



“A Prophet is Without Honor”

Mark 6:1-6:44

¹He went away from there and came to his hometown with his followers following him. ²After the Sabbath started, he began to teach in the synagogue and, when they heard him, many were amazed, saying, “Where did this man get these things? What is the wisdom given to this man and the powers that are happening through his hands? ³Isn’t this the carpenter? The son of Mary and the brother of James, Joses, Judas, and Simon? And aren’t his sisters here with us?” So they turned against Him. ⁴But Jesus said to them, “A prophet is without honor only in his hometown, among his relatives, and in his house.” ⁵He was not able to exercise any power there, except for laying His hands on a few powerless people to make them well. ⁶Their faithlessness amazed Him. Then He went around in the villages and taught.

⁷He summoned the twelve, began to send them out two by two, and was giving them authority over the impure spirits. ⁸He commanded them to take nothing on the way except a staff—no bread, no bag, and no money in the belt— ⁹and to wear sandals, but not to put on two shirts. ¹⁰He was saying to them, “Whenever you enter a house, remain there until you leave that place. ¹¹If ever a place does not welcome you or listen to you, as you are leaving, shake the dust off your feet as a testimony against them.” ¹²Going out, they proclaimed that people should repent ¹³and they were casting out many demons and pouring oil on and healing many sick people.

¹⁴Now King Herod heard about these things because Jesus’ name had become well-known. Some were saying, “John, who baptizes, has been raised from among the dead and, because of this, powers are working in him.” ¹⁵But others were saying, “He is Elijah,” and still others were saying, “He is a prophet like one of the ancient prophets.” ¹⁶But after hearing about this, Herod was saying, “John, the one whose head I cut off, has been raised.” ¹⁷For Herod sent men who arrested John, bound him, and put him in prison, because Herod had married Herodias, the wife of his brother Philip. ¹⁸For John was saying to Herod, “It is not right for you to have the wife of your brother!” ¹⁹So Herodias was holding a grudge against John and was desiring to kill him. But she was not able ²⁰because Herod was afraid of John, knowing that he was a just and holy man, and was protecting him. After listening to John on many occasions, Herod was anxiously doubting himself and yet he was gladly hearing him. ²¹But an opportunity came on one of Herod’s birthdays when he gave a banquet for his high-status nobles, military officers, and the prominent people of Galilee. ²²When his daughter from Herodias entered and danced, she pleased Herod and those reclining with him. The king said to the young woman, “Ask me for whatever you want and I will give it to you!” ²³Then he swore to her, “*Whatever you might ask of me I will give to you, even up to half of my kingdom!*” ²⁴After leaving, she said to her mother, “What should I ask for?” She said, “The head of John, the one who baptizes.” ²⁵After returning with haste to the king, she immediately asked, “I want you to give me, right now, the head of John, the one who baptizes, on a plate.” ²⁶The king became deeply distressed because he did not want to refuse her on account of his oath and the ones who were dining with him. ²⁷The king, immediately after sending for the executioner, commanded him to bring John’s head. After departing, he beheaded John in prison, ²⁸brought his head on a plate, and gave it to the young woman, and she gave it to her mother.” ²⁹After hearing about this, John’s followers came, took his dead body, and placed it in a tomb.

³⁰The apostles gathered to Jesus and reported to him everything they did and taught. ³¹He said to them, “Come here by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a little.” For many were coming and going and they

¹ Esther 5:3; 7:2

were having no opportunity even to eat. ³²They went away in a boat by themselves to a wilderness place. ³³But many saw them departing, recognized them, ran there on foot from all the cities, and arrived ahead of them. ³⁴After arriving, Jesus saw the large crowd and had compassion on them because “They were *like sheep having no shepherd*.” Then he began to teach them many things. ³⁵After the hour became late, his followers came to him saying, “This place is a wilderness and the hour is already late. ³⁶Send them away so that after they depart into the surrounding fields and villages, they might buy for themselves something to eat.” ³⁷But replying to them Jesus said, “You give them something to eat.” They said to him, “After departing, should we buy seven months’ wages³ of bread and then give it to them to eat?” ³⁸But he said to them, “How much bread do you have? Go look!” After finding out, they said, “Five loaves and two fish.” ³⁹He directed them to all sit down in companies upon the green grass. ⁴⁰So they sat down in groups of hundreds and fifties. ⁴¹After receiving the five loaves and two fish and gazing into heaven, Jesus said a blessing, broke the bread, and was giving it to the followers to share with the people. He also distributed the two fish to everyone. ⁴²Everyone ate and was filled, ⁴³and they still gathered twelve full baskets of leftover bread and fish ⁴⁴with five thousand men eating.

6:5 *What does “He was not able to exercise any power there...” mean? Is there something Jesus cannot do?*

6:1-6 *Why is it that every time Jesus interacts with his twelve followers it is juxtaposed next to a conflict with those we would expect him to love most (his family and hometown)?*

6:1-6 *What is the significance that both the crowds in Nazareth and Jesus are astonished at one another?*

6:7 *What is significant about Jesus sending out his followers “two by two”?*

6:8 *What is significant about Jesus’ followers only taking a staff when they are sent out?*

6:16-29 *Why was John arrested in the first place? What is ironic about how John’s fate is ultimately decided?*

6:14-29 *Why are Jesus and John identified together? Why would Mark position this in his narrative right on the heels of Jesus’ followers’ mission?*

6:34 *When Jesus sees the crowd as “sheep without a shepherd” what does this mean?*

6:37 *What do we learn from Jesus’ responses to his followers in regard to the hungry crowds?*

² Num 27:17; 1 Kings 22:17; Ezra 34:5

³ Literally: “two hundred denarii” - one denarius was about one day’s pay