

Commentary on Mark Chapter 6, by Chuck Smith 1.9.22

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January memory verse, Jeremiah 32:26-27 (NKJV)

²⁶ Then the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah, saying,

²⁷ "Behold, I *am* the LORD, the God of all flesh. Is there anything too hard for Me?"

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Jesus had been in the city of Capernaum there on the northern part of the Sea of Galilee. And He has just brought back to life the daughter of Jairus, one of the rulers of the synagogue there in Capernaum. Now He is leaving Capernaum and with His disciples He is returning back to His hometown of Nazareth. It's probably thirty to thirty-five, well maybe forty miles from Capernaum to Nazareth.

And he went from thence ([Mar 6:1](#)),

The *thence* would be Capernaum, the Sea of Galilee.

and came into his own country ([Mar 6:1](#));

That is, His hometown of Nazareth.

and his disciples follow him. And when the sabbath day was come, he began to teach in the synagogue: and many hearing him were astonished, saying, From whence hath this man these things? and what wisdom is this which is given unto him, that even such mighty works are wrought by his hands? ([Mar 6:1-2](#))

So, they were astonished, or the word in Greek is *scandalon*. They were stumbled by Him because they knew Him. And they said, "Where did He get all of this?"

Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary ([Mar 6:3](#)),

The fact that He is referred to as the son of Mary would indicate that Joseph was already dead. Chances are that Joseph died rather early and that Jesus stayed at home until He was thirty years old in order to provide for the family. At the death of His father, He would have had to have been the family provider. Now, this word *carpenter* is in the Greek, *an artificer*. Actually, He was the kind of fellow that, no matter what you needed done, was just a handyman. He could make anything from scratch. So, anything from building a little shed to building a house, He was just one of those men skilled with His hands and was capable of doing just about anything. And He no doubt remained at home until the rest of His younger brothers and sisters were able to be out on their own. And so, they said,

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Is this not the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James, Joses, and of Juda, and Simon? and are not his sisters here with us? And they were offended at him ([Mar 6:3](#)).

Scandalized, that would be a transliteration of the Greek word *scandalon*. He was a stumbling stone. It means a stumbling stone. They were stumbled at Him because they knew Him.

But Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honor, but in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house ([Mar 6:4](#)).

So there's an implication there that even His own brothers, His own kin did not really honor Him, His own house. But He's not without honor; He goes elsewhere to get honor. But in His own country they don't recognize Him; they refuse to recognize Him because they know Him.

And he could there do no mighty work, save that he laid his hands upon a few sick folk, and healed them. And he marveled because of their unbelief. And he went round about the villages, teaching ([Mar 6:5-6](#)).

He didn't do many marvelous works there in Nazareth simply because of the unbelief. The unbelief kept them from coming. Had they come, surely they could have been healed. But He just laid His hands upon a few of the sick folk, but there wasn't any marvelous miracles wrought there in Nazareth as there had been around the Sea of Galilee. "And He went around the villages there teaching."

And he called unto him the twelve, and began to send them forth by two and two; and gave them power over unclean spirits; and commanded them that they should take nothing for their journey, save a staff only [only their walking stick]; no scrip [but they were not to take any scrip], no bread, no money in their purse: but [they were to] be shod with sandals; and not put on [but they were not to take] two coats [two outer garments]. And he said unto them, In what place soever ye enter into a house, there abide till ye depart from that place. And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear you, when ye depart thence [from there], shake off the dust under your feet for a testimony against them. Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah

So there will be degrees. More tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah than for that city that rejected the disciples as they went out to witness for Him.

And they went out, and preached that men should repent ([Mar 6:12](#)).

The same message that John the Baptist preached, "Repent, for the kingdom of God is at hand." Change, turn.

And they cast out many devils, and anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed them ([Mar 6:13](#)).

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And so the disciples, as they went out, were anointing with oil. This is the first reference to it, and the only reference within the gospel. And the only other reference I know is in James where he just says, "If there's any sick among you, let him call for the elders of the church." Many that were sick were thus healed.

And King Herod heard of him [Jesus]; (for his name was spread abroad;) and he said, That John the Baptist was risen from the dead, and therefore mighty works do show forth themselves in him. [But] others said, That it is Elias [Elijah]. And others said, That it is a prophet, or as one of the prophets. But when Herod heard thereof, he said, It is John, whom I beheaded: he is risen from the dead ([Mar 6:14-16](#)).

Herod, no doubt, had a guilty conscience concerning John. This family of Herod had to be one of the most messed up families in history. It is so messed up that I would try and explain to you how messed up it is, but I'd probably get messed up trying to explain it. But this is Herod Antipas. He was the son of Herod the Great. Herod the Great was the one who was the Herod at the time of the birth of Jesus. He was the one to whom the wise men came and inquired of where the Messiah was to be born. He was the one who said, "Go search diligently for the young child. When you've found Him, come and let me know that I may come and worship Him." He was the one that ordered all of the babies in the area of Bethlehem to be killed who were two years old and under. He was paranoid; he was always fearful that someone was going to try and kill him and take the throne.

Part of his paranoia was probably the result of the fact that he was such a little runt. He was about four feet, nine inches tall. And being a little man, he had great ambitions. And whenever he would build something, he would build it out of huge stones. The Western Wall of Jerusalem today is a testimony to the building prowess of this fellow Herod, these huge stones that make up the wall that was the retaining wall for the temple mount. The Herodian, out near Bethlehem and then the Masada, down near the Dead Sea; other tremendous building monuments that were done by Herod known as Herod the Great.

But because he was so paranoid, he married his first wife Doris who had a son, and he killed them both, that is Doris and the son. Then he married another woman named Miriam and she had two sons. Now, one of these two sons had a daughter named Herodias. Then, Herod got paranoid about Miriam and the two sons; he thought they were plotting against him, and so he put her to death and the two sons. And then he missed her after she was dead, and he began to mourn for her. And so, he built a tower and all there in Jerusalem as a monument to Miriam because he missed her so much. At this point, a saying developed, "It's safer to be Herod's pig than to be his son." Because at this point he had wiped out both wives and all of their children. He sort of cooled down from this point onwards. He married another gal by the name of Miriam, had a son by the name of Herod Philip, who moved to Rome and was just a wealthy merchantman. But Herod Philip married his niece, Herodias, who was the daughter of the assassinated brother, who was a half-brother to Herod Philip. So, she was his wife

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and his niece all at the same time. Now, Herod married another gal and she had a couple of sons, of which one was Herod Antipas. This is the Herod in our story. Herod Antipas was the ruler over a portion of the kingdom that his father Herod the Great had ruled over. Over the area up in the Galilee region.

Now, Herod Antipas went to Rome and visited his half-brother, Herod Philip. Now, Herod Philip and Herodias, his niece, had a daughter that they named Solomane. And Herod Antipas, when he was in Rome visiting his brother, fell in love with Herodias, his brother's wife who was also his niece, and talked her into leaving his brother, her husband, and marry him and return and reign with him in Galilee. Now, John the Baptist was a straight shooter. And John the Baptist spoke out against this unlawful action by Herod Antipas. And so, we read,

For Herod himself had sent forth and laid hold upon John, and bound him in prison for Herodias' sake, his brother Philip's wife; for he had married her. For John had said unto Herod, It is not lawful for thee to have thy brother's wife ([Mar 6:17-18](#)).

Now, Herod, he liked to listen to John; though he didn't obey, he liked to listen to this guy. He was fascinated by John. But Herodias had it in for him. She was a very ambitious woman, scheming. Finally, she talked Herod Antipas to go to Rome and they, both of them, went to Rome together to ask the emperor to give him the title of king. The emperor of Rome, rather than giving him the title of king, banished him to gall. And that's the end of Herod Antipas and the history of him. But, at this point, Herodias was really upset, because John had spoken out against their marriage, saying, "It isn't lawful for you to have your brother's wife."

Therefore Herodias had a quarrel against him, and would have killed him ([Mar 6:19](#));

She was so angry she would have killed him in the quarrel. John was just laying it on straight to her, and they were quarreling. She became angry, and had she been able to, she would have killed him. She was so angry with him.

but she could not: For Herod feared John, knowing that he was a just man and holy, and observed him [he listened to him]; and when he heard him, he did many things, and he heard him gladly ([Mar 6:19-20](#)).

He liked listening, but it was some sort of a strange thing where a person likes to hear you, but yet, they don't follow it.

And when a convenient day was come, that Herod on his birthday made a supper to his lords, [and] high captains, and [those] chief estates of Galilee; and when the daughter of the said Herodias came in, and danced, and pleased Herod and them that sat with him, the king said unto the damsel, Ask of me whatsoever thou wilt, and I will give it thee ([Mar 6:21-22](#)).

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Now, the solo dances by women in those days were very sensual and usually done only by prostitutes. And of course, the whole purpose was the inflaming of the passions. And that Herodias would allow her daughter to perform such a dance before these men show of what low moral character she was. She was a woman without morals, allowing her daughter to go before these men with this sensual dance. Herod, being aroused by the dance, pleased, he said unto her, "Ask me whatever you want and I will give it to you."

And he sware unto her, Whatsoever thou shalt ask of me, I will give thee, unto the half of my kingdom ([Mar 6:23](#)).

It must have been quite a dance.

And she went forth, and said unto her mother, What shall I ask? And she said, The head of John the Baptist. And she came in straightway [immediately] with haste unto the king, and [she] asked, saying, I will that thou give me by and by [immediately] in a charger the head of John the Baptist. And the king was exceeding sorry; yet for his oath's sake, and for their sakes which [of those that] sat with him, he would not reject her ([Mar 6:24-26](#)).

He had put himself in a corner, and because of the oath and the fact that it was done in front of these fellows he couldn't back down. Pride wouldn't let him. And so, he did that unlawful murderous thing, adding sin to sin, compounding the situation.

and he went and beheaded him in the prison, and brought his head in a charger, and gave it to the damsel; and the damsel gave it to her mother. And when the disciples heard of it, they came and took up the corpse, and laid it in a tomb [buried it] ([Mar 6:27-29](#)).