

Daily Reading & Meditation

Jesus marvelled because of Their Unbelief

SUNDAY 4 JULY 2021

GOSPEL READING: Mark 6:1-6

1 He went away from there and came to his own country; and his disciples followed him. 2 And on the Sabbath, he began to teach in the synagogue; and many who heard him were astonished, saying, "Where did this man get all this? What is the wisdom given to him? What mighty works are wrought by his hands! 3 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. 4 And Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not without honour, except in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house." 5 And he could do no mighty work there, except that he laid his hands upon a few sick people and healed them. 6 And he marvelled because of their unbelief. And he went about among the villages teaching.

Meditation: Are you critical towards others, especially those who may be close to you? The most severe critics are often people very familiar to us, a member of our family, a relative, or neighbour or co-worker we rub shoulders with on a regular basis. Jesus faced a severe testing when he returned to his hometown, not simply as the carpenter's son, but now as a rabbi with disciples. It would have been customary for Jesus to go to the synagogue each week during the Sabbath, and when his turn came, to read from the scriptures during the Sabbath service. His hometown folks listened with rapt attention on this occasion because they had heard about the miracles he had performed in other towns. What sign would he do in his hometown?

Look upon your neighbour with the eyes of Christ who comes to heal and restore us

Jesus startled his familiar audience with a seeming rebuke that no prophet or servant of God can receive honour among his own people. The people of Nazareth took offense at Jesus and refused to listen to what he had to say. They despised his preaching because he was a mere workman, a carpenter, and a layman who had no formal training by a scholar or teacher. They also despised him because of his undistinguished family background. How familiarity can breed contempt. Jesus could do no mighty works in their midst because they were closed-minded and unbelieving towards him. If people have come together to hate and to refuse to understand, then they will see no other point of view than their own and they will refuse to love and accept others. How do you treat those who seem disagreeable to you?

The word "gospel" literally means "good news". Isaiah had prophesied that the Messiah would come in the power of the Holy Spirit to bring freedom to the afflicted who suffered from physical, mental, or spiritual oppression (see Isaiah 61:1-2). Jesus came to set people

free - not only from their physical, mental, and spiritual infirmities - but also from the worst affliction of all - the tyranny of slavery to sin, Satan, and the fear of losing one's life. God's power alone can save us from hopelessness, dejection, and emptiness of life. The Gospel of salvation is "good news" for everyone who will receive it. Do you know the joy and freedom of the Gospel?

Psalm 123:1-4

1 To you I lift up my eyes, O you who are enthroned in the heavens!

2 Behold, as the eyes of servants look to the hand of their master, as the eyes of a maid to the hand of her mistress, so our eyes look to the Lord our God, till he have mercy upon us.

3 Have mercy upon us, O Lord, have mercy upon us, for we have had more than enough of contempt.

4 Too long our soul has been sated (full) with the scorn of those who are at ease, the contempt of the proud.

Daily Quote from the Early Church Fathers: *Distinguishing God's power and our faith*, by Origen of Alexandria (185-254 AD)

"And perhaps, as in the case of metallic substances there exists in some a natural attraction toward some other thing, as in the magnet for iron, and in naphtha for fire, so there is an attraction in such faith toward the divine power according to what Jesus said: 'If you have faith as a grain of mustard seed, you shall say unto this mountain, 'Move to another place,' and it shall be moved' (Matthew 17:20). Matthew and Mark wished to present the all-surpassing value of that divine power as a power that works even in those who do not believe. But they did not deny that grace works even more powerfully among those who have faith. So it seems to me that they accurately said not that the Lord did not do *any* mighty works because of their unbelief, but that he did not do *many* there (Mark 6:5). Mark does not flatly say that he could do no mighty work there at all, and stop at that point, but added, 'except that he laid his hands upon a few sick folk and healed them' (Mark 6:5). Thus the power in him overcame even their unbelief."

OPENING PRAYER Lord Jesus, you are the fulfillment of all our hopes and desires. Your Spirit brings grace, truth, freedom, and abundant life. Set my heart on fire with your love and truth. **Amen.**

CLOSING PRAYER:- World and Covet19. Lord, Look upon the victims of Covet19 throughout the world with eyes of mercy, may your healing hands rest upon them, may your life-giving powers flow into every cell of their bodies and into the depths of their souls, cleansing, purifying, restoring them to wholeness and strength for service in your Kingdom. **Amen.**