

RTS Women's Study: The Gospel of Mark

#12: Mark 6:1-29: Counting the Cost

Intro: The "School of Death"

I. The Cost: Disdain and Contempt (v.1-6)

A. Negative Reactions Begin when Truth is Spoken

- "and he began to teach in the synagogue" (v.2)
- Two extremes to avoid when it comes to truth-telling:
 - Some of us never speak up out of fear of a negative reaction
 - Some of us speak up all the time, and in overly aggressive ways, assuming that the negative reaction is always because people "can't handle the truth"
 - "speaking the truth in love" (Eph 4:15)—Don't just pick one of these!

B. Sometimes Negative Reactions Come from Those Closest to Us

- This was Jesus' "hometown" with his family present
- Yet they "took offense at him" (v.3)—Greek word is *skandalizo*
 - Since they knew Jesus as a boy, there's a "who do you think you are?" attitude here
 - They recount how "ordinary" Jesus was: he was a carpenter, has brothers and sisters
 - They even take a dig at him, calling him "the son of Mary," but don't mention Joseph!
- Expect to get resistance especially from those closest to you: "A prophet is not without honor, except in his hometown" (v.4)

C. Sometimes it takes a lot of effort *NOT* to believe!

- "[Jesus] marveled because of their unbelief" (v.6).
 - The people of Nazareth saw amazing things and yet still did not believe!
 - Remember that belief is not determined by the evidence but the state of our hearts
- Key point: We are prone to take things for granted when they are familiar to us.

II. The Cost: Vulnerability and Rejection (v.7-13)

A. The Mission of the Disciples Made them Vulnerable

- Danger and inconvenience of travel
 - The cost of following Jesus means putting ourselves out there in uncomfortable places
 - Travel in the ancient world was slow, difficult, and fraught with danger
- Lack of financial resources
 - For the disciples, this was not a pathway to a rich and prosperous life
 - Jesus asked them to take very few things (v.8-9) so their dependence was on God
 - Our "stuff" can distract us from the mission!
- Key point: Following Jesus is risky! What risks are you taking for Jesus today?

B. The Mission of the Disciples would face Rejection

- Jesus anticipates that some “will not receive you and they will not listen to you”
 - Part of our expectation of following Jesus is that we will be rejected and not heard
 - Effectively, Jesus says doors will be slammed in your face
- Learn to “shake it off”
 - “shake off the dust” (v.11) was a common symbolic way of moving on
 - You’ve got to learn to accept rejection, not let it overly discourage you, but move on to those who may have ears to hear
- Key questions: How well do you handle rejection? What can help us press on in the midst of it?

III. The Cost: Hatred and Violence (v.14-29)

A. Herodias Hated John the Baptist

- John the Baptist spoke out against Herod because he married his brother’s wife, Herodias
 - Sometimes it’s appropriate to call out public cases of serious sin
 - Herod’s position was not just political, but in principle he was supposed to represent the Jewish faith
- But, “Herodias had a grudge against him and wanted to put him to death” (v.19)
- Key point: speaking truth, especially about sex/marriage, can lead people to hate you

B. John the Baptist is Beheaded

- The dance of Herodias’ daughter led Herod to make a rash vow
- Consequently, John died a martyr’s death

Discussion Groups

1. Share with the group about how you handle rejection and criticism for being a Christian. How can today’s passage help you handle it better?
2. Do you feel like you are willing to take risks in your life—whether relational or financial—in order to share Christ with others? What are some concrete ways you can get out of your comfort zone to endure more risks for Christ?
3. Do you ever feel yourself taking Jesus for granted because you are around him and the church so much? What are steps you can take to make sure you don’t drift toward unbelief like those in Jesus’ hometown?