

Mark 6:1-13 (MUC Pentecost 7 July 2024)

Theme

Quote: I don't know, I don't care, and it doesn't make any difference. (Jack Kerouac)

Quote: Is it ignorance or apathy? Hey, I don't know and I don't care. (Jimmy Buffett)

The Rejection of Jesus at Nazareth

⁶ He left that place and came to his home town, and his disciples followed him. ²On 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? What deeds of power are being done by his hands! ³Is 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 offence at him. ⁴Then Jesus said to them, 'Prophets are not without honour, except in their home town, and among their own kin, and in their own house.' ⁵And he could do no deed of power there, except that he laid his hands on a few sick people and cured them. ⁶And he was amazed at their unbelief.

- Carton: What kills religion? – Apathy (Discipleship)
- The insight is that what we know of someone can fix them in our mind's eye
- I can plead that I am not only curmudgeonly to my children but they mostly laugh and humour my delusion
- When we first met our daughter-in-laws parents in Germany who had gone through a messy divorce they nicknamed us the perfect couple
- I had to have a quite word to my son that on no account was he to set the record straight!
- We know that familiarity breeds contempt
- It is hardest to communicate our values & convictions with those who knows us best
- It is so annoying when others hold us to their view of us when we want to make have a different place for our life
- We know it is hard to let someone change and have a different place in our lives

- So easy to be portrayed as someone trying to raise oneself above others, an occupational hazard that goes with conviction
- However, this is not just a psychological insight but a theological one
- Or to put it another way – as I am often heard to say we all know the orthodox and in particular the Greek Orthodox Christian tradition is the one true church!
- You can get stuck in your theological convictions and miss what God may be doing that is new for your time and place
- Quote: I don't know, I don't care, and it doesn't make any difference. (Jack Kerouac)

The Mission of the Twelve

Then he went about among the villages teaching. ⁷He called the twelve and began to send them out two by two, and gave them authority over the unclean spirits. ⁸He ordered them to take nothing for their journey except a staff; no bread, no bag, no money in their belts; ⁹but to wear sandals and not to put on two tunics. ¹⁰He said to them, 'Wherever you enter a house, stay there until you leave the place. ¹¹If any place will not welcome you and they refuse to hear you, as you leave, shake off the dust that is on your feet as a testimony against them.' ¹²So they went out and proclaimed that all should repent. ¹³They cast out many demons, and anointed with oil many who were sick and cured them.

- Who are the disciples – often theologically and in much Christian tradition they're portrayed as the lead followers of Jesus - the special ones
- Kind of the Hall of Justice superhero followers of Jesus with spiritual superpowers
- When you take that view you end up replicating a view of leadership that suggests the view that there are two classes of Jesus followers
- The serious and the plebs or in current jargon the ministers and you lot!
- With this view when we hear this text we are inclined to submit to these superheroes
- Far be it for me to dissuade you that I am a superhero – if so my clergy superpower needs a little more clarification
- Are there special ones – is there a hierarchy of Jesus followers – not in my view

- What of elders, ministers, presbytery offices – their role is to represent and serve the church as followers of Jesus not be superheroes substituting for the church
- This is not a text indicating who are the special ones – the special followers of Jesus
- Rather this is a text saying that all who are followers of Jesus represent the God of Jesus – it is not a hierarchy but template for all of us who would take Jesus name
- The twelve represent all who would be followers of Jesus – twelve is a key number evoking the twelve tribes of Israel as the people of God called to worship and serve
- granted that representation feels flawed in that it is not comprehensive – not that many women at this point! – as it relies on men to represent everyone
- Nonetheless, it is prescient of all who will be included as followers of Jesus and as the story unfolds more and more are invited to share in taking Jesus name forward
- Basically we are to see each and everyone of us in this call and sending out to represent the God of Jesus among us and around us
- The fun of the Christian life is how we best go about that in our time and place

Practical Points from the Mission of Twelve for us Today

- Mark puts these two stories together as contrast to inform those who would have the eyes to see and ears to hear – and some just won't to get it
- responsibility for offering good news is through all followers of Jesus
- the twelve became an extension of Jesus and went his in name – meaning all that Jesus stand for – and not theirs

Preparation

- prepared by time with Jesus for their mission – we all need to grow our wisdom and brew how best to worship and serve the God of Jesus
- in part that is why we gather today or any other occasion of MUC worship & service

Together

- *two by two* affirms the communal nature of Jesus mission – we do it together
- Quote: The only thing that people can achieve on their own is dandruff.

Self-Serving

- accepting one place of hospitality avoids the temptation of seeking the best offer – conviction is best when it is aware of self-importance and self-serving
- being a follower of Jesus acknowledges that comfort is a rival for worship & service

Urgency

- being a disciple recognises the urgency of the task thus we should be prepared to travel light
- Not just apathy but comfort kills conviction, worship and service

Holistic

- the contributions of the twelve as Jesus representatives: exorcisms, healing, etc may sound a little weird to our contemporary ears
- however it best is take as signals that our worship and service but is comprehensive and holistic – taking account of all that what we are and what we are not

Faith

- the anointing with oil is an acted parable of the presence of the Holy Spirit which acknowledges the need for faith in the God of Jesus
- it contrasts the attitude of the people of Nazareth who let familiarity dull their capacity to acknowledge what Jesus brought to the table
- they rested in what they knew and missed what may have been worthy of their God

Conclusion

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