

February 9, 2014  
Port Gardner Church  
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Mark 6:1-6

*Mark 6:1-6 [6:1] He went away from there and came to his hometown, 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 these things? What is the wisdom given to him? How are such mighty works done 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 honor, except in his hometown and among his relatives and in his own household."** [5] And he could do no mighty work there, except that he laid his hands on a few sick people and healed them. [6] **And he marveled because of their unbelief.***

**Jesus returns to his hometown**

**Have you ever done this? Returned to your hometown?**

**Did you return a hero... or maybe not. Most of us just returned, with no parade or fanfare.**

**We all have a story. A story of how we arrived to this point in our life. Olympics, Seahawks. Back stories of people that came from nothing and accomplished great things.**

**Jesus' hometown of Nazareth is a 60 acre site of houses that holds about 500 people.**

**Jesus goes home and is treated by his friends, neighbors and family as a crazy man. A lunatic. A failure.**

**Jesus gives us a picture of what it will be like to follow Him. He shows us that we are not going to be praised and supported or even listened to, especially by those closest to us. And once again Jesus shows us that the insiders are outsiders and the outsiders are insiders. We would think that Jesus' family would be in support of Him. That they would be the insiders... but this is not the case.**

**And Jesus says...**

**[4] "A prophet is not without honor, except in his hometown and among his relatives and in his own household."**

Isn't this true?

To my brothers I'm still a prideful know it all. To my folks I don't live out the gospel in the way they would like, and to my children, I'm a flawed father that all too often has sinned and made mistakes in their presence.

To my spouse I am a man that is predictable in my failings and expectations of change are clouded by past behaviors.

To many that are close to us, we live in a box with no escape. We will always be the person that failed them. That embarrassed them. That did not fulfill our promises and cannot be trusted.

And add to that the Christian faith. Many of us, when we were called by God and made a decision to be a disciple of Christ had to make changes in our lives. Big changes. Changes so important that everything else had to take a back seat to this new found allegiance to the God that saved us. And it changed... everything. Our behavior, our actions, our thoughts, our plans... and of course, our relationships.

So now we are not only the son or daughter, brother, sister, mother, father or spouse that everyone knows. We are now the crazy religious person who can only talk about Jesus.

For Jesus, this was different but similar. He, being the son of God and perfect in every way had to be quite an enigma to his brothers and sisters. He was probably resented and doubted by them.

Remember the story of Joseph in the Old Testament. How his brothers sold him into slavery. How he was put in prison and yet in the end he became a powerful leader and eventually saved his entire family from famine...

Joseph and Jesus were put in a box. Their families had them "figured out". And they were treated with jealousy and contempt.

High School story.

And we do it to our families and loved ones as well. The truth is, as much as we think we are treated poorly and without respect, we do just the same to our own. To our sons and daughters, mothers and fathers, sisters and brothers. We put them in a box and we won't let them out. Maybe they've struggled with addictions or habitual behaviors. Maybe they have shown selfishness or acted on lustful desires. Whatever their' sins we have ascribed blame to them and we won't let them change.... Even when God does the changing. The fat will always be fat. The alcoholic will always be a drunk. The gossip, the one filled with rage, the glutton or the sloth. Branded for life. Forgiven? Maybe... but never forgotten.

This is the way it is. This is how we live. And change happens so rarely that when we see it... we don't believe it. We don't trust it. Rehab? Right. Not.

If you're a husband, you're in someone's box. If you're a wife, you're in someone's box. A mother, a father, a sister, a brother, a friend, a co-worker... **If you're breathing, you're in someone's box.** And if you're breathing, you've got someone in a box as well.

So the big question here is why. Why do we do it?

Well there seem to be a number of reasons. We can say that we have been hurt so often that we use this box system as a way to protect ourselves. To keep anyone from hurting us in that way again.

You know when someone is hurt or killed in a way that could have been prevented? If everything had been prepared correctly, if all the details of every contributing factor were handled properly, if somehow the planets aligned, there was harmonic convergence... then this would have never happened. But somehow something or someone didn't do what they were supposed to do and this terrible tragedy occurred. And now someone or a group of someones are going to bring public and political pressure, they are going to litigate and raise money to change the "thing" that failed so that it never ever ever happens to anyone else ever again.

We're in the business of protection. Removing all risk. For our kids, for our friends, for ourselves. So boxes are made to protect us and others.

We also want revenge. We pretend that we don't... but we really do.

We've all heard the words, vengeance is mine saith the Lord. He explicitly tells us that He will give mercy to whom He will have mercy and Judgment to whom He will bring Judgment. But that's not good enough for us it is...

With both of these scenarios, we are not satisfied with God's plan. His will. His mercy or His judgment. We want justice. But why? Why must we have justice.

Some like to harken back to OT law and say, an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth. But Jesus came and fulfilled all of the law. Jesus took our sin and said, I forgive you. No strings attached. No more penance, no more punishment, no more payment due.

Bingo! There it is. And it's probably not what you think.

Most of the time we think, well, Jesus forgives them so I better forgive them too. Or, Jesus forgives me so I have to forgive and well. Right?

You know the parable of the man that is brought before the king because he owes somewhere around \$1 million. And this guy begs the king for a chance to repay him and the king shows mercy and forgives this guy the entire debt. Then

this guy who was just forgiven goes out and shakes down another guy that owes him just a few bucks. The king finds out and throws the once forgiven man in jail. We kind of look at the Christian life as a tit for tat way of living. We buy into the idea of Karma. What goes around comes around. As you sow, so shall you reap. And this is true. Not the Karma part, but the fact that much of our life is the result of reaping what we sow.

And that's part of it... but it's not anywhere near All of It!

Why do you think that Jesus can love people, suffer for people, forgive people the way He does? It's because He knows who He is. He is the son of the most high, most righteous, most holy God. In fact, He is God. And He knows it and He can only be who He is.

Now here comes the kicker... Why do you treat yourself and others the way that you do? Why do you put others in a box. Why do you give them little opportunity to change. Why don't you forgive them. Why don't you see them the way God sees them. The way God sees you.

And there it is. How does God see you? Do you know how God sees you? Do you understand your identity in Christ? Do you see yourself as completely and totally chosen, forgiven and righteous before God? Or is the sacrifice of Christ not enough to do that for you? And there is the the ultimate kicker. If you are the child of the king yet you don't know yourself to be the child of the king, do you think you will act like the child of the king?

No you're probably hoping that right now I'm going to give you the special key to unlock this thing. That I've got a new and special magic understanding that has been hidden in scripture and we're going to pull it out and it will solve this issue for all of us once and for all.

Well I do have the answer. But it is not new and it is not magic.

To really know who you are you need to know the one that created you. The one that loves you. The one that saved you. You need to know Jesus Christ.

And not just a handshake. Not just an introduction where you say, yeah... I like that guy. You need to know Him better than you know anyone else on the planet. You need to find out everything you can and continue to reinforce it over and over and over again.

Some folks have asked me why we preach the gospel, the good news of Jesus every week? Some have told me that they would like to hear some "deeper truths" about scripture... as if there is a deeper truth than the God of the universe sacrificing Himself on our behalf so that we could be saved from the consequences of sin and spend an beautiful eternity with that same God.

"I would sooner bring one sinner to Jesus Christ than unravel all the mysteries of the divine Word, for salvation is the one thing we are to live for." C.H. Spurgeon

The deepest truth we can ever know is this: Jesus loves me this I know, for the Bible tells me so.

"You will never glory in God till first of all God has killed your glorying in yourself."

**Galatians 2:20** *"I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me."*