

# Many who heard Him were amazed

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[ 0 : 00 ] Let's turn now to the passage we read, the first few verses of chapter 6, Mark chapter 6, verses 1 to 6.

Now we have in these verses two things. We have the response of Nazareth to Jesus. And then we have the response of Jesus to Nazareth.

Remember, of course, that Nazareth was Jesus' hometown. This was Jesus' homecoming after having been in various other places, having been teaching, and having performed certain miracles. So that already we know something of his fame would have gone before him as he was returning home. But first I'd like to look with you at what kind of reception he got there in Nazareth.

Now first we notice what the people there felt. We're told at the end of verse 2 that many who heard him were amazed.

[ 1 : 14 ] This was when Jesus went on the Sabbath to the synagogue and he taught there. Many who heard him were amazed. Their initial reaction on hearing Jesus was husband.

Now this word that's used for amazement here is quite an interesting word because it's got an almost exact modern translation. It literally means that they were knocked out.

And we use that same expression, don't we, of this same kind of amazement. The people there were knocked out. They were really in a certain sense kind of devastated by what was happening. They were completely surprised and taken aback. That's the kind of word this is. Now the reason why they were so amazed is given really in the rest of verse 2.

Where did this man get these things, they asked. What's this wisdom that has been given him that he even does miracles? We see that there are two things there that they single out as causes for their amazement.

[ 2 : 26 ] First of all, there is his wisdom and then what we may call his works or miracles. There's the wisdom and the miracles and they see these rightly as being interrelated.

They were surprised by his wisdom. Obviously, this is referring in the first instance to the way with which he spoke. Now this is the kind of reaction that's given by many different kinds of people to Jesus.

We get this kind of reaction from all sorts of people. Remember the guards that were sent to arrest Jesus. They came back saying, never man spoke as this man.

In other words, they had never heard anyone speak in this kind of way in their lives before. And there were others too who wondered what kind of man he was when they heard the things that he said.

This kind of amazement seemed to be quite common. Now some people today, as they're reading something of the words of Jesus and the Gospels, they sometimes get the impression, if they know a little bit about the ancient world and about Judaism in particular, they may sometimes say things like, well, Jesus didn't sound all that different from a lot of the other teachers of those days.

[ 3 : 58 ] Some of the things he said sounded quite similar. And no doubt there's some truth in that, because, of course, when Jesus was expounding the Scriptures, anything that was in agreement with what others were saying, of course, it would sound quite similar.

But, of course, there were obvious differences. We know, for instance, that when he returned to Nazareth, as it's recorded in Luke's Gospel, and he preached in the synagogue, he read from the prophet Isaiah.

And he didn't just give a sort of nice little exposition of what that passage meant, when he read about the Spirit of the Lord being upon me.

He's anointed me to preach good news to the poor and so on. He didn't just give an exposition of what that meant. He simply said, today, these things are fulfilled in your hearing.

In other words, he said, what's written there has today come true, as I read those words. Now, that, of course, was obviously the kind of thing that astonished and amazed people.

[ 5 : 09 ] Especially, of course, when we're dealing here with people who grew up with Jesus. Some of, perhaps, his schoolmates and friends. They knew him. And, obviously, they had never thought him to be anything really out of the ordinary.

Which seems really amazing to us. That the Son of God, the perfect Son of God, could come into this world and live among people. And never sin.

And yet people didn't realize that he was so staggeringly different. Maybe it's because sin has so desensitized us that we can't really recognize true righteousness when we see it.

Because, no doubt, people would have attributed faults to him as he was growing up. Just as they did during his public ministry. They were always ascribing fault to him. Always picking fault with various things that he did.

So, obviously, as he was growing up, people would do the same kind of thing. Misunderstanding the kind of thing he was really saying and doing. So, they had never thought that, really, he was any different from any other boy growing up in Nazan.

[ 6 : 23 ] And now, hearing him saying these kind of things, making these staggering claims concerning himself. Obviously, they were amazed. But, also, there were his works.

His miracles. Literally, what he did with his hands. The emphasis is upon what he did with his hands. And that, again, is an interesting kind of expression.

An interesting word. It stresses to us that the part that Jesus' hands and Jesus' touching people actually played in his healing of them.

We noticed in the two cases of healing that we read about in the previous chapter. There was the element of touch. First of all, there was the woman who actually touched Jesus.

And then, there was the little girl that Jesus took by the hand and raised up. So, often, in Jesus' ministry, there was this element of his hand reaching out to help people.

[ 7 : 27 ] Or people reaching out to touch him. And that, again, in itself, is a great reminder of what Jesus came to do. So, often in the Bible, in the Old Testament, it talks about the hand of God.

Or the arm of God. The arm of God in great might and great power delivering his people out of Egypt. The hand of God being used to protect and defend his people.

And as Jesus went about doing good, as Jesus performed these works, these miracles, he used his hand so often. Demonstrating the hand of God reaching out to help and to save.

Well, then, these people knew something of this. And their reaction was amazement. And the question was, where did this man get these things?

What's this wisdom? They didn't really know the source of this. They recognized this as being now something different from what they had thought Jesus was. Where did he get it?

[ 8 : 31 ] He grew up amongst us. He went to the same school as us. He went to the same church as us. Where did he get this, all this stuff that makes him so different? They were amazed.

Well, if perhaps we could attempt to answer that, which might have been a rhetorical question originally, not expecting any answer.

Perhaps they were just expressing their amazement. But if we could try to answer it. Really, Jesus got this wisdom, especially the wisdom with which he spoke.

Really, we must argue, not in any kind of very supernatural way. Our Lord Jesus obviously drew his teaching, his wisdom, from two sources.

What we may call the book of God's word and the book of God's works. Our Lord Jesus obviously is steeped, his whole mind steeped in the Old Testament.

[ 9 : 39 ] When there was any point of difficulty, when there was any point of debate, the Lord Jesus decided it by reference to the Old Testament, which obviously he could do instantly from memory.

The Lord Jesus, in growing up through the normal system of those days, in the educating of boys, particularly in the synagogue, he applied himself, obviously, perfectly to the study of that word of God and treasured it as the word of God, as indeed his own word.

That's obvious from the teaching of the Lord Jesus. But also there's something else. Our Lord Jesus obviously also studied what we may call the book of God's works.

Our Lord Jesus was no blinkered kind of academic or spiritual person when he was here in this world.

His true spirituality was as wide as the world. Everything in this world, everything around him, was all grist to his mill.

[10:51] Because in a certain sense, of course, it was all his. He had come into his own world. And every part of the world around him, it was all full of significance and of lessons.

And therefore we see the Lord Jesus in his teaching, not only quoting from the Old Testament and expounding it and showing how it was fulfilled, but also he takes the very ordinary things of everyday life around people and draws lessons from them.

From the habits of farmers and sowing seeds, to the ways in which kings dealt with their servants, down to the shepherd who lost one sheep, and so on, all the time, drawing lessons from the world around.

And that, it would seem, was something, in the particular way in which he did it, something very new and very surprising.

So tremendous that indeed, those same stories and parables have really become part of the fabric of literature, particularly in our Western world, ever since.

[12:08] So that when we say the prodigal son, even still today, people know the kind of thing you're talking about. This then is something of what these people were querying about.

Where did this man get all this kind of wisdom? And obviously, our Lord Jesus' wisdom was drawn from those two sources as he came into this world as a man and was subject.

He was under the law, as the Apostle Paul puts it, under the law in different senses, but in one sense that we can think of here, in that he placed himself in the same position in which we are, that we have to learn what God's law teaches and what God's law is.

And as our Lord Jesus grew up, he learned that law, the law of God's word in the scripture and the laws of God in nature also. These then were the foundation of this great wisdom with which Jesus taught.

But there was something obviously more than merely that, because there were also his miracles. And there we see the directly supernatural element of the Lord Jesus Christ as the Son of God, demonstrating his authority over the world in which he was, the world he had come into to save, demonstrating that he had power and authority over it to even reverse the results of sin and of decay in this world.

[13:47] Then secondly, we need to look at what the people of Nazareth called him. We've looked at what they felt. They felt amazed, but they actually called him something. They said in verse three, isn't this the carpenter?

Isn't this Mary's son and so on? Isn't this the carpenter? Now, in fact, this is the only place in the New Testament where it is clearly stated that Jesus actually was a carpenter.

It's said in other places that he was a carpenter's son. Joseph, obviously, was a carpenter. But here it's specifically stated that he was a carpenter. Now, of course, we know that it is being said by those who were here becoming a little bit disgusted with him.

But so often, we get interesting pieces of information from Jesus' enemies. And here's one of these examples. Jesus was indeed a carpenter.

And that reminds us of several things. And here we should be very grateful that those people that day drew attention to the fact that Jesus was a carpenter.

[14:57] It draws our attention, first of all, to the humility of Jesus. A reminder, which we need to have again and again. When Jesus came into this world, coming as the Son of God, coming to be the Messiah, the anointed King, to deliver his people, he didn't come into a palace.

He didn't come into any of the echelons of government of any kind in this world, or positions of power, or wealth, or influence. He came, we may say, as an ordinary working person who worked at a trade with his hands.

And that should stress to us the great humility of the Lord Jesus Christ. It stresses to us also, of course, his great identification with us, with the mass of human beings.

Because after all, it's only very few people in this world and in the history of this world who haven't had to work with their hands. The vast majority of people in this world have had to do so to earn a living.

And Jesus here is identifying with the mass of humankind and showing that he was coming down to the very same level as every one of us.

[16:19] But also, it stresses to us that Jesus lays a certain value, a certain worth, upon hard work.

The Lord Jesus didn't immediately, when he came of age, he didn't immediately become a teacher or a rabbi as he could have done, sort of just going through what we may call the academic system of those days.

faith, but he specifically carried on in his family's trade. And therefore, he shows to us the importance of actually working at something and working at it, no doubt, working hard at it. This should be a help and encouragement to us when we think about our own particular work or our own particular gifts, whatever they may be. Other people may perhaps look down on the kind of work perhaps that we do.

Other people may think it's not all that important. But you know, every kind of work is important. Jesus' work as a carpenter was important.

[ 17 : 31 ] Jesus placed a certain worth upon that. And the work of every person is important. Manual work as well as academic or economic work.

And that really brings us to the final emphasis of this point where they call him the carpenter. It definitely gives to us here an indication from God himself that there is indeed an honor or a worth not only about work in general, but about manual and creative work.

because Jesus' work as a carpenter was both manual and creative. A carpenter in those days wasn't just limited to sort of making things in the workshop as perhaps we might think of a carpenter.

A carpenter was very much like, say, a carpenter would be in a village in the highlands, maybe until recently anyway. A carpenter would be involved in all kinds of work with wood, whether making agricultural implements or building houses or whatever.

He would be involved in that. And so the Lord Jesus would be involved in that whole range of activities in those years from when he came of age as a boy right up until the age of 30.

[ 18 : 55 ] And so our Lord was demonstrating here the honor, first of all, of manual work. Now we're living in a society which is going further and further away all the time it would seem from manual work.

We're depending on many other areas of the world and the people there to do a lot of our manual work, people to reap the harvest there, many of them by hand, picking tea or picking coffee or whatever.

So many of these things people do by hand and our society is becoming more and more automated and more removed from doing things by manual labor. But we ought never to forget that indeed manual labor is extremely important and perhaps there may be indications that our society has to get back to moral emphasis upon manual work.

Perhaps we have gone too far in the direction of stressing simply the cerebral and the academic and the intellectual and we need perhaps more emphasis on the dignity of what we can actually do with our hands and with our bodies too because God has created us as physical, mental, whole beings.

But notice also in this there is an emphasis upon creative work and that would really take in a great wide area of what we may call the arts in general.

[ 20 : 23 ] The Lord Jesus Christ no doubt as a carpenter would not just create things that were functional but he would create things that were good things that were beautiful things that were well made.

Now in that sense also there is something being taught us here about being creative. The Lord Jesus Christ coming as the creator of this world into this world and showing us and maybe showing the people around him how to create things a very ordinary everyday level and to reflect something of the beauty of the created world around us.

And here of course is a place for all the arts and the use of the arts whether visual or oral whatever aspect of this created world that we can reflect in our work it is to be done to the glory of God.

And here there's encouragement for the Christian craftsman or the Christian artist or whatever he may be following this example of the Lord Jesus in being a carpenter.

But of course those people were speaking those words not with the really the intent of praising Jesus we've been looking at what it actually meant that he was a carpenter but they spoke those words out of contempt.

[ 21 : 48 ] They said isn't this the carpenter? See in those days people like carpenters people like shepherds and people like that they were not highly respected they were looked down upon.

It was the person who could keep his hands clean who was the person who was looked up to in society or the person who got his hands dirty. And they said isn't this the carpenter?  
We can't have a carpenter coming along and saying all these things to us. he's just an ordinary person. He's not as good as so and so or someone else. He's not as good as our rabbi.  
How can he come along? Who does he think he is? He's only a carpenter after all. That's the way in which they were saying it. Now we've got to be on our guard against that same kind of attitude of mind whoever it may be about that we don't fall into the same with which people greeted Jesus. They of course fulfilled the proverb that says familiarity breeds contempt. They were familiar with Jesus.

[ 23 : 00 ] Some of them had grown up with him but now they came to only have contempt for him. And that should be a standing warning against us for having a misconception. Many people say things like well if only we had lived at that time when Jesus lived.

If only we had seen the things that he did and heard his teaching well we could really believe but now it's so long ago now we don't really know. We can't really believe those things now.

But you see the people who were there they didn't believe it either. They were there. They knew Jesus. They grew up with him. They saw the things that he did. They heard his teaching. They eventually heard that he rose from the dead.

and yet they didn't believe it. There's a whole mass of evidence presented in the gospel and yet people will still reject the evidence demonstrating that it is not because of any lack of evidence that people are unconvinced of the Christian faith but ultimately it is because the human heart says I will not bow to almighty God no matter how much evidence he brings to me I will not bow to him.

And it's only when we do bow that then we come to see the great salvation that Jesus came to give us. And then we see of course that they took offense.

[ 24 : 30 ] They took offense at him right at the end of verse 3. In other words literally they allowed themselves to be tripped up or to be lured into sin.

You see growing within them had been this feeling of contempt for him because he was only one of themselves and he was trying to get above his station trying to be better than he really was.

And as this attitude and feeling grew they stumbled they fell into temptation tripped up they fell into sin. in other words they fell into that great sin of rejecting what the Lord Jesus Christ was saying about himself and about the fulfillment of the kingdom.

They rejected him as the Messiah. and then we must look briefly at Jesus' response to his hometown of Nazareth.

And there are three things we need to notice here. First of all he partly excused their contempt or he made some kind of allowance for it didn't he when he said in verse 4 only in his hometown among his relatives and in his own house is a prophet without honor.

[ 25 : 58 ] A saying as we know that has become another proverb prophet is not without honor except in his own country and so on. But Jesus here in stating this was in a sense making some kind of allowance for them.

He was saying that in some ways it might have been easier for the people living in Capernaum and some of these other places because they hadn't known Jesus growing up as a boy he wasn't one of them and in some ways it might have been easier for them to see him as for what he really wants.

So he was making some kind of allowance for them. And you know that kind of gracious attitude of our Lord Jesus Christ is something that we ought to have too which is very often something difficult to have.

to make allowances for other people and not to think the worst of them immediately. Here the Lord Jesus was doing that kind of thing for those people who so obviously were expressing contempt for him and were rejecting him.

Yet he in his graciousness was making some allowance even for their expression of contempt. And then we read secondly that he could not do many powerful works there.

[ 27 : 25 ] He could not do any miracles there. Literally it is works of power except lay his hands on a few sick people and heal them. Now this is a most staggering thing that's said.

He could not do any miracles there. Perhaps we might imply from that really Jesus wasn't able to do it somehow.

Well Matthew's gospel gives us really the explanation of what is meant here. He says he did not do many miracles because of their unbelief.

Now that's the sense in which Jesus could not do the miracles. He could not do it because there were so few people there who believed. Where there was faith even the tiniest little bit of faith the Lord Jesus would lay his hands on these sick people and heal them.

But where there was no faith where there was no belief in him there really could be no healing. He had the power to heal there is no doubt about that. He had the power to save and deliver yet that power could not flow to them.

[ 28 : 45 ] unless through the channel of faith. And that is a very solemn reminder to every one of us. That the Lord Jesus Christ is here today with power.

Power to heal. Power to heal the great disease of sin. Power to deliver us from the power and destruction of sin.

sin. There is no doubt about that. The scriptures declare it. He is powerful to save. Yet he never forces people.

This power of the Lord Jesus is not a power of force. But he persuades. He draws. He invites. And he invites faith.

He invites you to come and to trust in him. And through that trust, through that faith, you receive his power. And where there is no faith, then there are no great works of miracle.

[ 29 : 52 ] There is no transformation. There is no healing. There is no salvation. And that is the solemn warning of Jesus' hometown of Nazareth. A place that knew so much, knew so much about Jesus, had so much evidence of who he was, yet they did not have faith in him.

They did not trust him. They did not believe him. And so, there was no power that day. There was no healing. There was no salvation there.

And if we do not extend our trust to Jesus, we do not reach out to him, we can never blame him and say, well, you didn't have the power to help us.

You didn't save us. You didn't want to save us. Because all he is asking of us is that we reach out to accept what he is saying and what he has done for us.

And finally then, the Lord Jesus, we are told that he was amazed. In verse six, he was amazed at their lack of faith.

[ 31 : 02 ] We read at the beginning that they were amazed. They were amazed about him. Now, in the end, he is amazed at them. And there are only two things in the scripture that we're told that Jesus was amazed about.

Only two. The first is faith. We're told that he was amazed at the faith of the centurion. Remember he said, I have not found such faith, no, not in Israel.

Among all the Jewish people, among all those prepared for the Messiah, among all those who for centuries had their culture and their families steeped in the word of God. There was not one who had the faith of that centurion who said to Jesus, well, I know what it's like having authority and been under authority.

I've got soldiers and servants and I can say, go to one and he goes and come to another and he comes. So I ask you to heal my servants.

Just by a word. Believing that the Lord Jesus Christ had that kind of authority over the very fabric of this universe, able to heal diseases at a word.

[ 32 : 20 ] Jesus, we're told, was amazed at that faith of the centurion. That's one thing that amazed Jesus, but here's the other thing. He was amazed at their lack of faith.

He was amazed at their unbelief. He was astonished that they should have no trust in him. And that is the thing that continues surely to amaze our Lord Jesus Christ.

Amazement that those who have heard so much of his love, heard so much of what he has done for us by dying and rising again, those who perhaps for years, perhaps their families, for many years, perhaps for centuries, our nation certainly for centuries, we have been steeped in the word of God, we have heard it, we have the gospel spread throughout it, we have God's word so easily available in our own language, and so on.

And yet, how many people simply turn away, as if it was nothing, as if it was something that didn't matter all that much, it's not very unusual, not very surprising, nothing to take interest in.

Amazing that there should be such a reaction, amazing that the Son of God should come into this world to give himself to that death on the cross, to that alienation from God, to that darkness, and to do so for the salvation of sinners, and for those sinners, to turn away, as if it didn't matter, or even worse, to reject it as something grotesque, or something that was of no consequence whatsoever.

[ 34 : 17 ] Amazing that that should be, and amazing today, if we who know the scriptures, and who know the invitations of God's word, should turn away from it, and not receive it, and not benefit from it, and not know the one who would come into this world for us, and to make us part of his family forever.

Let us pray. Our gracious Lord, we thank you for all your grace and kindness to us.

We thank you for the way you've come into this world and identified with us. You know all our pains.

You know our work. You know our suffering.

And you know all these things in a far greater way than even we know them ourselves. Because you have experienced and suffered more acutely than any of us could ever do.

And we thank you, gracious Lord, that we come to one who knows us and who feels for us, who identifies with us and sympathizes with us in our weakness.

[ 35 : 28 ] Because he was tempted in all points as we are, yet without sin. So, Lord, we come to you with confidence and we ask you today, Lord, to indeed work within us that faith without which no one can see God.

Gracious Lord, we pray that today you would turn our hearts and minds to you in love, to serve you and to love you and to trust you from this time on.

We ask these things in Jesus' name. Amen.