



# Jesus the Builder

**Theme:** "Much wisdom in the parables of Jesus were developed through his experience as a merchant and builder."

**Biblical:** Mark 6:1-6

**Start Questions:** Have you ever wondered how your working life makes you understand the parables of Jesus having empathy with the background of his teaching?

## Mark 6:1-6

Jesus left there and went to his hometown, accompanied by his disciples. 2 When the Sabbath came, he began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard him were amazed.

"Where did this man get these things?" they asked. "What's this wisdom that has been given him? What are these remarkable miracles he is performing? 3 Isn't this the carpenter? Isn't this Mary's son and the brother of James, Joseph, Judas and Simon? Aren't his sisters here with us?" And they took offense at him.

4 Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not without honor except in his own town, among his relatives and in his own home." 5 He could not do any miracles there, except lay his hands on a few sick people and heal them. 6 He was amazed at their lack of faith.

## Reflection Reading

An incident in Jesus' hometown gives a rare insight into his work prior to becoming a traveling preacher. The context is that Jesus' hometown friends and acquaintances can't believe that this familiar local boy has become a great teacher and prophet. In the course of their complaints, they say, "What deeds of power are being done by his hands! Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary and brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon, and are not his sisters here with us?" (Mark 6:2–3). This is the only passage in the Bible to directly state Jesus' trade. (In Matthew 13:55, Jesus is called "the carpenter's son," and Luke and John do not mention his profession.) The underlying Greek (*tekton*) refers to a builder or craftsman in any kind of material, which in Palestine would generally be stone or brick. The English rendering "carpenter" may reflect the fact that in London wood was the more common building material at the time the first English translations were made.

In any case, a number of Jesus' parables take place at construction sites. How much of Jesus' personal experience might be reflected in these parables? Did he help construct a fence, dig a wine press, or build a tower in a vineyard, and

observe the strained relations between the landowner and the tenants (Mark 12:1-12)? Did one of his customers run out of money halfway through building a tower and leave an unpaid debt to Jesus (Luke 14:28-30)? Did he remember Joseph teaching him how to dig a foundation all the way to solid rock, so that the building can withstand wind and flood (Matthew 7:24-27)? Did he ever hire assistants and have to face grumbling about pay (Matthew 20:1-16) and pecking order (Mark 9:33-37)? Was he ever supervised by a manager who asked him to join in a scheme to defraud the owner (Luke 16:1-16)? In short, how much of the wisdom in Jesus' parables was developed through his experience as a tradesman in the first-century economy? If nothing else, remembering Jesus' experience as a builder can help us see the parables in a more concrete light.

### **Dynamic Reflection**

1. How does Mark 6:1-6 help us to understand the Reflection Reading?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. Have you ever thought about how your feelings in the workplace can relate so much to your personal relationship with Christ? Have you ever felt cheated or have you ever felt the satisfaction of a good deal or a fulfilled promise?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. Maybe someone has never paid you a debt. But how do you feel about it that Christ has paid your biggest debt?

### **Application**

1. How did your mentality and actions change after reflecting on this?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. What can you do to practice this teaching in your work environment?