

Title: ENCOUNTERING UNBELIEF

Text: Mark 6:1-13

Setting (previous & vv. 1-2a)

Encountering Prejudice (vv. 2b-3)

What are my prejudices of Jesus?

Confronting Prejudice (vv. 4-6a)

Have I allowed my familiarity to lead to unfamiliarity?

Preparing for Prejudice (vv. 7-13)

Am I experiencing rejection as a result of my belief?

Overcoming Prejudice

CONVERSATION STARTER

- Talk about a time when something Jesus said or did in the Gospels ever made you uncomfortable, angry, or confused. Is there anything you wish you could remove from his teachings? If yes, what is it and why does it bother you?
- Read Mark 6:1-13. Why do you think those who heard Jesus teach in the synagogue found it so difficult to accept his message? How do you think their familiarity with Jesus factored into their rejection of his authority? What is the relationship between faith and Jesus' ability to perform miracles in this story? How does Jesus' rejection in Nazareth inform his instructions to the disciples in verses 7-13?
- Read Matthew 10:34-39. What prejudices of Jesus do you have that are challenged by this passage? How specifically does it challenge them? How might a potential follower of Jesus be offended by Jesus' teaching in this passage? In what ways have you "made Jesus into your own image"?
- Read the excerpt below. Do you agree with Yancey that Jesus is often unpredictable in his interactions with people? Why or why not? What about Yancey's indictment against the church in the final sentence? Is he exaggerating or dead-on? How do you think Jesus would surprise the church today if he came to a Sunday service?
- In what specific ways might our prejudices hinder an authentic encounter with Christ? What are ways we can overcome our prejudices? How might Jesus' experience of rejection inform our own expectations for Gospel living?

EXCERPT FROM: *The Jesus I Never Knew*

BY: Philip Yancey

The more I have studied Jesus, the more difficult it becomes to pigeon-hole him. He said little about the Roman occupation, the main topic of conversation among his countrymen, and yet he took up a whip to drive petty profiteers from the Jewish temple. He urged obedience to the Mosaic law while acquiring the reputation as a lawbreaker. He could be stabbed by sympathy for a stranger, yet turn on his best friend with the flinty rebuke, 'Get behind me, Satan!' He had uncompromising views on rich men and loose women, yet both types enjoyed his company. One day, miracles seemed to flow out of Jesus; the next day his power was blocked by people's lack of faith. One day he talked in detail of the Second Coming; another he knew neither the day nor the hour. He fled from arrest at one point and marched inexorably toward it at another. He spoke eloquently about peacemaking, then told his disciples to procure swords. His extravagant claims about himself kept him at the center of controversy, but when he did something truly miraculous he tended to hush it up...Two words one could never think of applying to the Jesus of the Gospels: boring and predictable. How is it, then, that the church has tamed such a character—has, in Dorothy Sayers' words, 'very efficiently pared the claws of the Lion of Judah, certified Him as a fitting household pet for pale curates and pious old ladies'?