He left that place and came to his hometown, and his disciples followed him.

On the sabbath he began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard him were astounded. They said, “Where did this man get all this? What is this wisdom that has been given to him?”

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?” And they took offense at him.

Then Jesus said to them, “Prophets are not without honor, except in their hometown, and among their own kin, and in their own house.”

And he could do no deed of power there, except that he laid his hands on a few sick people and cured them.

And he was amazed at their unbelief.
VOCABULARY

• **Teach** – To impart knowledge.
• **Astounded** – Very surprised.
• **Deed** – An act or work.
• **Offense** – Something that causes displeasure, anger, or hurt.
• **Honor** – To have or show great respect to someone.
• **Unbelief** – Lack of faith, distrust.

INTRODUCTION

Carmen felt God called her to be a YPD leader in the church. She committed herself to being more faithful in learning about the Bible in church school, by attending Youth Bible Study, and praying. Carmen understood she needed to grow spiritually and become more humble. Carmen’s life began to be transformed as she applied scripture to her life. But Carmen’s friends did not understand why she was acting so different.

Maurice, her friend, came over to Carmen’s house when he saw her sitting outside. “Carmen, where have you been? We miss hanging out with you.” He sat on the step next to her.

“Hello Maurice. I’m good. I still hang out sometimes with Shirley and Bruce. But I just don’t have a lot of free time lately.” Carmen replied.

“It’s summer. We don’t have school so now is the time when we can go to the amusement park, pool, youth center, have barbeques. ...You know, do fun stuff.”

“I do have fun sometimes. But I decided to focus on me this summer. I wanted to find out more about what God wants me to do with my life. I think God desires for me to be a leader in my church.” Carmen stated.
“Carmen, we’re young. We have plenty of time to do that later. Now, we can just have fun.” Maurice laughed.

“That’s okay for you but not me. I am going to prepare to serve God now. So that when the opportunity comes, I will be ready.” Carmen stood up to go back inside her house.

“Carmen, you are wasting your summer. You are not going to be a church leader.” Maurice shook his head in disgust and went home.

How does it feel when those closest to us misunderstand and reject our beliefs and actions? In today’s lesson, we learn that Jesus’ wisdom and power was rejected by his hometown in Nazareth.

**BIBLE STORY**

The author of the Gospel of Mark, John Mark, was not one of Jesus’ twelve disciples. However, John Mark he traveled with the apostle Paul on his first missionary journey (Acts 13:13). In our lesson today, the author takes us to a small town called Nazareth (Google “Nazareth”). Nazareth was Jesus’ hometown. Jesus’ family resided there. Since it was such a small town, everybody knew each other.

Jesus and his disciples traveled to Nazareth after Jesus healed a demon possessed man, as well as a bleeding woman. Furthermore, Jesus had also restored a dead girl to life. Jesus went to the synagogue and taught on the sabbath (vs. 6:2-3). He was teaching with great wisdom. The people of Nazareth were very surprised. They were aware of Jesus’ humble beginnings. The people judged Jesus based on where Jesus lived, Jesus’ occupation and family background. They rejected the wisdom Jesus shared because of prejudice. Sometimes people will not accept us or our beliefs based on what they think about us.

When the people rejected Jesus, Jesus expressed that “a prophet is without honor” among his own people (v. 6:4).
Jesus acknowledged that the people closest to him would not understand the mission and vision that was created for Jesus. But this did not make Jesus’ work any less important. We, too, cannot let rejection keep us from serving God.

Besides the few sick that were healed, the people’s rejection and unbelief hindered Jesus from doing greater miracles (6:5). They did not believe in Jesus’ message of being sent by God, and Jesus’ power to heal. Sometimes no matter what we say or do some will never accept us. We have to move on to those who will eagerly listen to the message of salvation and believe in Jesus’ power to heal and deliver.

LIFE APPLICATION

The definition of a bully is “an aggressive person who intimidates or mistreats another person.” Reread today’s scripture and identify the ways that Jesus was bullied by the people in his hometown of Nazareth. How did Jesus respond? How does God want us to respond to bullies? ________________
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We cannot judge people based on where they live, their family background, economic status, race, or gender. None of these dictate our paths in life. Think about Richard Allen, the founder
of the AME Church. Write all the information you know about his birth, life, and ministry. Richard Allen is proof that God can use anybody, no matter their status in life. Discuss contemporary people in the AME Church who had humble beginnings, but God used them to do extraordinary work.

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SUMMARY

We can all recall times when we rejected God’s Word, just like the people of Nazareth. In some instances we may have mistreated those who tried to share God’s message with us. The wise accept the wisdom contained in the Bible, and receive Jesus Christ as their Savior. The great news is that if we repent, we are forgiven. We then can experience spiritual and personal growth as we are guided by the Holy Spirit. Our mission for God will be made clear so we can daily follow the path given, regardless of what others think.

CLOSING DEVOTIONS

Prayer: All wise Creator, thank you for this day. We are grateful for your extraordinary wisdom. We will accept and live by your words even when they are challenging. Amen.

Closing Hymn: “Standing on the Promises” (#424 - AME Church Hymnal)