

We Follow A Saviour That People Won't Recognise But Will Reject

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[0 : 00] Well, folks, thanks for coming out. It's not easy to get out on a soggy day like it is today. And it's only going to get worse for the next foreseeable future.

For the next few months as we're heading into winter. So you made it out. Well done. It's quiet today, as I probably would expect on a day like today. But from wherever you came from, from whatever you came from, whatever struggle, whatever week you've had, whatever place you've come from, whatever buses you've had to run and catch this morning to get here.

Welcome. We really do hope that you feel welcome. I didn't think I would see you. I thought you were still away. Church is not the building. But on a day like today, we are thankful for the building.

It might not be as spectacular as some of the places you saw. Was it in Prague? Was it Prague? In Prague. And we even have visitors from the States all the way from Kentucky.

You know James and Abbey and the Mason family. James's dad, Tom, is here. And James's stepmom, Charlotte. All the way just for this. Not really.

[1 : 11] To see Scotland. And you've seen Scotland. Did you have a good week this past week? Yeah, yeah. So I want afterwards, I want you all to speak in as Scottish an accent as possible and see if they understand anything you're saying.

But we hope that you feel very welcome. I'm really encouraged to see you here. Thanks for coming along, James and Abbey and the family. It's good to see you. And it's good to see you all. It's good to be here.

Our hearts, our spirits, our souls need this kind of thing. We need one another. We need the word of the Lord. We need to be drawn into his presence and praise. It's good. It's good.

So thank you this morning. If you have a Bible, please turn it open to Mark chapter 6. We finally, we stopped Mark, I think, at Easter.

And we've taken a very extended break. But we're continuing our studies in Mark. So Mark chapter 6. Lord, we thank you for your word.

[2 : 26] And we pray that your spirit would speak to us through your word. Lord, your spirit would open our hearts. And that our own will would not close our ears to your word.

But Lord, would you speak to us? Would you encourage, challenge, convict, build us up? We thank you for the truth of your word.

We thank you that your word has persevered through every attempt to destroy it. We thank you for the truthfulness and the reliability of your word.

And we thank you for the inspiration of your word. We thank you that your word is not just an ancient text. But your word is living and sharper than any two-edged sword.

And so speak to us now and be glorified as we open your word. Would you open our hearts as your word is open to us? In Jesus' name. Amen. Mark chapter 6.

- [3 : 29] I'm just going to read the first six verses. And so this is after Jesus was back in Capernaum.
- And he was raising Jairus' daughter. And he charged them that no one should know about this. And he told them to give her something to eat.
- And then it says, Mark 6. He went away from there and came to his hometown. And his disciples followed him. And on the Sabbath he began to teach in the synagogue.
- And many who heard him were astonished. Saying, where did this man get these things? What is the wisdom given to him? And how are such mighty works done by his hands?
- Is this not the carpenter? Son of Mary? And brother of James and Joses? And Judas and Simon? Are not his sisters here with us?
- [4 : 32] And they took offense at him. And Jesus said to them, A prophet is not without honor except in his hometown. And among his relatives and in his own household.
- And he could do no mighty work there. Except that he laid his hands on a few sick people. And healed them. And he marveled because of their unbelief.
- And he went about among the villages teaching. Amen. Well I don't know if you've ever been to a high school reunion.
- Or anything like that. I've not. I refuse to go to any of those things. But I imagine there's a certain anxiety. About what everyone's done with their lives.
- A kind of comparison. What have you got up to? How have you fared since you left? I was reading about this. And the psychology behind it. And the earlier reunions.
- [5 : 32] Tend to be the more pretentious. And then the later ones. When people's lives even out. And they begin to face the same things. Irrespective of job or status.
- More people begin to attend. But I wonder. Even as Christians. In our Christian circles. If it can be a bit like that. You know. What has your Christian life amounted to?
- Maybe. You've been to a thing. And you've not seen people for a while. And. That thought is there. What has your Christian life amounted to? I certainly know.
- That Christians can struggle. When they are less able to do things physically. That they once did. I know that. I've seen that so many times. We have a tendency. To wrap up our identity.
- In the things that we do. Whether it's a job. Or some ministry. Or some ability. That we have. And then suddenly. Our confidence is shaken.
- [6 : 32] When we can no longer do those things. The truth is. These things might impress other people. For a time. But Jesus is looking at something. Else entirely. Did you know that.
- There is only one thing. That Jesus has ever said. To marvel at. Just one thing. And there's only two occasions. Where he is said to marvel.
- At this one thing. And it wasn't a beautiful sunset. It wasn't a powerful storm. It wasn't a grand piece of architecture. Like the palace. Or the temple. It wasn't a person's ability.
- Or wisdom. It wasn't a status. Or stature. Or anything that man had produced. By his own hands. Jesus wasn't impressed. By any of these things. And why would he be impressed.
- He is the son of God. He was with God in the beginning. And he was God. And through him. All things were made. And so what is a sunset. To the one who made the stars.
- [7 : 31] What is a storm. To the one who commands. The wind and the sea. What is a palace or temple. To the one who created the heavens and the earth. What is human ability and wisdom.

To the son of God. Who has power and wisdom. Over all things. Why would he be impressed. By any of these things. That we are impressed by. The only thing. That Jesus has ever said.

To have marveled at. Is faith. It's the only thing. And only twice in the gospels. Is Jesus ever said. To have marveled. Once.

In Nazareth. Nazareth. At the lack of faith. From a people who had. Every reason to have faith. Faith. And then the other time. At a centurion.

Who had every reason. Not to have faith. And yet he showed faith in Jesus. It's the only two times. That Jesus marveled at anything. One was the lack of faith. And one was. The presence of faith.

[8 : 28] Jesus only ever marveled. In relation to faith. Either having faith. Or not having faith. Think about that for a moment. Of all the things. That people are impressed by. Of all the things. That we think. Is important. And of all the things. That we wrap our identity up in. The only thing. That will make Jesus marvel. About.

In you. Or me. Is whether or not. We have faith in him. It's the only thing. That he. Will cause him to marvel at us. Is whether we have a lack of faith.

Or whether we do have faith. And so perhaps. There are some people. Here. Whose lives have been. So dark. And distant. From God. That it's a marvel.

That they should have. Faith. In the first place. But they do. They do have faith. Perhaps that's you. Perhaps you've had a very difficult life. And it's a marvel.

[9 : 24] That you have faith. But you do. We know people like that. Equally. Perhaps. There are some people here. Who God has been. Revealing himself to. In a great many ways. For some time. Such. That it's a marvel. That there's still unbelief. In the end. None of us. Will have any excuse. For unbelief. Other than a hard heart. That doesn't want to believe. After all. Do we not sit. At a point in time. With much greater revelation.

Than those folks. In Nazareth. After all. We know. About Jesus. Death. And resurrection. And his mission. His ascension. And mission. Yeah.

One of the things. That Mark. Is trying to show. Is that. If people. Like those. In Nazareth. Struggled. At the scandal. Of Jesus. Origin. Because he was.

[10 : 20] A simple carpenter. And the son. Of Mary. How much more. Will people. Struggle. At the scandal. Of a crucified. Messiah. Paul says this.

In 1 Corinthians 1. Doesn't he. For the word of the cross. Is folly. To those who are perishing. But to us. Who are being saved. It is the power of God. But let's rewind.

From the cross. Let's rewind. Back. To this visit. To Nazareth. Prior to the cross. Coming home. Is supposed to be. A happy occasion.

Have you ever had. A moment in time. Where. You were coming home. And you were looking forward. To that. The comfort. The familiarity. Even of your town. Your street. The places you spent.

Your childhood. The people who were with you. And around you. A lot of sentimentality. Coming home. Is supposed to be. A happy occasion. Now.

[11 : 17] When Jesus. And his disciples. Turned up. In Nazareth. It was. At least. A day. Or a few. Before the Sabbath. I wonder.

I was thinking about this. I wonder how long it was. Before the Sabbath. I wonder how things were. Before they took offense. I imagine things were. Very cordial. Perhaps enjoyable.

For a bit. Catching up. I wonder what kind of welcome. He was given. How much did people know. About what was going on. In his life. And then came the Sabbath.

Everyone goes. To synagogue. And Jesus. Begins to teach. And I wonder. If they would have. Accepted him. If he was a mediocre teacher.

They seem to take offense. That he has such wisdom. And mighty works. And they think of him. Just as a carpenter. And perhaps. Their expectations.

[12 : 15] Of his teaching. In synagogue. Was. Just whatever. A carpenter. Could muster up. I think. They would have been. Happy with Jesus. If he was just.

A carpenter. Giving a little bit. Of teaching. A go. And yet. He has this wisdom. Unparalleled. Wisdom. And he's doing.

Mighty works. It seems like. They would have been. Fine with Jesus. If he was just. A small town. Carpenter. And the son of Mary. But Jesus.

Is the Christ. The son of God. And they don't want it. Remember. That's who Mark. Told us that Jesus was. Right at his very. Opening line.

Of the gospel. This is the good news. Of Jesus. The Christ. The son of God. And yet. Nazareth. Does not recognize. That at all. The commentator.

[13 : 11] David Garland. Puts it this way. He says. His town folks. Believe. They know. All there is. To know. About Jesus. They think. They've got Jesus. Pegged.

This is just. One of Mary's boys. Who used to be. One of us. They think. That they know. All there is. To know. About Jesus. How many people. Are like that.

Even us. We think. We know. Everything there is. To know. About Jesus. People out there. Who argue. Against it. Think they know. Everything there is. To know. About Jesus. And so.

In Nazareth. Their unbelief. Is not. Is not an unbelief. In miracles. It's an unbelief. In who Jesus is. It's an unbelief. That Jesus. Could be anything more.

Than a carpenter. And the son of Mary. And they could not see. By his wisdom. And his mighty works. That he was actually. The Christ. The son of God. And so.

[14 : 06] We were discussing. This passage. On Wednesday night. And one of the things. That Ruth said. Which was helpful. Was. It seemed not only like. They couldn't see Jesus. As more than who.

They knew. But they didn't want to see. Jesus. As more than this. It's not just that. They couldn't. They didn't want to. They didn't want to see. Jesus. As anything more.

Than a simple man. And how true. Is that today. Of people. It's not for a lack. Of evidence. That we can know. Who Jesus is.

People just don't want. To know. Who Jesus is. People don't want. Jesus to be the Christ. The son of God. His mighty works. And his wisdom. Utterly confounded.

These people. Yet they don't want. Jesus to be someone. Who could do these things. It's not for a lack. Of evidence. They just don't. Want to believe. You see.

[15 : 01] Many people. Want Jesus. To do many things. Other than. What he came to do. Even today. Many people. Want Jesus. To do many things. Other than the things.

He came to do. The person of Jesus. His wisdom. His works. They still confound. And confuse people. Today. They still amaze people.

Yet many people. Don't want Jesus. To be more. Than a carpenter. Or a rabbi. Or a good man. Or a moral teacher. Ironically. Some will even grant. That he might be a prophet.

But many people. Don't want him. To be. The Messiah. The son of God. Many people. Don't want Jesus. To be Lord. And savior. And like his townsfolk.

In Nazareth. Many people. Today. Think they have Jesus. Pegged. They think. They know everything. There is to know. About Jesus. And it can even infect. Us Christians.

[15 : 56] That. Way of thinking. And so. Let me say. A few brief things. About each verse. And then conclude. He returns. To his hometown.

As far as. Homecomings go. This was a real. Low moment. A very low point. For Jesus. We can often. Read. These moments. In the gospels.

Without remembering. That Jesus. Was fully human. And susceptible. To the whole range. Of feelings. That we are. Would it not be. All the more piercing. To be rejected.

And scorned. By those. That you grew up with. And your relatives. And your family. Rather than strangers. Who never met you. And we know. That this wasn't. The first time. Back in.

Chapter three. His own family. Were saying. That he was out of his mind. And they were trying. To stop him. And so. It's not the first time. Either. That he's gotten into trouble. In a synagogue.

[16 : 49] But just. For a. For a minute. Let's not overlook. The pain. Of rejection. This is Jesus. The son of God. He's not hiding himself.

Under a basket. He's doing things. In plain sight. Of everyone. And his own people. Who had every reason. To believe. Reject him.

And scorn him. They use this. Statement. The son of Mary. Back then. You wouldn't be called. The son of your mother. You would be called. The son of your father. But they use this.

To jab at Jesus. Because of the scandal. Of his birth. And they say. You're nothing more Jesus. Nothing more. Than a carpenter. A blue collar worker.

Nothing more. Than someone. With a scandalous birth. Who do you think. You are Jesus. And let's not pretend. That that would not.

[17 : 46] Have hurt Jesus. It would have hurt. John. The apostle. Put it this way. And remember. He was here. To witness this. John.

Was by Jesus' side. And he saw. The rejection. And John. Later wrote. In his gospel. The true light. Which gives light. To everyone. Was coming into the world. He was in the world.

And the world. Was made through him. And yet. The world. Did not know him. He came to his own. And his own people. Did not receive him. What a low point.

Furthermore. These people. Were in the synagogue. We can see that. In the passage. When they went to synagogue. What does that mean. That they were in the synagogue. Well these are. Church goers.

Synagogue goers. They are hearing. The word of God. Week in and week out. They are sitting. Under the teaching. Of Moses. The old testament. Which should have helped him. See. How Jesus was fulfilling.

[18 : 45] All these things. He hasn't been rejected. By people. Who know nothing. About God's work. They've read the scriptures. They've had it. In their ears. For years.

Yet. This illustrates. How you can sit. Under God's work. God's word. With closed ears. And a closed heart. You can look religious. And devoted. You can look like.

A good Jew. Or even a good Christian. But not all. Who go to synagogue. And not all. Who go to church. Would recognize Jesus. If he walked through the door.

So no wonder. Jesus marveled. At this unbelief. They were dumbfounded. At him. And he was dumbfounded. At them. What is it going to take?

Like what is it going to take. For people to believe. In who he is. Well. We know what it's going to take. Clearly. The amazing teaching.

[19 : 41] And wisdom of Jesus. And the mighty. Miraculous works of Jesus. Are not enough. Some people make excuses. You've maybe heard these excuses. In our world. If only I saw.

If I saw a miracle. Then I would believe. No you wouldn't. People saw many miracles. Performed by Jesus himself. And they didn't believe. Because.

Faith. Is a matter of the heart. Not a matter of the eyes. And so people make many excuses. To cover up their unbelief. We would believe.

If this happened. Or that happened. Throughout Mark. So far. Most of the humans. That saw Jesus. Do these mighty works. And teach.

With such amazing wisdom. Most of the humans. Have been left. With more questions. And so let's run. Through these questions. Chapter one. You get the what question.

[20 : 43] What is this? A new teaching. With authority. He commands. Even the unclean spirits. And they obey him. What is this? Chapter two. We get all the wise.

Why does this man. Speak like this? He's blaspheming. Who can forgive sins. But God alone. Why does he eat. With tax collectors. And sinners. Why do John's disciples fast. And the disciples of the Pharisees fast.

But your disciples do not fast. Look. Why are they doing. What is not lawful. On the Sabbath. Why? Why? Why? And then we get some concluding thoughts.

In chapter three. Well. He's out of his mind. His family say. He's out of his mind. And the religious leaders say. He's possessed. By Satan. Chapter four.

We get the who question. From the disciples. In the boat. When he calms the storm. And they say. Who then is this? That even the wind and the sea. Obey him. And then now in chapter six.

[21 : 38] We get the where question. Where did this man get these things? Because they think. They know the who. They think they know who he is. And where he comes from.

But they don't know where he gets this wisdom. And mighty works from. They think. Scandalous son of Mary. Simple carpenter. How on earth does someone like that.

Get such wisdom. And mighty works. We know where he is from. But do they know where he's from? Because he didn't come. From earth.

He came from heaven. He came from God. Even Nicodemus. Had the sense to say. Nobody can do the things that you do. Unless he is from God. And yet these people in Nazareth.

Where did this man get these things? What is the wisdom given to him? How were such mighty works done by his hands? Is this not the carpenter?

[22 : 37] And so you see the progression of these questions. As people struggle to grasp. Who Jesus is. What is this? Why this? Why that?

Who is this? Where did he get these things from? Yet at the same time. While the people are struggling to understand. The demons are shouting out. The demons are crying out who Jesus is.

But what is it going to take for people to get it? Well we know what it's going to take. And it's a bitter answer. It will take the cross. Yet at the same time.

The cross. Will only come about because of the rejection. And so in response to these questions. Questions. Jesus quotes a proverb of the day.

A prophet is not without honor. Except in his hometown. And among his relatives. And in his own household. Think about that very last bit. In his own household.

- [23 : 33] Because we have a list. In this passage of Jesus' brothers. And we know from John 7.5. That not even his brothers believed in him. At least not until after.
- His death and resurrection. And then we see the likes of James. And Judas. Jude. Judah. But think about that.
- He's not even accepted by his own family. If Jesus was not accepted. By his own family. And faith was not guaranteed. In his own house.
- Then we should not be surprised. If we believe. But our family does not. Maybe our family even rejects us. Now we might not feel that here. But. You probably know people.
- In different places in the world. Whose families. Harshly reject them. Because of Jesus. Another thing.
- [24 : 34] That could seem very surprising. Is that Jesus could do. No mighty work there. Except heal a few people. What do you think about that? Jesus could do.
- No mighty work there. Because. Up until this point. In Mark's gospel. It seems like there's nothing. That Jesus cannot do. Jesus can do anything.
- So does this. The lack of. Belief in other people. Their unbelief. Their lack of faith. Does that limit Jesus power? You could say.
- Yes and no. No. In the sense that Jesus. Is who he is. And he can do. Whatever he wants to do. He can command demons. And they obey. He can command the wind and sea.
- And it obeys. He can walk on water. He can multiply loaves. He can forgive sins. And he can raise the dead. What can Jesus not do? Already in Mark's gospel.
- [25 : 31] We get the sense. That there's nothing. Jesus cannot do. However. Why is it limited? Well because Jesus. Will not override.
- A human heart. He will not force people. To believe against their will. He might compel people. He might transform people. But he will not force you.
- To do something. Against your will. And in God's wisdom. He calls people. To trust in him. So a human response. Is part of God's plan. He will allow us.
- To respond. Either. To have faith. Or to reject him. He will allow us that. And so we might say. That faith. May have limited Jesus. In the sense.
- That people. Not having faith. Meant that people. Would not even come to Jesus. In the first place. In order to be healed. It's not that people. Were coming to Jesus. And he couldn't muster up.
- [26 : 26] Enough power. To heal them. That's not the case. Rather. Unbelief. Kept people. From even coming to Jesus. For anything. That's where the limit is.
- The limit is with humans. Not even coming. Because of their unbelief. So. Now putting all this together. A couple of concluding thoughts. You may find.
- That despite. All of the light. That God is shining. In our world. And in people's lives. People that you know. You might find.
- That despite all of God's light. Shining. There is still great unbelief. And you may find. That it's not just. In this town. But it might even be. In your own house. Jesus. And that is not something.
- That any of us can fix. We can't do anything. About that. Jesus isn't going to be. Impressed by people's. Ability. Or knowledge. Or whatever it is. Faith is part of it.
- [27 : 25] And faith isn't blind. It's not for a lack of evidence. Nazareth. Had plenty. Of evidence. In front of them. And likewise. Even today. There is an embarrassment.
- Of riches. As to the evidence. Of who Jesus is. But it requires people. To come to him. And trust him. And have faith. People are not going to find.

Eternal life. Through technology. Or through. Advancing their knowledge. It's not going to be. By human wisdom. We aren't ever going to be. Good enough.

Or smart enough. To save ourselves. From the effects of sin. Salvation is by grace alone. Through faith alone. And Christ alone. Paul. Says again.

In 1 Corinthians 1. For since. In the wisdom of God. The world. Did not know God. Through wisdom. It pleased God. Through the folly. Of what we preach.

[28 : 19] To save those who believe. See God. Confounds. The wisdom of man. So faith.

Is something. That only God. Can give to those. Who come to him. And we ought to celebrate. If we. Know Jesus. We ought to celebrate. Even the smallest. And water. The smallest.

Seed of faith. In Jesus. When we encounter it. In someone. And then. When we encounter. Unbelief. We ought not. Let it. So unsettle us.

That we stop. Offering salvation. In Jesus name. To people. The fear. And pain. Of rejection. Could easily. Keep a person. From doing God's will. Jesus.

Could have come to earth. On this mission. To save the world. And then. Considering the pain. Of rejection. And crucifixion. He could have. Just decided. To stay a carpenter. And not bother anyone.

[29 : 15] In case he offended anyone. He could have decided. Before he started. His ministry. He could have said. Nah. It's not worth it. I don't want to deal. With the pain. Of rejection.

And crucifixion. I don't want to offend anyone. So I'll just stay a carpenter. He could have done that. Can you imagine. What would have been lost.

If he did that. Even before the cross. Think of the countless people. Jesus healed. And helped. And saved. And liberated. And loved. And honoured. And brought to God.

Who never would have had any of that. If Jesus stayed a carpenter. Yet for Jesus. What was at stake. Was eternity. And if he was willing.

To be crucified. For our sake. Then he certainly. Wasn't going to stop. Just because some people. Got offended. Think about. The disciples of Jesus.

[30 : 10] If the fear. And pain. Of rejection. Kept them. From doing God's will. We would not even know. About Jesus. You see. The fear. Of the fear. And pain.

Of rejection. Can stop us. Even before we get started. We might never want to tell. Someone about Jesus. Or do something for God. Just in case. It offends people.

And makes them stop liking us. God forbid. People would stop liking us. But it is. Painful. But it can also stop us.

After we get started. Jesus didn't remain a carpenter. But what if. After Nazareth. He threw the towel in. What if. The pain of that rejection.

And the discouragement. It caused him. To stop doing. What he was doing. Again. We wouldn't have had the cross. Or the resurrection. Or the ascension. Or his reign. Or him making everything new.

[31 : 06] Including me and you. Jesus did not stop. You see. The very last line. And I know that we know it. We know. About the cross. We know about history. But even in our passage.

At the end. He marveled at their unbelief. But he got on with it. He went about the villages. Teaching. The truth. Thank God. Thank the Lord.

And so. He moved on. He continued on his mission. Because eternity. Is at stake. It would be less loving. Not to tell people.

The truth about sin. And judgment. And God's saving son. Than it would be. To keep quiet. And carve wood. Instead. It would be less loving. Likewise.

As his disciples. We ought not let. The fear of possible rejection. Or the pain of real rejection. Stop us from helping people. See who Jesus is. So that they can have life.

[32 : 07] In his name. Because eternity. Is at stake. And for our sake. Someone did that for us. And namely. The first. Was Jesus.

You see. While John said. He came to his own. And his own people. Did not receive him. He also said. But to all. Who did receive him. Who believed in his name. He gave the right.

To become. Children of God. Born not of blood. Or the will of the flesh. Or the will of man. But the will of God. Just as he writes. In 1 John 3.

See what kind of love. The father has given to us. That we should be called. Children of God. And so we are. And then interestingly. John writes this.

The reason why the world. Does not know us. Is that it did not know him. So forget all the things. That you think. Would impress people. In this world. Forget them all.

[33 : 02] Don't put your identity. In any of them. Jesus is looking for faith. Anyone can have faith. It's not about what we can do. Jesus is just as interested.

In you. As he is. The person out there. He is just as interested. In your faith. As he is on the people out there. And so if you feel like. You can no longer do.

The things that you once did. Don't worry about it. It didn't impress. Jesus anyway. But he loves your faith. He loves it.

When people have faith in him. And trust in him. And you can do that. If you have breath in your lungs. Don't put your identity. In the things that we can do.

Or cannot do. But those who trust in Jesus. Have their identity. As children of God. And so finally. While this passage.

[33 : 55] Teaches us. To follow the example of our Lord. Whenever we might encounter. Unbelief or rejection. What it shows us. Is that because eternity. Is at stake.

Jesus did not stop. Let it stop him. From continuing his mission. To save us. Jesus didn't let it stop him. Because eternity. Was at stake for us.

So that we might. Know him. He allowed that rejection. To eventually nail him. To the cross. For our sake.

So that we might. By his death. And by his spirit. Be convicted. And see who he is. So that we might repent. And believe. And have life in his name. And so consider the pain of rejection.

That Jesus went through. For your sake. And for my sake. So that we might see who he is. And believe. And in so doing. We might have life in his name. And let me just leave you.

[34 : 53] With a question. Do you not feel grateful. For Jesus today. Amen. Amen. Lord. We thank you. That you would suffer rejection.

And crucifixion. For our sake. Please help us. To see who you are. And please help us. To resist. The temptation. Of trying to impress. By your deeds.

Or abilities. Or things. But to have faith in you. And to know that's enough. Lord. We thank you. That it is even possible.

Because of your grace. We give you thanks. In your amazing name. Amen.