

Title: KINGDOM WORK CONTINUES, MARK 6:1-13.  
(Chatham, NJ; 07/05/09, AM) [Pc – Two-Sided Outline]

Theme: Despite the resistance of his hometown to believe Jesus, he sends out the disciples to continue the work of announcing the coming of the Kingdom of God.

Purpose: To remind us that because Jesus did not succumb to discouragement when his hometown didn't believe him, we should also continue to believe and work for the establishment of the Kingdom.

Introduction:

1. Life is full of contradictions. Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 attests to this reality.
2. Sometimes though trouble and distress seem ever-present.
3. Sometimes we have to do the best we can to make life as normal as possible: the orchestra in St. Petersburg, Russia, was determined to play music despite the siege of the city by the Nazis.
4. At other times blessing just seem to come: in the same year that my family experienced the loss of our mother, my sister's son married and produced her first grandchild.
5. Life goes on despite what we experience and despite conflicting emotions.
6. More importantly the work of God transcends petty human unbelief and perplexing circumstances.

I. A Prophet without Honor.

A. Ezekiel was just such a prophet.

1. His calling demanded mental toughness, Ez. 2:1-7.
2. Israel would not listen to him, verses 8ff.
3. Though he was no longer in his hometown, he was among countrymen living in a foreign land.
4. Whatever camaraderie he may have felt with his own people evaporated when he spoke God's words to them.
5. They rejected him with scorn and indifference.

B. And yet Jesus marvels.

1. Jesus pronounces a truth about home and prophets.
2. The familiar became a source of alienation; his friends and neighbors took offense at him (3).
3. Home was not a warm, welcoming place.
4. Despite the truth about prophets, Mark interjects how Jesus felt: he marveled at their unbelief.
5. Knowing the truth about prophets is now affirmed by experience. The latter can be jarring.
6. Perhaps his humanity shows here: I wonder whether "marvel" might not even be something like "unnerved" or "eye-opening."

C. They didn't want to believe the truth about him.

1. Pre-conceived notions die hard; in their experience he was too ordinary to be so extraordinary.
2. Ezekiel's audience did not believe him either.
3. Furthermore Jesus criticizes the disciples for not believing, Luke 24:25.
4. We are told that the Gospel is foolishness to many, 1 Corinthians 1:18.

5. Deception works best on those unwilling to believe the truth, 2 Thess. 2:10.
6. Jesus, however, is not put off. He carries on: "And he went about among the villages teaching."

## II. Kingdom work continues, Mark 6:7-13.

- A. Jesus sends out the twelve.
  1. He confers authority over demons on them: evil will not triumph.
  2. They take only what is necessary: God will provide for them.
  3. They are instructed in how to conduct themselves: they experience belief as well as unbelief (verses 10-11).
  4. They told people to repent: this was distinctly the message associated with the Kingdom of God, Mark 1:15.
  5. Perhaps even here lies one of the reasons for unbelief; people fail to comprehend and confront the evil that resides within their own souls.
  
- B. The moments of unbelief and rejection.
  1. Neither Ezekiel nor Jesus nor any other prophet had the luxury of turning away because their words were derided, scorned, or otherwise not believed.
  2. Jesus knew this when he sent them out.
  3. No moment of frustration and struggle was ever dark enough to deter them from the path of righteousness.
  4. Timothy must preach in and out of season, 2 Tim. 4:1-2.
  5. In Acts 4 the early church reacted to opposition with concerted prayer and the truth from Psalm 2 that the worldly kingdoms would try to stop the Gospel.
  6. In Ephesus (Acts 19) the community erupted with anger at the truth of the Gospel. Yet it spread.

### Conclusion:

1. And here we are 2,000 years later.
2. The Kingdom is alive and well in spite of those who oppose it.
3. We have a table prepared for us in the midst of our enemies, and all their sputtering gibberish about how foolish it is has done nothing but make it grow.
4. Keep about Kingdom business; have faith in the one who established it; when he appears, all the contradictions will evaporate into eternal joy and peace.