town of Nazareth is really kind of a, from a Jewish perspective, a more slum, maybe not the best word, but it's kind of the idea, the connotation that we would have. It's a town carved out of a solid rock hill. They know where Nazareth is even today. And so it's basically this town that was chiseled out of this large, rock face. The residents were about 500 at this time, roughly 500 residents. There was a lot of Hellenists there, so there was a lot of Greeks that were residing there, the Jews as well. But because of the large amount of Greeks, you see Greek influence there, the Jews would have thought it not a good place to be or be from. You weren't maybe as wholly Jewish as you should be because there's so many Greeks in your hometown. And this is one of the good examples here where the writers of the Gospels, the Synoptic Gospels, Matthew, Mark, and Luke, Matthew records the same scenario in Matthew 13, 53 through 58. So if you want to look at Matthew's rendition, we'll be referencing a little bit here and there today. But you'll see Matthew's rendition there. And we're going to look at Luke's rendition, and I'll show you why I call this the second visit to Nazareth here shortly. But I want us to keep in mind while we're getting into this text, the teaching that we've seen from Mark. Mark has made the argument, and I was very excited about it a minute ago, but I'm going to re-emphasize it again. Mark has set the tone for the authority of Christ. That's what he has done over and over in his teachings, in his miracles, over and over again, Mark has made an argument for the authority of Christ. So I'm

going to begin number one with a hometown visit. If you have your notes, a hometown visit. And so he's going back to visit his hometown. Now, if you want to make a note there, if you take notes, if you want to make a note there, this is his second visit. And I want to show you why it's his second visit. If you would turn with me to Luke chapter four, there's a lot of debate and discussion and even maybe even some argument about Luke chapter four. and whether it's not a different rendition or retelling of the same interaction. But there's too many things that are different. So I'm going to read Luke chapter 4, verses 14 through 30. It's a more lengthy passage, but I want us to see Luke's account because of the variation where Luke puts it, how Luke writes. Keep in mind that Luke writes in a very chronological, linear fashion. He's a doctor. He's very point A to point B. He is less out of the three synoptic gospels. He's the one that writes less on a needs basis, more of a historical basis. So he's showing you Jesus's life as it happened, whereas Matthew and Mark teach and write more from a making points along the way, right? So some of their stuff is in different orders, depending on the parables and the teachings. And so Luke here in chapter 4, verses 14 through 30 is going to give us what is the first visit to Nazareth. So Luke chapter 4 is very early in Jesus' life, right after his temptation. He goes back home. So I'm going to read this to you, keep in mind compared to what we're reading in Mark 6. And Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about him spread through all the surrounding district. And he was teaching in their synagogues, being glorified by all. And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up. And as was his custom, he entered the synagogue on the Sabbath and stood up to read. And the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him, and he opened the scroll and found the place where it was written, The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free those who are oppressed, to proclaim the favorable year of the Lord. And he closed the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. And the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. And he began to say to them, Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing. And all were speaking well of him and marveling at the gracious words which were coming forth from his lips. And they were saying, Is this not Joseph's son? And he said to them, No doubt you will quote this proverb to me. Physician, heal yourself. Whatever we heard took place at Capernaum. Do also hear in your hometown as well. And he said, Truly I say to you, no prophet is welcome in his hometown, but I say to you in

truth, there were many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the sky was shut up for three years and six months, when a great famine came over all the land, and yet Elijah was sent to none of them, but only to Zarephath, in the land of Sidon, to a woman who was a widow. And there were many lepers in Israel at the time of Elisha the prophet, and none of them were cleansed but only Naaman the Syrian. And all the people in the synagogue were filled with rage as they heard these things. And they stood up and drove him out of the city and led him to the edge of the hill on which there had been built, and in order to throw him down the cliff, but passing through their midst, he went on his way. So in timeline, looking at Luke, looking at the differences in the story, knowing how Luke writes versus how Mark writes, the best estimation is this event in Luke happened about a year and a half before where we are in Mark. If you look in Luke, he hasn't called his disciples yet. He hasn't really fully begun his ministry as he has in Mark. So at this point, he is by himself in Luke. teaching in the synagogue, and they drive him out to the cliff in an attempt to throw him over. So he's actually already been rejected once at his hometown. The people there said very similar things that we're going to recount here in Mark 6, but there's some distinct differences that we'll see along the way that will show us that this is his second time. So we have to understand the reason why I'm explaining this to you is this is the second time he's been home. He now has his disciples. He now is at his hometown, verse 1 of chapter 6, and Jesus went from there and came into his hometown and his disciples followed him. So he is now fully embraced his position as rabbi. Everyone called him rabbi. It was traditional and common for a rabbi to bring his disciples to their hometown. A very common practice. And so now in Mark 6, he's now going home for a second time. So he's already shown them clearly from the Old Testament, from the Jewish scriptures, that he was the one who came to fulfill Isaiah. And they had already rejected him for the same reason then, that he will be rejected in the text that we'll see today. So I want to set this idea here of a second time, because it's important to understand that the people of Nazareth have had the truth now twice. They've had the truth of Christ twice. Now, whenever we think of it going the second time, you have to understand all the miracles that Jesus had done in his first year and a half. Mark records so many things, and as I mentioned before, even without social media, news traveled very fast there, okay? There weren't TikToks or Facebook, but believe me, there were people who liked to talk. And so word traveled, they knew about his miracles, they knew about his teaching, they knew what he was going to do, what his reputation was. And then he still goes into,

and we'll see here in just a moment, he still goes back and begins to teach in the synagogue. So there was, I want to make sure and understand there's no shadow of a doubt that the people of Nazareth had already knew who he was from his own mouth, by his own presentation from Isaiah the first time, and now he's going back after having established a ministry for a year and a half to teach them again. So that's the setting of where we are getting into chapter six. So point number two, there's a hometown offense. There's a hometown offense, verses two and three. So I'm going to reread verses two and three for us, and then we'll dig into some of the things that the crowd in his hometown says to him. Mark chapter 6 verses 2 and 3 reads, And when the Sabbath came, he began to teach in the synagogue, and many listeners were astonished, saying, Where did this man get these things, and what is this wisdom given to this man? And such miracles as these performed by his hands. Is this man not the carpenter, the son of Mary, and brother of James, and Joseph, and Judas, and Simon? Are not his sisters here with us? And they were taking offense at him. So now he's back home, he's back in Nazareth, and as was his custom, he would go to the synagogue. Jesus still ministered to the people of Israel in the same fashion that they had looked at the Word of God for centuries. So he continued this custom, and he sits down and teaches them. We don't know the content of his teaching as usual. Mark is very succinct, very quick and clear in his recordings of it. And so he just says he began to teach them, and they were listening. And then they reacted. Where did this man get these things? Because it says in verse two that they were astonished. Where did this man get these things? And what is this wisdom given to this man and such miracles as these performed by his hands? Now, if you stop there, if you stop there, it almost seems like they're believing him this time. If you stop there and you don't read the rest of the connotation of what they say, it may lead you to believe, okay, he's went back to Nazareth and now his hometown will embrace him. But when you add in verse three, is this not the man, the carpenter, the son of Mary and brother of James and Joseph and Judas and Simon, are not his sisters here with us? You begin to understand the tone of what they're saying is not one of support, but one of disgust. What they're saying is not one of, oh, look at this man, this must be who we've been waiting for, this must be the Messiah. No, no, this is actually a cry of derision towards him. Now I want to break down the culture here and understand the words that they're saying based on the town of Nazareth. Now, as we established in the introduction, the town of Nazareth is full of both Greeks and Jews. And you can hear the wording that they have here being proclaimed by both. Both of their issues with Jesus

are here. Beginning of verse 3, is this man not the carpenter? Now, in Jewish custom, working with your hands was a good thing. That's how many of them made their living, whether it be shepherding, working with their hands. And in that culture, carpenter also had the same connotation as stonemason. So they usually worked with both wood and stone, carving things to make them fit together. And so from a Jewish perspective, that's not a bad thing. That's how everyone did it. But when we look at from a Greek perspective, that was the lowest of the low from the cultural perspective. If you were not born into nobility, if you were born into what we would consider a blue-collar family, you were considered less than ideal, less than fully a person from a social standing. And then it goes on and says, the son of Mary, the son of Mary, what a slap in the face is that? From a Jewish perspective, and the Greeks also, but especially from a Jewish perspective, who you were as a person in the Jewish culture was based on who your father was. not based on who your mother was, to say son of Mary was literally a cultural slap in the face. There's things in our culture that you can think of that you use towards a person with derision that may sound similar to that. So this is essentially this group of people coming from both cultural perspectives deriding him, bringing him down, telling him, how dare you talk to us in such a fashion. So let's think about the perspective here of what's going on, the setting of what we have. We have Jesus, son of Joseph and Mary, who's already been in Nazareth once and they tried to kill him, were it not for his own miraculous escape. They would have thrown him off the cliff, and like I said earlier, it's built on the side of a... The cliff was actually part of the town. They would have driven him out to the, essentially what would have been the front of the town. They would have carved the houses into the rock behind it. And then the cultural place of gathering would have been out in the front, almost like a town square. And at the back of that town square would have been the edge of a cliff, and down the cliff it would have went, into the valley. So the first time he's there, they take him from the synagogue, walk him to the edge of this cliff, and attempt to throw him off. So he goes back, and this time, they start deriding him automatically. And the issue is here, they know where he started. Think about that for just a second from your own perspective. How many of you come, we live in a small town, but how many of you come from a small town? Or how many of you have relatives that just can't wrap their minds around the fact that you're a maybe somewhat successful adult? I have that problem, not even gonna lie, right? Or you have people that you see in movies or connotations of the small town and the person

who leaves the small town and go gets his big city degree, right? You guys have all seen those movies. That's the idea of what's going on here. So we have these people that say, how dare this common man who's one of us, now he thinks he's better than us. How dare he come here? Isn't he just a carpenter? Don't we know his dad and his mom? Don't we know who they are? How dare he come and teach us? He's common just like we are.

Now he has all these followers. I can just hear, you can hear the sarcasm in their tone when you read it now, right? You can hear, now he's got these followers. You can probably hear the conversations.

Now he's coming back and he just thinks he's better than us. He's done these miracles. He's done these teachings. And now he's here telling us who he is. How dare he? How dare he? And then when they have the slap in the face of the son of Mary, you have to understand, not only was it a Jewish cultural slap in the face by calling him his mother's son, not his father's son, but they're also making a stab at his illegitimacy as being born at all. There was a rampant rumor during his time on the earth that Christ was an illegitimate son. So in every way possible in these two verses they are deriding him, slandering him, trying to come at him in such a fashion. And you can get the connotation or the idea of the son of Joseph being the more prominent one because even today you have last names that are Thompson, Sanderson, right? Even our surnames today, they didn't have surnames back then, but even our surnames today develop from that same idea, right? There's entire last names that have grown out of being someone's son. There's some that are, you know, Carpenter, and their livelihood will be attached to their name, but you can still see the idea, the use of who you are as a child being the way of identifying who you are. It was Joseph, it would have been Jesus, son of Joseph, not son of Mary. So I want us to see the derision that we have. And then they bring up his family. His brothers are all here. Now, for a moment, you might think, well, I thought his brothers believed in him. Not yet, they haven't. Not yet they haven't. There are some of his brothers that will embrace him as who he is, but not till after his resurrection. In fact, in John 7, verse 5, it says, for not even his brothers were believing in him. Do you recall back earlier in Mark when his family came to tell him that you need to come with us? And we talked about the wording there. It wasn't a, we would like to spend time with you. It was stop being crazy. You guys remember that? His family came to get him his attention and to reign him in, if you will. Now eventually they do believe in Acts chapter 1 and verse 14, it records after his resurrection, these all with one accord were continually devoting themselves to prayer along with the women and Mary, the mother of Jesus

and his brothers. So eventually his brothers and his mother do embrace who he is after his resurrection. But at this time in Nazareth, they were just common folk working with their hands in a backwoods town that was considered to be nothing to the Jewish people. And so them taking offense, their pride causing them to take offense makes perfect sense when you understand the language they're slapping him with. So now he's back, he's teaching, he's trying to reveal to them again who he is, the same way he did the first time, I'm sure, because in a normal synagogue process, in a normal synagogue worship service, the scrolls were being read every single Sabbath. They would have opened the scroll to a specific place, they had it mapped out, there was a way that they followed it every single year, so they could get through all the Law and the Prophets every year. And so he would have went back and read something else from the Prophets, in his teaching, and so it's very likely he is doing something very similar to what he did the first time. Not to mention all that he's taught, all the miracles that he's had, what Mark's recorded in a year and a half of ministry. I bring all that up because there is no excuse for the people of Nazareth to not believe. I want to establish that very clearly. There's no excuse for the people of Nazareth not to believe from a human perspective. They have all the evidence in front of them. Everything's there. But they take offense at him. Now you might think, how can I take offense at him? Well, this word here is skandalon in the original language. You can hear it in the word skandalon, the root word for scandal. So it's the same idea that we would think of as scandal, the original language would have it as a stumbling block. Your version of the scriptures may actually say they became a stumbling block for him. But in Mark, this word, every time it's used, it's used eight times in the book of Mark, every time it is a word used to explain unbelief in Christ. unbelief in Christ. And it's the same word that Jesus uses in Matthew 11, 6 when he said, and blessed is he who does not take offense or scandal on at me. So he and his teaching, because of him coming from that town, because of their hard-hearted pride, how dare he, a common man like us, come in here and parade himself around like he knows what's going on. He himself became an offense to them. Has anyone ever experienced a time when you took a fence at the name of Jesus? Have you met anyone that takes a fence at the name of Jesus? I think our culture is to that point, would you agree? It's no longer, let's ignore it, let's take a fence at it, right? Let's push back against it, it's now something that we attack. And there's a key difference that we're gonna see here in just a moment as to why that is. So their amazement that we saw in verse 2 is not true amazement. Their astonishment, their amazement is not what we consider amazement. It's more of a how dare he kind

of amazement, right? So they've seen all these miracles, they've heard all these things, and yet this wisdom that Jesus has, this understanding and teaching about himself, is so foreign to them that they are actually brought to a place of offense by it. And if you recall, Paul tells us the same thing, that the wisdom of God is going to be a stumbling block, same word, to Jews and an offense to Greeks. Now, we've just established by the wording here the Greek and Jewish offense that they have with Jesus. Both cultures are here, both are representative, represented, excuse me, and both are seen in the wording that we have here. How dare you be a son of a carpenter and you're the son of Mary? The offense is here. So I want to show you what the gospel does to those who do not have the gift. Now, if you've been listening over the last several weeks and you've followed along through Mark, we know that the gift is the gift of faith. We talked about it a lot last week. So let me have you turn over to 1 Corinthians chapter 1, if you would. I'm going to read another slightly lengthy passage, but I want us to understand the doctrine ultimately here, a doctrine that we derive from these texts called limited atonement. And that's a doctrine that we're discussing today. There's a gift not given to some. 1 Corinthians chapter 1 verses 18 through 31. For the word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise and the cleverness of the clever I will set aside. Where is the wise man? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since in the wisdom of God the world, through its wisdom, did not come to know God, God was well pleased through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe. For indeed, Jews ask for signs and Greeks search for wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified. to Jews a stumbling block, and to Gentiles foolishness, but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men. For consider your calling, brothers, that there were not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, The God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong, and the basic things of the world, and the despised God has chosen the things that are not, so that He may abolish the things that are, so that no flesh may boast before God. But by his doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption, so that just as it is written, let him who boasts, boast in the Lord. So we have here in Nazareth,

and you can begin turning back over to Mark chapter 6, we have here in Nazareth a clear picture of Mark showing us what happens when someone does not have the gift. So I want you to think what he's taught us in the miracles and teaching that he has so far. He taught about the parable of the sower, right? The good soil which the farmer works is what produces the seed and the fruit. We had the miracles, and I won't go through every one of them, but we saw the clear, clear teaching of both the demoniac, who was the one that was converted, while all his other people, his countrymen, told Jesus to go away. We saw a clear distinction because Christ impacted the demoniac, but the others did not have the same gift. And now we come to the woman healed after 12 years. How many of you guys remember last week we talked, how many people were probably touching him in that crowd? More than we can probably count. They were probably shifting around him. Everybody wanted to touch his cloak, but who was healed by the sovereignty of God? The woman. Where was the gift given? Where God chose it to go. And now Mark is showing us in chapter 6, this is a terrible, in my opinion, a terrible place to put chapter 6. This should have been in chapter 5 with the other teachings. Sometimes the chapter breakups are not the most helpful. So now we're here, Mark is teaching us, here's what he does when he gives the gift. Here is what happens when the gift is not given. Someone is presented twice. This group of people have been presented twice by Christ himself, who grew up with him, who knows this man, and yet because the gift was not given, their own pride and offense was allowed to fester they rejected him completely now you may be asking yourself why why doesn't his hometown get the gift and there's only one answer to that question from Scripture God's will there's only one question of that from Scripture and it's very clear and I want to show you that it's very clear Did you know that there is no obligation on the part of God to give grace to anyone? There isn't. There is no obligation from God to give anyone this gift. From our human perspective, we in our minds go, no, no, God is love. I would agree with that. Scripture says He is. But so often we overemphasize that God is love, that we neglect or overshadow or downplay that God is just and righteous and holy and cannot ignore sin. The Jews here, so I want to show you from a scriptural perspective, from a biblical theology as a whole, why the Jews especially were under judgment from God. So I'm going to give you a list, I'm not going to read them all, but I'm going to give you a list of a few places to look at when you have time. And I'll read one of them that summarizes. Deuteronomy chapter 29 and verse 4. Isaiah chapter 29 and verse 10. Those are just two very small

Old Testament examples. There's many, many more. Matthew chapter 13 and verse 13 and following teaches about the judgment on Israel. But a good summation is in Romans chapter 11 verses 7 through 10. If you'd like to turn there you can, I'm going to read it for you. Romans chapter 11 verses 7 through 10. What then? What Israel was seeking it has not obtained, but the chosen obtained it and the rest were hardened. Just as it is written, God gave them a spirit of stupor, eyes to see not and ears to hear not, down to this very day. And David says, let their table become a snare and a trap and a stumbling block and a retribution to them. Let their eyes be darkened to see not and bend their backs forever. And that's just a summary. You can read all of Romans chapter 11 and really 9 through 11 to see more about that. But Israel was under the judgment of God for breaking the covenant. Quick plug, if you'd like to learn more about the covenants, Devin's doing an amazing job teaching on the Abrahamic covenant on Sunday mornings during Sunday school, so I'd encourage you to come learn more about those. But the ultimate reason that the Jews, especially anyone, but especially the Jews here, were not able to understand and the gift was not given is because they were under judgment. Now, God is very gracious and we learn later on in Acts that many of even the teachers and the Pharisees and those who were synagogue leaders did actually convert to Christ under the disciples. So God is still very gracious. But I want us to understand it is by His choice and His mercy alone. Romans 9, verse 18 says, So then He has mercy on whom He desires, and He hardens whom He desires. And in verse 20, lest we say as men that it is unfair, Paul adds, Romans 9, verse 20, On the contrary, who are you, O man, who answers back to God? Will the thing molded say to the molder, why did you make me like this? So Paul is using the visual understanding of a potter and clay and that the potter makes out of the clay vessels for redemption and vessels for destruction. And he says, it is not up to us to ask why. The clay does not ask the potter, why have you made me in this fashion? In fact, Paul in his wording there almost says, how dare you ask? That's the idea. And so the why behind this is not for us to understand. It's good to dig in and it's good to understand that sin is judgment and we need to understand that. But the ultimate reason why some are given a gift and others are not is because God chooses whom will have mercy and who will not. and that it's His just decree, and we have no right to question that. But we see here how God allows that to happen. These people, God simply removed His hands of grace, and their pride, selfishness, and sin ballooned into literally taking an offense at Jesus. And so when the gift is not

given,

how often do we see that Christ himself becomes more of an offense, not softening the heart? Over and over, Israel is called stiff-necked and hard-hearted people. And in Ezekiel, we see the promise that to those whom the gift is given, God removes that heart of stone and gives them the heart of flesh that is able to understand, embrace, and come to faith in Christ. So our application for point two is this clearly presents that these people were not given the gift of faith. that the atonement of Christ is limited to those whom he chooses by his own sovereign decree, by his own justice, by his own mercy, his choice, that that gift is given to whom he will. And we see here clearly that when the gift is not given, the heart does not change. We've seen lives absolutely turned upside down by Christ and Mark, chapters one through five, over and over and over again. Mark has not stepped back from showing us who Christ is since the first word on the first page. And yet here he comes and shows us that there are those who aren't given that gift. And sometimes it's even those whom are close to him. There must be a gift of faith by grace in order for someone to embrace who Christ is. Point number three. A hometown rejection. A hometown rejection, verses four through six. So we're going to see a little bit more detail from Christ here that will elaborate and drive our point home. In verses four through six of Mark chapter six, it says, And Jesus was saying to them, a prophet is not without honor, except in his hometown and among his own relatives and in his own household. And he could do no miracle there, except that he laid his hands on a few sick people and healed them. And he was marveling at their unbelief. And he was going around the villages teaching. So what is Jesus's reaction? He says the same thing to them again that He said the first time. If you remember in Luke, He says the exact same thing. Now, in Luke's recollection, the first time Christ was there, He goes into detail about Elijah and Elisha, and how those prophets were not accepted in their own time. You can read their stories in 1 Kings 17 and 18 for Elijah. and 2 Kings 5 for Elisha. So if you want to see what they went through as coming as the mouthpiece of God or the people of God to tell them that they were wrong, they were absolutely rejected and driven out. And there's other prophets in the Old Testament that show the same kind of reaction. Amos was thrown out of Israel when he was sent to prophesy to the king. And it was not only to the king, but it was against the king. So if you want to see Amos' experience, that's Amos chapter 7, verses 12 and 13. He was rejected. God called Jeremiah. And when Jeremiah was sent, Jeremiah was called a traitor, and he was arrested for being the voice of God. Jeremiah 26, 7 through 11. Micah was treated very similarly

to Jeremiah. All the Old Testament prophets almost bar none were rejected by the nation of Israel. And Jesus himself is using them as an example that a prophet is not without honor except in his hometown and among his own relatives and in his own household. And Isaiah spoke to the same thing that the Messiah would be rejected. He would not be accepted by anyone.

especially the Jews. And if you read through Isaiah, you'll actually see that the Messiah being rejected is part of the fulfillment of pointing to who the Messiah was. For Christ is the true and better prophet. Is he not? Christ is the antitype to the Old Testament prophets. You see Christ being the better Moses, the better Isaiah, the better Elijah, So not only do we see Christ explaining here, or Mark, excuse me, recording the explanation here of those who don't get a gift, but you see when you tie into the fulfillment of the Messiah, their rejection of Jesus is actually a point in the column of, this is the Messiah, according to the Old Testament prophets. There's so much packed into these six verses, it's almost mind-blowing. So we see the clear examples

in the Old Testament of God's people being rejected when God does not bring them to a place of repentance. If you see in the Old Testament, the pattern of Israel over and over and over again was to reject God, to do what they wanted to do, to have a prophet that they rejected until God brought them to the place of repentance, they would be reconciled to God, and then they would go off again. Without the working of God in the life of human beings, they will only embrace their sin more and more and more. So now we've come to a place where we understand what Mark is saying, according to the first five chapters of all, that Jesus brought to people the gifts that He gave. We see the gift not given here. And then we see in verse five,

something that has troubled many people, at least in my conversations with people, about this particular passage. Verse five, and he couldn't

do no miracle there except that he laid his hands on a few sick people and healed them. Now, this verse has been ripped, kicking and screaming out of context to say, see, you have to have enough faith to allow God to work. But if you don't have enough faith, look at Jesus. He couldn't work in his hometown because they didn't have enough faith. And so that's been used to beat people over the head, in lack of a better term, to think that they can conjure up enough faith that allows God to work in their lives. Matthew records the same thing, but he words it slightly different. Matthew 13, 58 says, and he did not do many miracles there because of their unbelief. But Mark, in the way he words it, he says he could do no miracle there except that he laid his hands on a few sick people. So in reality, there were still miracles done. But the issue is not that he

was prevented by man's unbelief or by man's rejection of him, like as if they held some sort of power over him. Mark is just established for five chapters that he has authority over nature, authority over demons, authority over death. We cannot take that verse out of context and go, see, man has control over allowing God to work. In context, it simply is saying he did not do as many miracles because they didn't believe, and the more miracles he did because the gift was not given, the deeper the offense would be. In fact, we know from other scriptures that we are told not to cast pearls before swine, aren't we? Lest they turn and attack. Now, we could get into a long, drawn-out discussion about how Him continuing to work and do things to the people who did not believe were part of the redemptive plan, and upsetting the Jews enough so they wanted to kill Him. Because that is a part of it. But we have to understand that man has no authority or power over the working out of God's plan. This verse does not and cannot mean that based on where it is in the text. There's one other interesting phrase here in verse six. And He was marveling at their unbelief. He is amazed at them not believing. Do you know what God is amazed by and marvels at from a human perspective? Using words that we can understand God better, it says that He marveled. The depravity of man is what God marvels at. How deeply the depraved man is, is what caused the Son of God to marvel. How deeply entrenched their unbelief was, is what caused Jesus to marvel. Their hardness of heart and unwillingness to believe in Him, as I read it this week. That's what caused Jesus to marvel. Just how hard their hearts were. So ultimately when we expand that, we understand the depravity comes from sin. How deeply rooted sin is in the heart of man without God giving the gift. Man has no hope apart from the grace of God. Jesus marveled at their unbelief, understanding how deep rooted sin is and how committed man is to sin and how it impacts every part of who we are. We have no hope outside of the gift, gracious gift of faith that comes from God alone. So our application on this third point is that no one knows who is going to be the outsider or who will be the insider because he's going to continue to go and teach. The end of verse six, he's going to go and continue to teach in the villages as he had been doing. But no one knows who's the outsider or the insider. We've seen in Mark 1-5, chapters 1-5, over and over, he shows that there's the crowd on the outside, the disciples on the inside. Those who don't believe and those who do believe. We see a distinct difference between the two. I can assure you the Jews never

thought that a Greek man in the Decapolis that had a legion of demons would ever be a follower of the Messiah. That would never have entered their thought process. And yet he was. So we have to understand we are not called to determine who it is that will believe and who will not. Spurgeon was loose quotation here, but Spurgeon once said something along the lines of, I wish it would be as easy as lifting up a man's shirt to see a yellow mark on his back for the elect and those who aren't. But since I don't have that, I will preach the gospel to everyone. And that is what our call is

to do, to preach the gospel to all. We don't get to decide who is the one, who have we determined here in the scriptures today, who is the one that makes that decision? God. It is not for us to make. Yet

we are to continue to go around in the example of Christ here and to teach, spreading the gospel to all that we encounter, letting those know of what God has done in our lives, and pointing them to Christ as the one who has done it. Our call is not to determine, but simply to obey. Because Mark, throughout this entire book so far, has made abundantly clear that God is sovereign over the soil. So in conclusion, I want us to understand that there are gifts that are not given. There are those who are not regenerated. There are those who will suffer the judgment of God. But our question cannot be why do they not get the gift? That's not our focus. I lean on R.C. Sproul for this idea. Our focus cannot be, why does everyone not get the gift? Our focus must be, why did I get the gift? God's sovereignty and salvation should not make us question Him as far as, why are you not at my level of justice? But our sovereignty of God and salvation should make us look to Him and go, thank you for the gracious gift because I don't deserve it. God's sovereignty should not

make us doubt Him and His justice, but live freely and righteously and prayerfully and praising Him for what He's done. It should drive us to our knees in grace as we understand that we deserve to be just like those who don't have the gift. We have nothing in us that deserves anything. We have no merit in ourselves, and yet He gave us that gift anyway. That's where our minds and hearts should go. It should not call us to recoil, but to embrace the gracious gift of Christ in our lives. To rest our weary heads on the pillow of God's sovereignty, understanding that He's in control and nothing happens to us without His doing. Nothing. And then we open that up into a broader perspective of not only sovereignty and salvation, but then we see his sovereignty in everything. And we understand that even when times are hard and even when sickness is hit, and even when the car breaks down or the job gets lost, that God is absolutely in control of every one of those things. But we can trust him because of his goodness to us. Because

we've already been brought up death into life. God's sovereignty is something that we as finite people of the dirt should fall to our knees and praise him for. Can you imagine going through life with no meaning and no understanding of the things that happen? I wouldn't be able to get out of bed. So let us rejoice in the sovereignty of God. Let us rejoice in the gift that has been given. And let us pray with everything we have for those who hasn't been given that gift yet, that God would show grace to those who haven't received it. Let us be about the work of Matthew 28 as we've been called to do to teach and to preach the gospel to everyone that we meet, that you might be by God's grace, the tool that he uses to bring someone to himself. What an inestimable privilege it is to be used by God to bring another one of His sheep home. I pray that His sovereignty is encouraging to you. I pray that this message helps you look to Him in awe and glory and do want to do nothing but praise and live for Him because in His sovereignty, that's what it should drive us to. He gave us this gracious gift when He did not have to by His choice alone. Let us honor Him in all that we do. Let's pray. Dear Heavenly Father, we thank you so much for who you are. Thank you so much for showing us your sovereignty in this text today, that we can see that although there is sometimes a gift not given, it should make us cherish the gift that we have that much more. Not because we're special, there is no merit within us, Lord, and we know that it is by your grace and your grace alone that you have given that gift, and we are completely unworthy. Help us to fall to our knees every morning as your mercies are new, to see them as new, and to understand who you are, that we might praise you and glorify you with every fiber of our being. In the good times and in the bad, when things are hard, Lord, help us. When it is so much harder to look to you and your sovereignty, help us to lift one another up. Help us to carry each other's burdens, always pointing to Christ and what he has done in that gift that you have given us. We love you and praise you and thank you for who you are. In your holy name I pray, amen.