

(In preparation for gathered worship next week, November 9, 2008)

Mark 6:1-56

The arrival of the kingdom of God in the person of Jesus is the best thing ever to happen to this planet. Yet some people oppose Jesus.

Opposition to great blessing doesn't make sense. As you read the passage, take note of Jesus' detractors and watch how he responds to them.

- 1) Why do the hometown folks 'take offense at Jesus'? (verse 3) And what does the familiar maxim mean: 'A prophet is not without honor, except in his hometown and among his relatives and in his own household'? (verse 4)

- 2) When Jesus sent out the twelve disciples to proclaim the good news of the kingdom of God, he prepared them for possible rejection: 'if any place does not receive you . . . shake off the dust that is on your feet as a testimony against them' (verse 11). Why would anyone reject the gospel?

- 3) Why did Herod execute John the Baptist? See verses 14-29. Why do people oppose the gospel today? Bonus question: what can we do about it?

- 4) How did Jesus respond to rejection? See verses 30-44. In the light of his response, what is the significance of verses 42 and 43 in particular?

- 5) Seeing a man walk on the sea during a storm is pretty astounding (verses 48-51). Yet, for the disciples, it ought not to have been. Why? What 'did they not understand about the loaves'? (verse 52)

- 6) What do the following words from Jesus mean to you: 'Take heart; it is I. Do not be afraid'. (verse 50) Explain . . . applying these words to your life.