**Mark 6:1-6 Jesus left there and went to his hometown. His disciples followed him. 2When the Sabbath came, he began to teach in the synagogue. Many who heard him were amazed. They asked, “Where did this man learn these things? What is this wisdom that has been given to this man? How is it that miracles such as these are performed by his hands? 3Isn’t this the carpenter, the son of Mary and the brother of James, Joses, Judas, and Simon? And aren’t his sisters here with us?” And they took offense at him.4Jesus said to them, “A prophet is not without honor except in his hometown and among his own relatives and in his own house.” 5He could not do any miracles there except to lay his hands on a few sick people and heal them. 6He was amazed at their unbelief. Then he went around the villages teaching.**

Power over Wisdom

This is an RCA logo. You might have seen it before. There is a black and white dog, looking quizzically into the horn of an old-style Victrola record player. The name of the picture is “His Master’s Voice” painter by Francis Barraud in 1898. If you have seen it before, have you ever wondered why the dog looks a confused? He is hearing his master’s voice. It’s a voice he knows. It’s not just that its coming from an odd place. What confuses the dog is that he and the record player are on top of a casket. The dog’s master is dead but his voice lives on coming from the record player. While the dog knows his master’s voice, we often forget ours. We seek worldly wisdom, not God’s power. [[1]](#footnote-1)

Many people who should have followed the Master’s voice gladly look for worldly wisdom. Centuries before Jesus appeared at his hometown synagogue, God came to the prophet Ezekiel. He instructed his prophet to deliver a call to heartfelt repentance. He called people to listen to what he says. Along with his directions, God also gave Ezekiel a warning against the major frustration that would come with delivering God’s message. God said, *Son of man, I am sending you to the people of Israel, to disloyal nations, who have been disloyal to me. They and their fathers have rebelled against me to this very day.**These children of mine are brazen-faced and hard-hearted*(Ezekiel 2:3-4). Even then people wanted worldly wisdom. It is not necessary for me to tell you in detail what happened with that message. It went unheard and unheeded for the most part.

For hundreds of years and many prophets God reached out to his people and the message went unheard until God’s power struck. You might think that cause people to listen.

Now it was years and years later. The Word of God had become rare. Jesus and his disciples return to his hometown of Nazareth. Jesus was a local boy. Miracles were being performed, messages were being delivered, and large crowds were being touched by the Savior. People were proud of the hometown boy. Would they listen to him?

On Saturday, the leaders of the synagogue did what was right and proper. They invited Jesus to speak. He came forward and sat down to read from Scripture and expounded with Godly commentary and explanation. During his time, Jesus amplified and applied the lesson.

The Nazarenes reacted in their predictable fashion. **They asked, “Where did this man learn these things? What is this wisdom that has been given to this man? How is it that miracles such as these are performed by his hands?Isn’t this the carpenter, the son of Mary and the brother of James, Joses, Judas, and Simon? And aren’t his sisters here with us?” And they took offense at him.** They were displeased with their boyhood buddy. On their minds and hearts, they rejected and hung “Do Not Disturbs” signs. They were guided by worldly wisdom that ignores Christ’s to save. Their rejection was so strong their wanted him to be silent. Some might be surprised, but Jesus wasn’t. After all, murdering the messengers of God was almost their national pastime.

Many people desire wisdom. When wisdom is sort aside from Christ, the vacuum is filled with what the world gives. Many people in their wisdom look for salvation from their own strength rather than listen to Jesus. The one with wisdom is rejected and other sources get followed. The desire to embrace worldly wisdom has resulted in people without beliefs or ethical boundaries. Worldly wisdom says, “Cheat on your taxes and other people but don’t make it so obvious that you get caught. Cheat on your spouse but be careful so you don’t get an STD. Wouldn’t wisdom says, “Live you own values, cancel your commitment, ignore your integrity.”

The craving for worldly wisdom has made us into double-talkers, where truth and virtue are only for the dweebs, losers, elderly, and fuddy duddies. We sugarcoat sin to make it appear acceptable. Lying has become reasonable to spare feelings or as just means to reach a goal. Cheating is making use of resources. Lusting is a healthy appreciation. Drug abuse is a coping mechanism. Gluttony and laziness a personal choice. Homosexuality practicing an alternative lifestyle of how God made you. Children being unwilling to obey parents and authority a stage in development. We want worldly wisdom, not the Savior’s power that calls the lost from darkness to light.

When God’s people shut their ears to the prophets who spoke God’s message of repentance, the Lord did not force them to hear. He allowed them to follow their won path, worship their man-made gods, and commit their own transgressions. Then, they were left without him and his help when they faced trouble, uncertainty, and even when they faced death. They went to the grave alone.

When Jesus’ neighbors in Nazareth shut their ears to his message of salvation, he didn’t demand that they hear him. He didn’t call down fire and brimstone. He didn’t sack their synagogue. He didn’t perform one miracle after another until they were forced to admit he was God’s Son. Jesus allowed them to reject him. That day, he just stopped talking. (Pause to allow the church to fill with silence.)

What will the Lord do hear? With history’s record of God’s ways, we have to ask, how long will he continue to reach out and preach to people when his Word is treated as so common that it isn’t used and followed? How long will it be before the open and direct attacks against God’s Word turn to it being completely outlawed? We can’t know whether the time will be long or short but Christians should know it’s the right time to get their priorities in order. It is time for us to join together and follow the Savior even as we reject the world’s wisdom.

A young boy had a puppy, which he loved very much. Loving puppies is what little boys do. This puppy liked to bark because that’s what puppies do. This was not a problem until the boy’s mother became ill. Then the dog’s yipping and yapping caused her nerves to jangle. When he found out about his mom’s discomfort, it took only a few hours before he came and reported, “The puppy won’t bother you any more, Mom. I gave him to my friend.” The sympathetic mother replied, “But you loved your puppy.” The boy agreed. “Sure, Mom, I loved my puppy. But I love you even more.”

That’s the spirit with which Christians respond to the Lord. They enjoy what the world offers. We like the toys, the gadgets. The riches, power, successes, and fame. But they default to God over all of these. If they displace God, we gladly leave them behind without a second thought.

That’s what Jesus does for us. Saving us from sin and death was the Savior’s first priority. Saving us was more important than having his hometown love him. Saving us was more important than having the crowds follow him. Saving us more important than saving himself from death. That is why we don’t hesitate to say, “God comes first. He comes first in my week. He comes first with the paycheck. He comes first with my family and home. Everything else can fight for second.” Keeping the Lord as first, Christians can’t hold on to anything that separates them from God’s love and power. Having seen Jesus fulfill every prophecy, having watched his powerful sacrifice on Calvary’s cross, we gladly make him first.

Years ago, revolutionaries attacked a governor’s home in Egypt. The great man’s daughter was carried by one of the guards from her bedroom to safety. He risked his life to protect her. After the rescue, he said to her, “Will you give me a hug for what I have done?” With a pout and a shake of the head, she answered, “No hugs for you. You took me from my toys.” That little girl didn’t understand what the guard had done for her.

Not at the risk but at the cost of his life, Jesus saved you. It is a grand and glorious miracle. Now he asks, “Will you not thank me for what I have done? Will you listen to me?” How will you respond? Will we say, “No thanks for you. You make me give up too much. You keep me from my playground, my stuff, my own way, my wisdom?” That would be the worst of worldly wisdom. No, instead, I invite you to join with me in amazement at the wisdom and power of God’s Son, our Savior. Amen.

Points to consider as an individual or with a small group:

* Where has God’s Word become so common place for you that you are following worldly wisdom?
* What would listening to Jesus look like in regard to those parts of your life?
* What are you going to do?
* Write your prayer of repentance and then pray it each day of this week.

1. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:His_Master%27s_Voice.jpg> <https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/2/2d/His_Master%27s_Voice.jpg> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)