

Mark 6: 1-13

A Prophet Without Honor

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,^[a] 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 honour 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.

Jesus Sends Out the Twelve

Then Jesus went around teaching from village to village. **7** Calling the Twelve to him, he began to send them out two by two and gave them authority over impure spirits.

8 These were his instructions: “Take nothing for the journey except a staff—no bread, no bag, no money in your belts. **9** Wear sandals but not an extra shirt. **10** Whenever you enter a house, stay there until you leave that town. **11** And if any place will not welcome you or listen to you, leave that place and shake the dust off your feet as a testimony against them.”

12 They went out and preached that people should repent. **13** They drove out many

Today’s passages speak to us about several things which are particularly important to the place we find ourselves in individually – as a parish and even in the wider world.

It shows us firstly where our identity lies.

2ndly – what we need to take for the journey.

3rd how important the anointing is.

I wonder if you had been Jesus and you had gone back home, and they initially thought you were wonderful as such wisdom came from you but then within hours, they change their mind because of who your family were. What you would have felt like?

Would you have felt rejected? Excluded or maybe even worse like a total alien in your own hometown.

But what did Jesus say about the people- he said that he was amazed at their unbelief.

Why did he say that? It was because he knew who he was. He knew many people had been healed by him and that he had been given authority to forgive sins. He was totally secure in who he was and so when they rejected him, he didn't have that sense of feeling rejected but possibly more of pitying those who refused to accept his ministry to them.

Today we hear more and more about those who are or feel excluded because of their colour, where they are from, education or sexuality. The good news is that once you meet with Jesus, we should know that our identity doesn't rely on others accepting us or of us feeling we need to belong to a certain group or institution.

Hebrews 11 tells us that we are Aliens in a foreign land, and this is not our home. When we recognise that we belong to God's kingdom this should help us to feel less rejected and less a desire to want to belong to a certain group or be accepted by people in an unhealthy way.

What does the bible say about our identity?

1 1 Peter 2:9 ~ "But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. "

2 John 1: 12 Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.

We are his children. God doesn't make trash he makes us in his image. He knew us before time began.

When we truly truly get this, it takes of the pressure of needing to be accepted. When we realise, we are God's handiwork that should enable us to do what he has called us to do which is -

Point 2 to be light in the darkness.

Jesus went out and called the 12 and then sent them out. He is calling us today to go out and tell those in our surrounding villages about him. He has given us authority to cast out demons to heal the sick – he has called us as individuals and a parish to be light in the darkness.

Have we forgotten why we are here? I think not – in fact, I think many many of us now more than ever before actually realise what we are called to do. We have been given an amazing opportunity to look afresh at our lives and our parish and say ok Lord what do you want of us?

My concern is that we will forget this and try to get back to business as usual.

I am really pleased that we have a new rector coming who will certainly see things with fresh eyes.

Hopefully, we have the grace and humility to listen to the things he may want to change, rather than saying those words which every vicar dreads to hear and which when we do hear we know we have very little chance of changing without resistance and often a really unwanted battle, they are – But Revd we've always done things that way – or even worse – well we tried that once and it didn't work

Maybe we can be brave and begin to ask the question why are we doing what we are doing both on a personal level and on a parish level? Personally is God asking you to step up more into church leadership and give those who have been serving for many years a hand?

Many of us in church leadership roles are pretty exhausted. Like the rest of the world I know, but maybe some people are feeling really led to get more involved in building Gods Kingdom here as they have gone through this last year pondering there calling?

Let's remember who we are individually and who we are as a parish and what God may be asking of us in the next season of our lives – to be light in the darkness/ and what that may look like in the bigger picture.

3rd Point let go of things that hinder and take nothing with you but the anointing.

More importantly is his statement on taking nothing with you. Now I know in other parts of the bible Jesus tells the apostles to take things with them. What is the difference here? There is much speculation but possibly that this was a shorter mission trip where they would need to really believe that God will provide all they need.

Do you remember being taught something theoretically and then having to do it in real life. I certainly do. I remember learning all about taking a wedding and the choreography etc and then having to do it in real life- it was totally terrifying. I think Jesus knew that he had shown his followers who he was – the authority he had given them and now he was saying it's your turn. Take a friend for encouragement but go and do what I have done, healing etc in my name and trust me.

Will we as a church trust God more- will we believe he has called us to do even more mightier works than he has? Will we go and make disciples of all nations. Or do we want to go back to church as normal going through the motions and not ever seeing the power of God in our communities?

Can we really do this. What things are we taking from our past even in terms of what we have done in church that we feel are ours?

It's a good test of our heart to regularly lay things down on the altar of tasks and things we are involved in.

Maybe spend time in prayer and lay all the things on the altar that you are involved in and also who you're involved with and ask the Lord what you are still anointed to do and called to walk with?

You see if we won't let go of stuff that is not ours to hold onto – by the way nothing is ours – its only loaned to us from him – but not only can the Lord not give us the opportunity to try something new and learn more about him, but we may also be stopping other people grow into a ministry position that would be able to bless more people than we are.

Remember King Saul in the bible when God had taken his Kingship from him and gave it to David. He fought it but lost everything in the process as he had become possessive and arrogant. We must be careful not do get like that.

Applications

- a. Learn more of your identity in Christ so that you can be more confident in sharing the good news of the gospel.
- b. How can we be more light in the darkness as we emerge out of this pandemic, are we brave enough to ask the question why are we doing what we are doing?
- c. Let go of things if Gods is asking you to and allow others to step up into the place God is calling them.