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“Enough!”

Sermon on Mark 6:1-13

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Mark 6: 1-13

He left that place and came to his hometown, and his disciples followed him. On 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! 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. Then Jesus said to them, ‘Prophets are not without honor, except in their hometown, and among their own kin, and in their own house.’ And he could do no deed of power there, except that he laid his hands on a few sick people and cured them. And he was amazed at their unbelief.

Then he went about among the villages teaching. He called the twelve and began to send them out two by two, and gave them authority over the unclean spirits. He 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. He said to them, ‘Wherever you enter a house, stay there until you leave the place. If 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.’ So, they went out and proclaimed that all should repent. They cast out many demons, and anointed with oil many who were sick and cured them.

I don't like it. I'm hoping it's a poor translation. After they took offense at him, Mark wrote that "he could do no deed of power there."

That doesn't sound right. It doesn't sound right from a theological perspective. We're talking about the Son of God here. This is the man who can still the storm. This is a man who can feed the multitudes. Raise the dead! God is God! Omnipotent! What do you mean "he could do no deed of power there!"?

I don't like it. Well, I don't like it from the "Team God" perspective. I don't know if you noticed it, but it's getting harder and harder to be a believer these days. More and more there are less and less people who take God seriously. Those on Team God are doing what they can. I heard someone on Team God in Louisiana proclaim that every classroom needs to have the Ten Commandments on the wall. It just seems like these are last gasp efforts. We're talking about the Almighty here! I just can't imagine the conversation in heaven, the angels checking in with God. "How was your day God?" "Well, I got my name on a license plate in Tennessee." I mean, the Titans have done that. I just have higher aspirations for God.

I'd like a God with a little more shake, rattle and roll! But instead, "He could do no deed of power there!" Power is what we want from God. Why have God if you don't have power? What good is God without power?

Guy read to you from the Apostle Paul who wanted to get a little more power out of God. He prayed three times to God! Can't you hear his prayer?

"Lord, if you would just heal me, I'd be more effective." "Lord, I don't ask for much but if you could see in my healing the gospel will proliferate more and more." "Lord, I'm really not asking for me, I'm asking for you!" And if God would answer his prayer, well now that's power! Paul prayed three times that the thorn in his flesh would leave. What a testimony that would be. "Well, what happened to you, Paul? You look like a new man." "The Lord Almighty healed me." That's good testimony. That's an answer to prayer!

But the answer to prayer that Paul received was, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness." You see, this is what I'm talking about. The Church is on its last legs here!

Power is made perfect in weakness! That doesn't make any sense. What coach would say to the team? "I want you to go out on to the field and collapse like a deck of cards. No effort, just be as weak as milquetoast." What? No coach would say that! And Jesus was doing so well! There was a 12-year-old girl who was dead, and Jesus said, "Raise up!" And she got up – now that's power!

He was coming home!

Home where my thought's escapin',
home where my music's playin',
home where my love lies waitin'. Quietly for me!

Simon and Garfunkel - you've heard of them. Haven't you?

Home is "Welcome home!" I remember going home, my mom in her 90s, and she'd jump out of her chair and say, "You're home!" I was king at home! Mom would make my favorite meal, and dessert was cherry Jell-O with cherries and whipped cream on top. It's food for the kings.

He got home, but no such thing.

They don't even recognize him at first. "Where did this man get all of this power?" But then, "Isn't this the carpenter? Isn't this Mary's boy? Don't we know his family?" And they took offense at him.

They could have had the power of God at work in their midst! But they chose the alternative. They chose to embrace that wonderful part of the human condition that needs to cut someone down to size so as to feel better about themselves.

Do you ever do that?

"Well, he's got money, but he inherited most of it. He's not self-made. Born with a silver spoon in his mouth." Take them down a notch, and it makes you feel good.

The one I heard the other day, "Yes, she is a great cook when she keeps to that one dish." Now, why do you have to say that? To bring yourself up.

"Isn't this the carpenter?" "Mary's boy?" "Who is he passing himself off as?"

There are people out there in this world that can just puncture your heart. "He could do no deed of power there." Think about the prophet Elijah. Elijah could rain fire down from heaven. He could pray for rain in the middle of drought... and out on the horizon would appear a cloud no bigger than a human hand. "You better get the sandbags ready; it's going to be a gully washer." And then there came this woman, Jezebel, who had all this power over him. Queen Jezebel just punctured his heart, and he ran out to the desert to die.

Do have anybody like that in your life? Someone who can take the life, the wind, and the spirit right out of you?

I don't want to think that anyone can hurt God's feelings enough to weaken God. God! "He could do no deed of power there..." But then Mark writes, almost as an afterthought, "...except that he laid his hands on a few sick people and healed them." Except that he could heal some people, which kind of made you think he had power.

I've never put power and belief together. It makes sense if you think about it. That power needs to have an audience of some sort. I mean what good is power if there isn't someone there to see it?

I went out to my backyard yesterday, and there I have a garden of Zinnias. The gold finches all know the power of a flower - they come by and just eat the petals off one-by-one. I never see the Goldfinches until I see the Zinnias. I have hundreds of flowers, and there was one Zinnia left untouched by the finches, full of petals and just this most iridescent shade of purple in the light. It caught my eye, and I just was amazed by it. And the Zinnia said to me, "Thank you for noticing me today! I appreciate your admiration! It's a beautiful day that the Lord has made! And I'm glad you're a part of my day!" Yes, a Zinnia said that to me.

I walked back into the house, and there was my wife on the sofa. I listened to the Zinnia, and I said, "There's my beautiful wife!" She brightened up and gave me a kiss. Isn't that interesting? You have all this power to say a good word, and if you keep it to yourself...

The gospel, I think, requires an audience.

In a moment, you'll receive some bread and grape juice. Nothing much, really. But in that weak-tasting bread and that cost-cutting juice is a voice that says, "I love you." You believe that don't you? I believe it. I find it to be the only thing that makes sense in this crazy world. That you can give of yourself to the world, not ask anything, just give. It's astoundingly beautiful.

Now you can sit on the power of all that. Keep it for yourself. Or you can find another, and share that love. Share the word you heard. And where two or more are gathered, he'll show up. And the lame will be healed. And the demons will disappear. And that thorn in your flesh will become a crown of glory. For Jesus is there! It's nothing! But it's all you need, it's enough!

It is enough to go with, and Jesus could do some great power. And he was so amazed by their belief.

I like that!

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