JESUS: MISUNDERSTOOD AND REJECTED

Mark 3

Mark 6:1-6

Awareness

Before listening, reflect:

- What are the benefits and drawbacks of skepticism?
- How do you answer the question, “Who is Jesus Christ?”

The earthly ministry of Jesus Christ moves swiftly in the Gospel of Mark. But in story after story, each time Jesus teaches something important, somebody does not understand and some choose not to believe him and blatantly reject his teaching. Studying these accounts provides us with a mirror to examine our own faith, giving us the opportunity to ask ourselves if our own assumptions or narrowmindedness hinder our relationship with our Savior Jesus Christ. But even more vital, they help us gain a better understanding of the identity of Jesus and answer the question, “Who is Jesus Christ?”

Listen:*Jesus: Misunderstood and Rejected*

Reflection

After listening, consider:

- In reflecting on how Jesus’ family and people from his hometown of Nazareth reacted to his ministry, host Dave Bast observes that in our culture today over-familiarity with Christianity can breed contempt. When have you observed a similar reaction to Christianity or the Church? How might we be guilty of it ourselves?
- In Mark 2:1-12, Jesus healed a paralyzed man by saying “Your sins are forgiven,” and revealed that he is indeed God. Only God can forgive sins. The religious leaders and authorities reject this aspect of Christ’s identity. Do you struggle to reconcile any aspect of who Jesus is with who you expect him to be?
- Read Mark 7:5-13. We corrupt religion when we make keeping the rules more important than our relationship with God or his people. Where are we guilty of letting rules or traditions become more important than our relationships with God and his image-bearers? Focused on their “fenced-in” laws, the religious leaders and authorities missed the chance to know and follow Jesus. What do we miss if we get stuck on a tradition purely for the sake of tradition?
- When Dave and Scott discuss what some have coined the “unforgivable sin” in Mark 3:29, they explain that it’s unforgivable not because God cannot forgive it, but “because there is no language with which God could reach you anymore...if you regarded God’s grace as something evil, well then, what hope could there be?” N.T. Wright compares it to “holding a conspiracy theory: all the evidence you see will simply confirm your belief. You will be blind to the truth. It isn’t that God gets specially angry with one sin in particular. It’s rather that if you decide firmly that the doctor who is offering to perform a life-saving operation on you is in fact a sadistic murderer, you will never give your consent to the operation” (*Mark for Everyone*, p. 38). How does this comfort you as a believer? Do you think the phrase

“unforgivable sin” helps you or confuses you when it comes to understanding what Jesus meant?

Related Passages

- **John 1:9-13**
- **John 7**
- **Mark 7:5-13**
- **Mark 2:1-12, 23-28**

Conclusion

In Mark 3:5, Jesus is angry and deeply distressed by the stubborn hearts he encounters in the synagogue, of people who should know better. In Mark 6:6, Jesus is amazed by the lack of faith he encounters in Nazareth, his hometown.

Based on the lessons Mark teaches us, pray for yourself, your community of faith, and the faith leaders in our world today. Pray for:

- Humility to confess when rules have become more important than relationships
- The softening of stubborn hearts
- That God would continue to reveal Jesus Christ
- That the Holy Spirit would open minds to understand Jesus’ teaching
- Eyes to see and ears to hear
- Hearts ready to recognize Jesus Christ and receive his message
- Strong faith

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