

Sixth Sunday after Pentecost:

Proper 9 Year B

RCL

July 4, 2021

Ezekiel 2:1-5; Psalm 123; 2 Corinthians 12:2-10; Mark 6:1-13

They took offense at him

By: The Rev. Fr. Fabian Villalobos

In today's Gospel, Jesus is in Nazareth his hometown, it is the Sabbath Day, and he is teaching in the Synagogue, when people heard his teachings, they were astounded and asked,

"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?

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?"

The countrymen and people who witnessed Jesus' ministry after recognizing that Jesus was one of them, were in great denial, "And they took offense at him." They passed from being astounded to being offended.

It was difficult for them to accept that Jesus is different, that he knows or has more authority over them. They took offense at him, and maybe we need to ask why? Was Jesus doing something wrong or teaching false statements of faith? Actually, it is the opposite; they were astounded with his teachings.

They took offense of Him, why? Was it because of their prejudices, because of their lack of understanding how God's grace operates?

The Gospel tells us that Jesus did not perform any deeds of power there, except that he laid his hands on a few sick people and cured them. And he was amazed at their unbelief. Jesus could not work miracles; their unbelief stopped them from receiving Him. When they recognized Him, they became blind and could not see any further. Their hearts were closed, there was no love, only rejection.

When we try to apply this Gospel to our own circumstances, we need to first ask, where is Jesus' hometown today? For sure God is everywhere and Jesus the Risen Lord is all over the world. We cannot contain His Presence and love into a box or a building; Jesus' power is among us everywhere we go.

We need to profess also that Jesus' hometown is His church, His Body, His people, and all those who have been baptized and redeemed by Him on the cross, and all who each Sunday gather to hear His teachings, and celebrate His resurrection.

If the Church is Jesus' hometown, we need to be concerned with how much we know and how much we hear about Him, and how much we obey Him. Could it be that when we recognize Jesus, our hearts close because we already know what is next and we do not want to commit our lives fully? Could it be that we are so familiar with Him, that He cannot work with our unbelief?

A difference from other Sundays or from other Gospel's narratives is Jesus cannot work any deed of power. Yes, they recognize, and they know Jesus, but they do not accept him for who He is. There are no miracles for their unbelief. Jesus does not move them out of their closed minds and hearts because God requires our human faith, willingness, and commitment to work within us.

God and Jesus enter only in those who receive, accept, obey, and believe in Him. Perhaps this is one of the reasons why there is much incoherence in the Christian world. Not all who call him Lord, Lord will enter the Kingdom of God. All human beings are free to receive or reject His love, and all too often we choose like Jesus' countrymen.

The fact that Jesus was ignored in His hometown shows that their unbelief was general, except *that he laid his hands on a few sick people and cured them*; most of the town choose the rejection.

Despite this reaction from His own hometown, Jesus' mission continues, He moves forward, He shows us that we need to obey God before men. Jesus' mission needs to continue also today; we are his disciples, even with difficulties, with unbelief and prejudice, we are sent to heal, restore, and proclaim His love, and to help others of our society with the unclean spirits.

The grace of God is more powerful than the unbelief of Jesus' countrymen, His grace is superior to the closing of human hearts, and more powerful than the things that offend us. His grace is for sure greater than the many offenses we have made against him. Amen.