

JESUS: THE SERVANT AT WORK

VOLUME ONE

STUDY NINETEEN

A Prophet Without Honor

Mark 6:1–6

Too much familiarity can make a person cynical. Cynical indifference brings such a chilling effect that it freezes God's power.
—Pastor Charles R. Swindoll

WHAT's the big deal?" "Who do they think they are?" "Why the applause?" These questions surface in our hearts when we see people from our past rise to prominence. Just yesterday, it seems, they were just some of the kids on the playground. We remember their flaws and foibles—their awkward years as teenagers. We knew them when they had no extraordinary talents. Why are others so enamored with them now? Familiarity breeds cynicism and can prevent us from seeing who people really are or what they've now become.

Some people regarded Jesus as “no big deal.” They couldn’t get past His humble beginnings—His lowly birth in Bethlehem (Luke 2:7), His simple upbringing as a carpenter’s son (Matthew 13:55) in the small and insignificant village called Nazareth (2:23). Nathanael skeptically said, “Nazareth! . . . Can anything good come from Nazareth?” (John 1:46). One cannot help but wonder how His hometown friends and family felt toward Him.

In our previous *Searching the Scriptures* Bible studies, we saw how Jesus healed a woman who was outcast, forgotten, and chronically ill. We also saw how Jesus raised a girl from the dead. Those who witnessed these miracles were amazed!

In the passage of this *Searching the Scriptures* Bible study, we encounter another group. These folks from Nazareth had the opposite reaction. Instead of amazement, they reacted with shock and skepticism. Let’s follow Jesus into His hometown with His disciples and discover timeless truths that can *encourage the committed, guide the curious, and help the cynics.*



INSIGHT FOR LIVING



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SEARCHING
THE
SCRIPTURES
BIBLE STUDIES

A Prophet Without Honor

Mark 6:1–6



PREPARE YOUR HEART

*Who is like you . . . O LORD—
glorious in holiness,
awesome in splendor,
performing great wonders? (Exodus 15:11)*

In a prayer, express your awe of God and open your heart to see the splendor and great power from the One who can transform your life with His precious truths from Mark.



TURN TO THE SCRIPTURES

Jesus' authoritative teaching and great power dazzled the crowds in Capernaum. Jesus' popularity, however, concerned His relatives. Perhaps they worried that He was making enemies of the powerful elites who didn't like their authority challenged. Or that He was sounding like a revolutionary by making claims about Himself. They sincerely wondered whether He was "out of his mind" (Mark 3:21), and they came from Nazareth to Capernaum to convince Him to come home. But Jesus rebuffed them.

In Mark 6, Jesus went to Nazareth to appeal to His family and friends. His hometown was about twenty to twenty-five miles from the northwest corner of the Sea of Galilee—not too far from Capernaum. Let's see what sort of welcome Nazareth's talk-of-the-town celebrity received when He returned home.



Observation: Jesus—A Prophet Without Honor

Begin with observation, the first step of the *Searching the Scriptures* Bible-study method, by reading [Mark 6:1–6](#).¹ Try to picture yourself as one of Jesus' friends or family members. Imagine that you've known Jesus since He was a boy. You watched Him grow up, and you remember Him as a talented young craftsman. But who is this new Jesus? He's changed, and you're not certain what to make of Him.

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Coming Back to Nazareth—Mark 6:1

In Mark 6:1, Jesus returned to Nazareth as a rabbi, accompanied by His circle of disciples. What questions might have occupied the minds of the people of Nazareth when they saw Him?

If He had fixed your back door, if He had done your cabinets, and He now comes in the synagogue and stands as One in authority, you're going to ask the person sitting next to you, "Who does He think He is? What's happened to Him?"
—Pastor Chuck Swindoll

Teaching in the Synagogue—Mark 6:2

Imagine walking into the synagogue, looking up, and seeing the former carpenter who's now a rabbi standing before the congregation. What does Mark 6:2 tell us about those who heard Jesus when He began to teach? How did they refer to Him?

Look at the words, "this man." There's a slam in those words. "Where did this man get these things?" So they're wondering about His person. "What is this wisdom given to Him?" They wonder about His words. "Where'd a carpenter get wisdom like that?" —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

Reaction of the People—Mark 6:2–3

Summarize the answers they provided to their questions in Mark 6:3. How would you reword the last statement or sentence of 6:3?

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“I mean He speaks our Galilean dialect of Aramaic. He may not want everybody to know it, but we know here in Nazareth: He’s no different from any of the rest of us.” That’s the idea. “They took offense at Him.” —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

Response of Jesus—Mark 6:4–6

What was Jesus’ response to the congregation in Mark 6:4–6? As a result, what could He not do?



Interpretation: Cynical Indifference Walls Us Off from God’s Power

Mark noted that as Jesus began to teach in the synagogue in Nazareth, “many listeners were astonished” (Mark 6:2 NASB). Look up the Greek verb *ekplesso* for “astonish” in the Greek dictionary at billmounce.com. Contrast their reaction with the reaction of those in Capernaum when Jesus taught in the synagogue there—“The people were *amazed*” (same Greek root word, 1:22, emphasis added). Explain the meaning and significance of the townspeople’s reaction to Jesus and their questions.

They’re sitting at the synagogue. They’ve done that all their lives. That’s what you did as a part of Judaism. So, you know the people, and you know that person who has come in, and you are astonished. Look at the questions. They’re all good questions. They’re the right questions. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

The townspeople of Nazareth were “deeply offended” at Jesus and “refused to believe in him” (6:3). Look up the Greek term *skandalizo*, translated “offended,” in the Greek dictionary at billmounce.com. Read [6:3–4](#) in the MSG and the AMP translations. What does it mean that they took offense at Jesus?

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In Mark 6:4–6, Jesus responded to the congregation that “a prophet is honored everywhere except in his own hometown.” The Greek term *prophetes* for “prophet” is used for the first time about Jesus here in Mark’s gospel. The word *honor* means “deference,” “reverence,” “respect.” Look up [6:4–6](#) in *Constable’s Notes* at netbible.org. How would you explain the reason Jesus could not do miracles there?

No words will convince them; no technique will impress them. No amount of logic will convince them. No passionate urging will move them and persuade them. They’re the ones saying, “Who does He think He is?” Cynicism in the raw. And the result is He could not because He would not. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll



Correlation: Responding to Jesus, His Message, and His Miracles

People responded differently to Jesus, His message, and His miracles. Compare our passage to the various responses to Paul’s sermon on Mars Hill ([Acts 17:16–34](#)). What supporting evidence can you find in this passage for these three groups—the cynical, the curious, and the committed?

How did Jesus deal with the cynical, the curious, and the committed in [Matthew 19:16–29](#); [Mark 6:1–6](#); [John 20:24–29](#)? What do these passages teach us about going beyond being exposed to the truth to letting it transform our lives?

*I get a little concerned for some of you who stay exposed to the truth, but the truth never does make a journey into your life. I get a little nervous about your amassing a lot of information but missing the devotion.
—Pastor Chuck Swindoll*

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Application: Let the Truth Change Your Life

Asking the Holy Spirit to show you where you are in this narrative is the goal of application. What encouragement has the Holy Spirit brought to you in whichever group you relate to the most?

If you're among the committed, it's to continue in your growth. Stay humble and open and teachable. If it's among the curious, seek some answers. Pray. Ask God to reveal Himself, to use circumstances to answer some of those longstanding struggles. Ask Him to make you sensitive in areas you've not been before. And if you're among the cynical, hang on. God's never met His match.
—Pastor Chuck Swindoll

It's easy to be exposed to great theological truths and not experience transformation. In what areas of your life do you see the need for God's transformative power? What practical steps can you take so the truth can invade those areas and bring about true and lasting change?

Jesus' own people rejected Him and refused to believe in Him. Many of them would believe in Him later, after His resurrection. For now, they folded their arms and turned their backs. Have you felt that same sting of rejection? Has the tide of opinion ever turned against you, perhaps in a meeting at work or among friends or even with family?

Rejection is a horrible experience. If anyone knows what it feels like to be drenched in a sea of scorn, it's Jesus. As you close your study, spend time in communion with Him, feeling His love and acceptance and drawing strength from Him through your unbreakable bond with Him.

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A FINAL PRAYER

Heavenly Father, thank You for Your Word. Thank You for Your nearness to me and Your promise never to leave me or forsake me. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

ENDNOTE

1. To learn more about Pastor Chuck Swindoll's *Searching the Scriptures* Bible-study method, go to the web page "[How Does Pastor Chuck Swindoll Study the Bible?](https://www.insight.org/how-does-pastor-chuck-swindoll-study-the-bible)" at [insight.org](https://www.insight.org).

For the 2026 broadcasts, this *Searching the Scriptures* Bible study was developed by Mirlenda Noëlliste in collaboration with Bryce Klabunde, vice president of *Searching the Scriptures* Ministries, based upon the original outlines, charts, and transcripts of Charles R. Swindoll's messages. Copyright © 2010, 2026 by Charles R. Swindoll, Inc. All rights are reserved worldwide. Duplication of copyrighted material for commercial use is strictly prohibited.

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