

Jesus, The Astonished Prophet - Mark 6:1-6

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Preacher: Guest Preacher

[0 : 00] Good morning, everyone. It's wonderful to be with you again. Yeah, my name is J.J.Routley, and I have the privilege of teaching over at Emmaus University now,! Formerly Emmaus Bible College.

The name was changed this past fall, mainly because we're in the process of creating and adding a master's program to our undergraduate degree.

So I get the blessing of being on the small committee that's scrambling to create that master's program that we're, Lord willing, going to release this fall.

It's been a lot of fun, but you can pray for us. There's a lot of work that goes into that as well. It's wonderful to hear about your pastoral search and how the Lord is guiding and directing in those ways, and so I will continue to pray, as I'm sure you will, that the Lord will lead the right individual here.

I can't imagine how anybody would be a part of your congregation for a weekend and not want to be with you all. So I know the times that I've been with you, I've been very blessed to be here and have felt very welcomed and at home.

[1 : 15] We're going to be in Mark 6 this morning, continuing on your series, I believe, of teaching through the Gospel of Mark. And we're going to look at just the first six verses together, Mark 6, 1 through 6, and examine it in some detail for our time together.

When you hear the word astonishing, what comes to mind? Maybe you have something that immediately comes up as like an event from your life where you were surprised or maybe even shocked by something or someone.

Maybe, though, you might be initially having a little bit harder time recollecting something or bringing something to mind. So let me give you a couple of examples of things from recent history that some have called somewhat astonishing.

Here's one. There was a Syrian brown bear named Wojtek who was actually adopted by the Polish soldiers during World War II.

Have you heard about this? The bear grew up with the 22nd Artillery Supply Company and formed a close bond with the soldiers. During the Battle of Monte Cassano in 1944, Wojtek helped move crates of ammunition and became a celebrity with visiting Allied generals and statesmen.

[2 : 49] And after the war, he actually survived through the entire war. After the war, he was mustered out of the Polish army and lived out the rest of his life at the Edinburgh Zoo in Scotland.

Who would have thought, right, a bear in the military? Here's another one. Astonishing. These are just kind of silly things, right? Astonishing. A headless chicken.

Seriously. Back in 1945, a chicken who was destined for the chop block miraculously survived the farmer's axe and ran around without a head for the next two years.

This is a true story. The farmer and his new headless chicken, whom he named Mike, soon left their farm in Colorado and hit the road, showcasing the unbelievable sight of a walking, breathing, headless chicken to any who were willing to pay a fee.

I mean, I would probably do the same thing, right? People from across America gawked and stared at Mike's headless chicken while scientists poked him and prodded him to try to figure out why exactly he was still alive.

[4 : 02] The answer lay in the positioning of a chicken's brain, which actually goes down into their neck a little bit, situated toward the back of their heads. And so when the farmer chopped off his head, he chopped off a good portion of the head and a small portion of the brain.

And much of the brain was still left intact. So a fortunate blood clot by this chicken then prevented Mike from bleeding to death and he survived for another two years.

That would be an astonishing sight to see a chicken running around with no head. How about one more? This is another little-known fact from history.

America actually had planned to send a nuke to the moon. Are you aware of this? As unfathomable as it sounds, the Americans really did consider sending a nuclear missile toward the moon.

Why would they do that? To prevent the Soviets from landing there first. Ever since the end of World War II, the two countries you might remember were locked in an ever-escalating nuclear arms race that evolved eventually into the space race.

[5 : 16] And the Soviets got off to the quickest start with the launch of their Sputnik 1 in 1957, the first artificial satellite.

Fearing that they might fall further behind, American top commanders wanted a show of strength, so the U.S. Air Force began Project A-119, a.k.a. Project Nuke the Moon.

The Air Force wanted a mushroom cloud so large it would be visible from Earth as the ultimate display of one-upmanship on the Soviets. Praise the Lord, they didn't actually go through with this. Can you imagine what might have happened if we had actually sent a nuclear missile to the moon? In this passage that we're going to read about, at the beginning of Mark chapter 6, we read about something that astonished Jesus.

Something that he marveled about. It was something that shocked him. Even something perhaps that made him say, I just can't believe this. If you're wondering what exactly made Jesus react this way, then let's look together at Mark chapter 6 and verses 1 through 6 and examine just what it was that bewildered our Savior.

[6 : 40] Mark chapter 6 and verse 1 says this, He, this is Jesus, went away from there and came to his hometown and his disciples followed him.

We know from earlier in this gospel and other gospels that Jesus grew up in the city of Nazareth in lower Galilee. And on the Sabbath, he began to teach in the synagogue and many who heard him were astonished, saying, Where did this man get these things?

What is this wisdom given to him? How are such mighty works done by his hands? Is not this the carpenter? The son of Mary and brother of James and Joseph and Judas and Simon?

And are not his sisters here with us? And they took offense at him. And Jesus said to them, A prophet is not without honor, except in his hometown and among his relatives and in his own household.

And he could do no mighty work there, except that he laid his hands on a few sick people and healed them. And he marveled because of their unbelief.

[8 : 00] And he went about among the villages teaching. Father in heaven, as we look at this passage this morning, we pray that your spirit would be at work in our minds and within our hearts to help us understand not only what it means in its original setting, the way that Mark wrote it and how he intended it for his audience, but what it means for us today, how we should adjust our lives, our behaviors, our thinking as a result of what we read this morning.

So we pray that your spirit would be at work here among us. It's in Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Amen. The first verse then says that Jesus went away from there and came to his hometown, the city of Nazareth, and his disciples followed him.

Now in the last chapter, you might remember he was in the city of Capernaum where he had healed the woman who had been bleeding for 12 years and he raised Jairus' daughter who had died.

Amazing works that were done on the northern side of the Sea of Galilee then. Jesus went away from the northern shores of the Sea of Galilee at this point and back to the mountains west of the sea to his hometown, the city of Nazareth, and his disciples went with him which in the very next section that we have, verses 7 and following of Mark's gospel, Jesus is going to commission his disciples and send them out to share the good news of his kingdom.

So Mark is maybe giving us a little bit of a preview here that there's something in store for Jesus' disciples. And so we should read this section understanding that the disciples are present but they're sort of observing on the sidelines what goes on here.

[10 : 02] The good news that Jesus is going to send them out to proclaim is simply that the kingdom of God again has arrived in the person of the messianic king who is Jesus himself.

God who's come down in the flesh and that by believing in him they may have life in his name. The disciples in the next section are going to be given the ability to perform many miracles signs and wonders to demonstrate to give evidence to the truthfulness of Jesus' claim to be the king of Israel.

Really that was that was the point largely of the miracles of Jesus' life. His miracles were meant to testify to the truthfulness of his message.

Now we read in verse 2 on the Sabbath he began to teach in the synagogue and many who heard him were astonished saying where did this man get these things?

What is the wisdom given to him? How are such mighty works done by his hands? Mark tells us that this event takes place on a Sabbath day.

[11 : 25] The Sabbath day was the holy day of Israel when the Jews were commanded not to do any work but rather to consecrate the day and keep it holy.

And on this particular Sabbath day Jesus entered into the synagogue and he began to teach there. This would not be exactly like entering into a church setting today because in the synagogue the seating was not just facing like one podium up in the front it was more in a U shape and people sat around an area there was a place for the scrolls of the law of the Lord in the center of the room and a place for the rabbi the main teacher at the front.

Typically within a synagogue setting the Old Testament scriptures would be read publicly and then the Jews who were present would actually have an opportunity to hear the presiding rabbi share his thoughts on the meaning of those scriptures.

To that degree it was similar to our church services today but one thing that was maybe a little bit different was then there was an opportunity for the Jews who were present to respond to ask questions to talk to the rabbi and so it was kind of like an interactive service it would be something like if after this preaching service then we spent another 15 or 20 minutes and you would ask questions or respond or talk or something like that out loud.

So on this day Jesus was to speak in the synagogue and he was given the great privilege of standing up and reading from the Old Testament.

[13 : 15] What did Jesus say in the synagogue? Well Mark in his gospel doesn't give us the detail however Luke goes into much greater detail in his gospel.

In Luke chapter 4 and verses 16 through 21 we find there that when Jesus was in Nazareth he was given the scroll of the prophet Isaiah.

They wouldn't have had the entire Old Testament written out just on one scroll but different scrolls for different books of the Old Testament and they would have had one scroll for Isaiah and because it was such a large scroll and it's all wound up they would have previously probably before the service started rolled it to a certain spot that they wanted Jesus to read from.

Now this is where in Luke's gospel it gets a little bit interesting. Luke says that Jesus unrolled the scroll that's a little unorthodox a little out of the ordinary probably made a few people a little bit uncomfortable in the synagogue service.

He unrolled the scroll and he rolled it to a particular passage Isaiah 61 and verses 1 and 2 this is what it says in Isaiah 61 the spirit of the Lord is upon me because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor he has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind to set at liberty those who are oppressed to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor and after reading this Luke says Jesus rolled the scroll back up returned it to the officiant from whom he was given the scroll and he sat down to teach his introduction for the Jews in the synagogue when he sat down to expound upon the verses he had just read went something like this today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing now you have to understand how monumental this statement would have been for the

[15 : 43] Jews of Jesus day for them to hear him say these scriptures had been fulfilled in their hearing was the same as him saying the words to them I am the Messiah I am the king of Israel why because the word anointed in Isaiah 61 1 the spirit of the Lord is upon me because he has anointed me this is the same word in Hebrew from which the word Messiah or Mashiach comes and these verses would have been understood by the Jews of Jesus day to be predictive of the coming king of Israel Jesus was telling them in other words I am the one you have been waiting for I am your king now Mark tells us that the response to Jesus came in a couple of waves to the

Jews in the synagogue first they were astonished by him and this word for being astonished is also a word that's used after Jesus taught the sermon on the mount in Matthew chapter 7 where the crowds were astonished there at his teaching I think the people would have marveled at the amazing teaching of the Lord Jesus they also asked him where did this man get these things what is this wisdom given to him how are such mighty works done by his hands you know these are good questions to ask about Jesus I would offer that these are actually the right questions that those who

are sincerely seeking Jesus would ask about him so let's look at these for a moment first of all where does his teaching come from is one question that they're asking where did he get these things the answer of course is that his teaching came from God the father Jesus would say in John's gospel my teaching is not mine but his who sent me John 7:16 if Jesus if the Jews in Nazareth had pursued this question and sought the true answer it would lead them to the fact that Jesus had come from God second they asked the question what is this wisdom that's been given to him again these were not his own thoughts but wisdom from on high Jesus taught the oracles of God the word of God directly from the mouth of God third they asked how are such mighty works done by his hands likely the people in Nazareth had heard about some of the incredible miracles that Jesus had performed in other places like Capernaum you know you've just been hearing about how he healed the sick raised the dead Jairus daughter she was dead right he calmed the sea and cast out demons how are such mighty works done by him the answer is of course because he came from God with the wisdom of God to display the glory and power of God the miracles that Jesus performed were meant to verify the message that he proclaimed in other words the signs and wonders of Jesus were meant to show the people of Israel that he really was the Messiah their king God come in the flesh these signs and wonders continue today to verify Jesus message for all who will believe in him but after these initial questions the questions of the Jews in synagogue at Nazareth start to get progressively more and more critical look at verse three they say is not this the carpenter the son of Mary the brother of James and Joseph and Judas and Simon and are not his sisters here with us and they took offense at him instead of acknowledging that Jesus must have come from God they explain the way the miracles by presenting the impossibility that Jesus was anything special he's just a carpenter we knew his father he grew up here we've known him from the time he was a boy Joseph was his dad Mary is his mother we know them and they're not all that great nothing special about them his brothers James and Joseph and [21:05] Judas and Simon we know all of them and we know his sisters too this guy isn't anything special now I want to make a quick note here because sometimes there's confusion about this sometimes Mary is presented as being a perpetual virgin in Roman Catholic theology for example Mary and Joseph according to Catholic theology never consummated their marriage and Mary only gave birth to Jesus no other siblings the Catholic concept that you may have heard of called the Immaculate Conception what you might not realize is that's not actually talking about Jesus that's talking about Mary that Mary was conceived without sin and so she had to be sinless all of her days in order to give birth to the sinless Messiah these ideas are not found in the Bible in the Bible Mary's found to be with child by the Holy Spirit miraculously conceives and bears the baby Jesus but then afterward her and her husband enjoy a normal marriage and she has other children some of them are listed by name in this passage in a family that large the boys are listed there's Jesus has at least four brothers here and doesn't mention the names of the sisters in a family that large I am quite confident that Mary was not sinless at all points in her lifetime Jesus did have brothers one of whom James later became the leader of the Jerusalem church after Jesus death and resurrection according to the record that we have in the book of Acts now the Jews in Nazareth found it hard to believe that Jesus was anything special because they knew his background it would be like someone here who's been going here all their life maybe a college age person who's grown up here you all have known him and suddenly this college age student stands up and says I'm actually your savior I'm your messiah that would have been what it would have been like for the Jewish people in Nazareth at this time with one exception Jesus had signs and wonders to support his statements and in spite of these wonderful signs and teachings the Jewish people refused to believe because in their minds he was just one of them Bible teacher Daryl Bach says here the marvel is that they accept that mighty works are being done but cannot accept the claims that Jesus makes for Mark this illustrates the hardness of unbelief verse 4 says Jesus said to them a prophet is not without honor except in his hometown and among his relatives and in his own household Jesus' response to the unbelieving Jews in Nazareth is to give them this proverbial statement you know there were other ancient thinkers who said similar things for example the philosopher Greek philosopher Plutarch who lived just after the time of Jesus said this you would find the most sensible and wisest people are little cared for in their own hometowns the Old Testament often speaks about the rejection of the messengers of God the prophets by God's own people but I want you to focus in for a moment on and don't pass too quickly over the way that Jesus refers to himself

here in verse 4 he speaks of himself as a prophet a prophet is not without honor except in his hometown we know there are a number of occasions in the gospels where Jesus is spoken of as a prophet by others like Luke chapter 7 when Jesus raises back to life the dead son of the widow of Nain after Jesus revived him the response of the people in that city according to Luke 7 16 was fear seized them all and they glorified God saying a great prophet has arisen among us and God has visited his people but in our passage Jesus himself testifies to the reality that he was a prophet sent by God to the people of Israel a prophet in the biblical sense of that office is simply a messenger who speaks the word of the Lord to the person or people to whom God wants to communicate so in the Old Testament Abraham was called a prophet in Genesis 27 Moses is called a prophet Deuteronomy 18 15 David was a prophet according to Peter's words in Acts 2 30 of course we have prophets like Elijah and Elisha who did a lot of miraculous things and they're talked about in the Old

[26 : 49] Testament but they left no writings that we know of from their hand particularly we've also got other prophets like Isaiah Jeremiah Ezekiel Daniel who have extensive prophetic writings sometimes the prophets would perform signs and wonders miracles from heaven by the power of God that would serve to validate the message that God had given so God sent the plagues on Egypt so that Israel and the Egyptians would know God had really sent Moses to deliver the people of Israel and lead them to the promised land if Jesus says of himself in this passage that he is a prophet it might be good for us to spend just a few moments considering how he was a prophet so let's briefly look at a couple of ways that Jesus was a prophet and not just any prophet but we could say

Israel's greatest prophet first of all as Israel's greatest prophet Jesus communicated God's word to God's people John tells us in his gospel that Jesus came to perfectly reveal the father to humanity John 1 14 the word became flesh and dwelt among us and we have seen his glory glory as of the only son from the father full of grace and truth and verse 18 no one has ever seen God but the only God who is at the father's side has made him known Jesus spoke the words of God to the people of Israel John 7 16 we've looked at already my teaching is not mine but his who sent me and he says again in John 12 49 through 50

I've not spoken on my own authority but the father who sent me has given me a commandment what to say and what to speak and I know his commandment is eternal life what I say therefore I say as the father has told me all of Jesus teaching could be classified then as prophetic utterance to his people it's important to note that Jesus is of course greater than any other prophet of Israel because he is God himself come down in the flesh did Jesus perform signs and wonders like a prophet you better believe he did standing in the tradition of the old testament prophets Jesus healed the sick gave sight to the blind caused the lame to walk the mute to talk the deaf to hear Jesus exercised authority over the natural world turning water into wine feeding 5,000 walking on the water calming the raging storm on

Galilee Jesus exercised authority over the demons casting out demons as you've seen more recently raising to life those who had died on numerous occasions the widow's son in name the daughter of Jairus the leader of the Capernaum synagogue and Lazarus the brother of Mary and Martha who had been dead for four days really the ultimate example of bringing someone back that's not just mostly dead to borrow from Billy Crystal and the princess bride that's all dead right Jesus performed some incredible miracles to demonstrate that he really had been sent by God third Jesus showed himself to be a prophet similar to many prophets who had come before him and yet greater so think about this Moses came to deliver his people

Jesus came to deliver his people not from slavery in Egypt but from slavery to their sin instead of turning water into blood Jesus turned water into wine like Moses he demonstrated the greatness of God over nature but rather than part the water and walk through on dry ground Jesus just walked on the water there's an escalation then in the miraculous within the life of Jesus instead of killing the firstborn of Egypt he would offer himself the firstborn over all creation as Paul says in Colossians to satisfy the wrath of God against sin like Elijah who raised a widow's son back to life Jesus raised a widow's only son back to life at Nain like Elisha who prophesied the cleansing of leprous Naaman Jesus just reached out and touched lepers or spoke and they were cleansed from their leprosy finally

[32 : 14] Jesus fulfilled Moses prophecy of a greater prophet a messianic prophet who would come after him in Deuteronomy 18 15 Moses predicted the Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet

like me from among you from your brothers it is to him you shall listen and in verse 18 I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers I will put my words in his mouth and he shall speak to them all that I command him Moses knew that one day there would come a great prophet a prophet with a capital P and that the people would listen to him we can see at the time of John the Baptist the Jews who were sent to John to ask to ask him about who he was thought about this in John 1 21 one of the questions that they asked

John the Baptist is are you the prophet probably a reference to Deuteronomy 18 in Acts chapter 3 Peter applies Deuteronomy 18 to Jesus showing that he was the prophet capital P of whom Moses had spoken Jesus then was not just a prophet like every other prophet that had come in Israel's history he was the prophet Israel's greatest prophet who would also be king and priest over his people and he gives us a window a small glimpse into this glorious truth in Mark chapter 6 this prophet would initially be rejected by his people but after the greatest sign the greatest wonder the greatest miracle that could be performed this prophet's message would be shown to be absolutely true what was that greatest miracle the greatest prophet's greatest sign would be none other than his own death and resurrection verse 5 we read there he could do no mighty work there except that he laid his hands on a few sick people and healed them

Jesus gospel ministry always had as its aim the faith the belief of his people that's what he so desperately wanted he wanted them to believe in him to believe that he had been sent from God to believe that he was the prophet that Moses had predicted would come to believe that Jesus was the true king over Israel and indeed over all the earth and where there was no belief there was no point in trying to validate his message Mark's words he could do no mighty work there should not be taken to mean that there was something inept in Jesus the problem was not with Jesus the problem was with the unbelieving people in the city of Nazareth they did not believe so they did not receive the blessings of his prophetic ministry except only a few sick people were healed as if that in itself is not amazing enough!

many mighty works here because of their unbelief it's not that he couldn't it's that he wouldn't do it and verse six and this is where we see Jesus astonished!

six and he marveled he was astonished what made him marvel he marveled because of their unbelief and he went about the villages teaching the unbelief of the Jews in Nazareth was amazing to Jesus he was astounded by their unbelief their lack of faith was shocking to him really people of Nazareth really I mean wow just wow Jesus was flabbergasted by their unbelief incidentally this shows that the true humanity of Jesus that he took on the true limitations of humanity experiencing feelings of disappointment astonishment!

[37 : 34] sadness I'm sure at the negative response of his people it makes me think of John chapter 1 verse 11 he came to his own and his own people did not receive him now on a different occasion Jesus was asked by a Roman centurion to heal his suffering servant Jesus was very willing to help and he told the centurion that he would come and heal him the official stopped Jesus however and told him he was not worthy to have Jesus come under his roof but instead Jesus should just give the command for his servant to be healed and that would be enough and this interaction again resulted in Jesus marveling being astonished but this time it was at the centurion's faith Matthew chapter 8 verse 10 Luke 7 verse 9 Jesus said to the crowd who was following him on that occasion

I tell you not even in Israel have I found such faith isn't it interesting that Jesus expected faith a response of faith from the people of Israel but he found none and yet he expected unbelief from the Gentile world those who were outside of Israel but often times he found faith there and so we conclude this message with a question what is your relationship with the Lord this morning you've heard the good news about Jesus in this passage he makes it very clear he was proclaiming to all the earth that he's the one true king God come down in the flesh and his desire is that all people would believe in him to be forgiven of their sins and saved from their sins but when he looks at your heart this morning what does he see is he astonished by unbelief perhaps you're here and you've been here week after week or time after time or church service after church service this may be your first time in this church service but you've been to others and yet you've never opened your heart to the

Lord Jesus when Christ looks at your heart is he astonished by the stubbornness of unbelief you know the greatest thing in the entire world is being shared with you this morning it's the gospel of Jesus Christ how is your heart responding to it are you willing to accept it to receive it maybe he

looks at your heart and you have trusted in Christ as savior and he does see that faith Lord help me to have the faith like the centurion where he saw that centurion faith and said wow that is marvelous that's astonishing I want to have an astonishing faith in the Lord

Jesus what is the condition of your heart this morning the Bible tells us that all things are visible to God he can see it all nothing is hidden from him he can see into your thoughts right now what you're thinking what you're feeling he knows what you've done this week knows what you've done this morning he knows what you're thinking about at this moment everything is visible to him he knows whether you're stubbornly rejecting his glorious gospel or whether you've accepted it in faith what is the condition of your heart are you like the Jews in the synagogue that have heard the most wonderful message in the world and their response is meh this is just Jesus we know him we grew up with him he's nothing special they took the most wonderful thing in the world and rejected it because of disbelief don't pass by the most marvelous glorious thing that

God wants to give to you this morning because of unbelief be sensitive be sensitive Jesus is Israel's greatest prophet come to proclaim the good news of his glorious gospel freedom from sin slavery to our own sinfulness and through his sacrifice in the cross he provides forgiveness for that sin to any and all who will believe if you've never done that this morning forget about everything else and everyone else around you do not leave this room until you trust the Lord Jesus as your Savior let's bow in prayer together father in heaven we are so thankful for a passage like this where

[43 : 22] Jesus clearly demonstrated for his people who he was his true identity come down from heaven as your Messiah to save them from their sins and it makes us astonished Father that they would be presented with the most wonderful thing in the entire world and reject it as base Lord we know the propensity of our own hearts toward the glorious news that we have in the word of God and yet not treating it as we should help us to have a faith that's astonishing to Jesus teach us from the pattern of the centurion that we talked about help us not to have an astonishing unbelief and again if there's anyone here this morning who has never trusted the Lord Jesus as their Savior we pray that your spirit would poke them and prod them in their mind in their heart so that they would turn and be saved!

Thank you for our time together today it's in Jesus name we pray Amen