

Summary

In this sermon from Mark 6:1-13, Pastor Paul explores the concept of offense as it relates to Jesus Christ. Drawing from the Greek word "scandalone" (from which we get the word "scandal"), he examines why Jesus was offensive to the people of His hometown of Nazareth and why He continues to be offensive to some people today. The townspeople were scandalized by two things: the ordinary nature of Jesus (a carpenter they had known since childhood) and the circumstances of His birth (calling Him "Mary's son" rather than "Joseph's son" to imply illegitimacy). Yet in their very insults, they unknowingly pointed to the heart of the gospel, as Jesus would ultimately become "fatherless" on the cross so that we could gain access to the Father. The sermon then turns to what this means for followers of Jesus today, using Mark 6:7-13 as a guide. Pastor Paul challenges believers to avoid two extremes: being so focused on being liked that they never share hard truths (hypocrisy), or being so harsh and truth-driven that they become cruel and obnoxious (brutishness). Instead, Jesus calls His disciples to a balanced approach of being both attractive and offensive in the right ways. The sermon closes with a personal challenge not to repeat the mistake of the Nazarenes, who were so close to Jesus in his humanity that they missed His divinity, and ultimately were left with Jesus amazed at their lack of faith.

Intro Prayer

Heavenly Father, we come before You today as a group of people who want to know You more deeply. We ask that You open our hearts and minds to what You want to speak to each of us personally. Remove any pride or defensiveness that might keep us from hearing Your truth. Help us to see Jesus clearly, not just as a historical figure, but as the living Savior who calls us to follow Him fully. May Your Holy Spirit guide our conversation today, and may we leave this time changed and challenged to live more faithfully for You. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Ice Breaker

Think back to a time when someone surprised you by doing something you never expected them to be capable of. What was it, and how did it change the way you saw that person?

Key Verses

- Mark 6:3
- Mark 6:6
- Mark 6:11
- Isaiah 53:3
- John 14:6

Questions

- The sermon describes how the people of Nazareth experienced a 'paradox of proximity,' meaning they were so close to Jesus in his humanity that they missed His divinity. Have you ever found it difficult to see someone clearly because of how well you thought you already knew them? How might that apply to how we sometimes approach Jesus?
- The Greek word translated as 'offense' in Mark 6:3 is 'scandalone,' which is where we get the word 'scandal.' Why do you think Jesus, who is described as loving and kind, would be considered scandalous or offensive to so many people both then and now?
- The townspeople called Jesus 'Mary's son' rather than 'Joseph's son,' which was a deliberate insult about the circumstances of His birth. The sermon points out that Jesus later became truly 'fatherless' on the cross when He cried out in Matthew 27:46, 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?' (NIV). How does understanding that Jesus took on shame and rejection change the way you view the cross?
- The sermon describes two unhealthy extremes for Christians: being a 'hypocrite' who only shares the loving parts of the gospel to avoid conflict, or being a 'brute' who uses truth as a weapon without love. Which of these two tendencies do you find yourself leaning toward, and why?
- In Mark 6:6, it says Jesus 'was amazed at their lack of faith' (NIV). What does it mean to you personally that Jesus could be amazed by a lack of faith? Does that change how you think about your own faith journey?
- The sermon challenges us not to make the same mistake as the people of Nazareth, who had Jesus standing right in front of them and still rejected Him. In what ways might we as modern believers be guilty of a similar kind of rejection, even while calling ourselves followers of Christ?
- Jesus sent His disciples out in Mark 6:7-13 with both power and clear boundaries, telling them to serve people and not be a burden, but also to proclaim a gospel of repentance. How do you personally balance sharing the grace of the gospel with the call to repentance in your everyday relationships?

- The sermon uses the illustration of a fire escape plan to describe how Jesus offers a way out of sin that is not cruel but incredibly kind. Is there someone in your life right now who needs to hear that there is a way out? What is holding you back from sharing that with them?

Life Application

This week, identify one relationship in your life where you have been leaning too far toward either being a 'hypocrite' (avoiding hard truths to keep the peace) or a 'brute' (sharing truth without love or grace). Pray specifically for that person each day this week and ask God to show you one practical way to bring both love and truth into that relationship. Consider writing down what a balanced, Christ-like conversation with that person might look like, and ask God for the courage and wisdom to have it.

Key Takeaways

- Jesus has always been offensive to some people, and this was even prophesied in Isaiah 53. His exclusive claim to be the only way to the Father (John 14:6) and His call to surrender our lives to him will always create resistance in those who are not ready to receive Him.
- The people of Nazareth were offended by the ordinary nature of Jesus and the circumstances of His birth. Their 'paradox of proximity' caused them to miss his divinity entirely, and their insults ironically pointed to the very identity of the Savior He came to be.
- The gospel is simple but profound. Jesus did not come with an army or a sword, but with His own body broken on a cross, so that we could stand before the Father as forgiven and righteous. This simplicity offends those who expect a different kind of Savior.
- Followers of Jesus are called to balance being attractive and offensive in how they share the gospel. We should serve, love, and help people while also being willing to proclaim a message of repentance, without swinging to the extremes of hypocrisy or brutishness.
- We must not repeat the mistake of the Nazarenes by allowing familiarity, pride, or unresolved doubts to keep us from fully embracing Jesus as Lord. Jesus was amazed at their lack of faith, and we are called to respond to Him with wholehearted trust and surrender.

Ending Prayer

Lord Jesus, thank You for this time together and for the truth of Your Word that challenges and changes us. We confess that there are times when we, like the people of Nazareth, allow familiarity, pride, or fear

to keep us from fully trusting You. Forgive us for the moments when we have been either too timid to speak truth or too harsh in the way we have spoken it. Help us to walk in the balance You modeled, full of grace and full of truth. Give us eyes to see the people around us who need to hear that there is a way out, and give us the courage and the love to point them to You. May we never be amazed at our own lack of faith, but instead grow deeper in our trust in You each and every day. We ask all of this in the name of Jesus, the one who went to the cross so that we could know the Father. Amen.