

THE MARVEL OF UNBELIEF

WILLIS 0/19/10

Mk6:1-6

Our text this morning is Mark's account of the same story we read last week in Matthew. Where the veil of familiarity was the barrier we broke last week in Matthew, today I want us break down Hell's twin gate with familiarity, the gate of unbelief.

- **Familiarity and Unbelief work in tandem. Like twin gates in Hell's defense, these two gates seek to keep us from entering into all God has promised.**
- I have entitled what I want to share today "The Marvel of Unbelief." I use the word "marvel" because just as unbelief can be a gate to keep someone out it can also be seen as a gate to let someone in.
- Before we get to why Jesus "marveled at their unbelief," let's look at the destructive force of unbelief.

Mk6:1-6

Our focus has been breaking down the barriers that would prevent the Bride of Jesus Christ from making herself ready. If wisdom is "the ability to learn from other peoples mistakes," perhaps there is no better example of a barrier to readiness than the gate of unbelief.

- **Many commentators agree unbelief is the oldest sin known to man.** Unbelief reaches all the way back to that fateful day in the Garden when the Serpent sowed that original seed of doubt by saying, "Did God really say..."
- It was unbelief that caused a generation to refuse the warnings of a righteous man named Noah. It was unbelief that caused Sodom and Gomorrah to refuse the warnings of Lot. Unbelief kept Israel from entering the Promised Land and it is unbelief that keeps you and me from entering the rest of God.
- **It could be easily argued unbelief is the root of all sin. Fear, envy, greed, lust...they all find the root of their destruction in this demonic gate of unbelief.**
- Charles Finney said, "Unbelief is a state of mind that leaves the conduct of man uninfluenced by the truths of God."
- **There wasn't a demon in hell that could hinder to the slightest degree one iota of Christ's work yet unbelief virtually silenced God and left Nazareth uninfluenced.**

Unbelief is sinister. In fact, unbelief is so insidious that in Heb 4 the writer says, "Let us fear lest while a promise remains of entering His rest anyone of us should come short because of unbelief."

“Let us fear not entering due to unbelief.” This sounds like a contradiction to “fear not” when in reality it is a warning that leaves us wondering, **how could Jesus marvel at their unbelief and not rebuke them for their unbelief?** How could unbelief be something Jesus marveled at?

- Could it be unbelief was a marvel for Jesus because of its representative value? **If there were no possibility for unbelief there would be no reason for faith.** For there to be unbelief there must first be something to believe in.
- Like the boy who seeing a barn full of manure said, “Yes, there must be a pony in here somewhere.” **If your life is full of unbelief, there must be a promise in there somewhere.**
- The manure can be cleaned up so get excited about the pony. Unbelief is being removed so get excited about the promise.
- **Marvel: to admire. Could it be Jesus marveled at their unbelief because though it represented a gate of resistance, behind that gate were all the promises of God waiting to be believed in.**
- Unbelief is simply a demonic gate. Gates serve one of two purposes. They either keep a people out or they let a people in. The devil would have us believe unbelief is a gate that keeps us out...
- **Jesus would say, “The gates of hell shall not prevail against you. What was meant to keep you out shall now let you in. Behind that gate of hell is something to believe in.”**
- The devil doesn’t erect gates in front of hell to keep us out of hell. He erects gates in front of the purposes of God to keep us from going in. The gates of hell represent the value of what is behind them. Those gates won’t prevail because we refuse to stop at them.

Have you ever considered living man is the only creature of creation that struggles with unbelief? James tells us in Jm2:19 “Even the demons believe and tremble.” Living man is the only creature of creation that struggles with unbelief because living man is the only creature to whom are given the promises of God.

- **Could it be unbelief is a marvel because unbelief represents the promises of God? Unbelief is a gate; it need not keep you out if you see it as a gate to let you in.**
- Is62:10 “Pass through; Pass through the gates, clear the way for my people.”
- Unbelief is a gate of hell. The gates of hell shall not prevail against us because we are not of those who stop at gates, we pass through.
- **“When going through hell, don’t stop.” Bishop Long**

How do we pass through the gate of unbelief and step into the promises of God?

1. **Change our Perspective: Heb11:6** As Finney said, “Unbelief is a state of mind...” Unbelief is not a reality it is a state of mind so when it seeks to stop you, change your

mind. Change your mind by believing that God is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

- Change your perspective about unbelief, it is only a gate.
- **Gates add value to property. Pass through the gate of unbelief and you will add value to your testimony.**
- Hope deferred is only a gate. Hope deferred is no longer an enemy when we see it announces that there is still hope. Hope deferred is not hope gone. As long as there is hope, even if it is hope deferred, there is still hope.
- **When standing before the gate of unbelief, change your perspective on if the gate swings. It swings open so pass through into belief and possession.**

2. **Fix Your Eyes on Jesus: Heb12:2** What Jesus begins He completes through faith. Provision, timing, context...these are not the issue, they will come into view at their appointed time, the only issue is our faith overcoming the demonic gate of unbelief.

- Hab2:2 “The vision will tarry” count on it taking longer than you thought, so we must learn to fix our eyes on Jesus in the “mean time.”
- **The “mean time” is the time between promise and provision. Its only mean though if we take our eyes off Jesus while He is authoring and perfecting our faith.**
- Rom10:17 In the mean time get a Word. The faith that overcomes unbelief comes from a Word from God. Get a Word, believe the Word and never give up on the Word.

3. **Don't Despise the Day of Small Beginnings: Zech4:6-10** Everything big comes from something small. Trees come from seeds. Homes are built with boards. Books are written with words.

- **Destinies are realized one promised believed at a time.** Schools get built one student at a time. Excellence is achieved one practice at a time. Best sellers are written one paragraph at a time.
- 1Kings18:36-44 After 3 ½ years the drought ends but the end begins with a cloud the size of a man's hand. That was all Elijah needed, being he didn't despise the day of small beginnings he *acted* as if the rains had already come.
- **Unbelief is often the result of unrealistic expectations of time. If so don't trash the dream, honor the day of small beginning and adjust the expectation of time.**

If there is a gate of unbelief standing between you and the promises of God, I'd like you to stand so we can go through that gate together in prayer.

- “The gates of hell shall not prevail against you...”No weapon formed against you shall prosper.”