

## Ordinary 14 to Ordinary 17



Year B Ordinary 14

Mark 6. 1 - 13

### *Familiar Places*

*Mark 6.3 Isn't he the carpenter ...?*

#### **Jesus at home**

In just a few words we have an insight into the real world of Jesus.  
It is uncertain how long he had been away, but not long enough to be forgotten.

We are introduced to him as carpenter.  
Had Joseph died? Had Jesus taken on the business?  
Mary, his mother is well-known in the community.  
His siblings have grown into teens and twenties - brothers James, Joseph, Judas, Simon and sisters whose names we do not know.

It is a picture of a familiar place  
- of Jesus making a return visit to friends and family -  
meeting people at the synagogue on the Sabbath where he is able to exercise his right as teacher .

It is at that point the *familiar* doesn't seem quite right to the local people.  
*He's different. Such wisdom in his teaching! Ability to heal some sick people!*  
*That's not familiar!*  
*This is the Carpenter - this is the Davidson lad! He's one of us!*  
*Where did he get all this wisdom and power?*

So they rejected him and had only limited faith in him  
which in turn reduced their receptivity to his kingdom ministry for themselves and their community

Jesus understood the saying "*a prophet is without honour among his own.*"

#### **The danger of familiarity**

Familiarity is still liable to diminish vision and faith  
and still robs the power of God  
In our worship  
In our mission  
In our service to others

#### **Answer the Questions**

The Gospel came again to Galilee and Nazareth after the resurrection of Jesus and the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost

I like to think the work of Jesus had a very different reception then  
Certainly his own brothers came to faith in him

If that was so it was because they had looked again at the questions they had asked  
Isn't he Jesus? the carpenter?  
Where did he get this wisdom and power?

This time the answer could be:

*Yes, he is Jesus - one of our own*

**And** *he is God - who is all wisdom and power*

### **Overcoming familiarity**

In the same ways we overcome the familiarity which robs our faith and our experience of the power of Jesus - the glory of God

Know him as a real person - living in a real world

Know him as God - to whom nothing is impossible - to whom all truth known

### **Receiving and Accepting**

But they would still have to **receive** him - God and man

**believe** beyond the familiar

and prove his wisdom and power

**And so do we!**

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**Year B Ordinary 15**

Mark 6. 14 - 29

### **Facing Truth**

*Mark 6.18 It isn't right ....!*

### **A fearful truth**

The gruesome death of John the Baptist is a fearful story - but not only for John.

It was for Herod too! in that he was compelled to face the truth.

Herod Antipas was the youngest son of Herod the Great and inherited the Tetrarchy of Galilee and Perea. Like his father he had a great interest in architecture and built the new city of Tiberias in Galilee. Antipas entered a marriage of convenience with a daughter of the Arabian King Aretas IV but divorced her to marry Herodias, his half-brother Philip's wife. John had spoken out against the marriage and so incurred the wrath of the Tetrarch.

Herod reacted by imprisoning John. He was reluctant to put him to death, as Herodias wished, because he secretly admired John. He was afraid of the prophet because, like his father he was highly superstitious and recognised him as a good and holy man. John spoke the truth and Herod was disturbed by what he said.

Finally Herodias tricked Herod into disposing of John after making a rash promise to Salome at his own birthday party.

### **Facing the truth**

Herod's problem was that John caused him to face the truth  
he illustrates how we sometimes have to face the truth about ourselves

Facing the truth about ourselves is the beginning of personal freedom  
It is probably the most important thing we ever do in our lives

### **Hear the truth**

Facing the truth begins with listening to it  
- a challenging step which may come through  
the honesty of someone close to us  
or at the reading of scripture  
when God's spirit speaks to our spirit  
in a moment of deep revelation and conviction

*It happened that way with Herod who was ready to hear and discuss with John*

### **Be troubled by the truth**

Not necessarily afraid of it,  
though there may be consequences which are difficult to cope with  
As we wrestle with it we come to terms with ourselves

*Herod who liked to listen to John - visiting him in prison - even though John's words disturbed him - maybe BECAUSE they disturbed him.*

### **Face the Truth**

Don't try to lock it away  
It has to be faced  
doing nothing about it because, like Herod it may mean loss of popularity, position, pleasure,  
may be simply digging a bigger hole to fall into!

### **Face Jesus - the Truth**

The final problem for superstitious Herod arose when Jesus came on the scene  
and some people said he was a reincarnation of John!

in one sense he was  
He was The Truth - God who knows the truth about us  
We have to face him with the facts of our life eventually  
Better to stay close to him  
compare ourselves with him  
let his Spirit speak to our spirit  
and be sorted out day by day.



**Year B Ordinary 16**

Mark 6. 30 - 34 (53-56)

### **Mission Ignition**

*Mark 6.34 His heart was filled with compassion*

#### **Let's take a break!**

*If you think you've had a busy day, just look at Jesus - everyday!!*

The first Kingdom missions were buzzing  
Jesus' twelve chosen companions returned from the mission on which he had sent them to  
neighbouring towns and villages.

They had exciting things to tell him about:

their experiences of;

using his authority over evil

the response to their preaching

the thrill of healing the sick

the amazement of learning to live by faith

the joy of hospitality

and the privilege of seeing God turn people's lives around for good

Jesus continued his preaching and teaching as they rejoined them  
and the calls on their time were so great there was barely time to stop for a meal!

At that point Jesus gave wise counsel for all his followers - *Let's rest. Take time out for ourselves.*

But even that was not possible - except in the boat during a lake crossing - because the crowds  
went round the lake on foot and were there to meet Jesus and his men when they arrived by boat

I suppose he could have said

*- let's stay out here on the lake!*

*or we'll go further south and find a quiet place!*

But that was not his way

Because *his heart was filled with compassion* when he saw the crowds and their needs

#### **Compassion**

A beautiful word - deeper than pity

*A feeling of sorrow and sympathy because of the suffering of others*

It is a picture of *God IN Christ*

*A token of the very nature of God and his love for his world*

'Compassionate God'

His heavy, burning, sacrificial love of mingling joy and pain

for every person in the world

for every human situation, crisis, need

Compassion is;

the source of all Jesus' words and work from his birth to his ascension

the inspiration for the Church's mission in every generation

*e.g. What these people need is not sermons, but the most basic thing of all, compassion (Lisa Skobtsova working in the Paris slums of the 1930s)*

## **Ignition for Mission**

This same compassion rises in the lives of those who are being filled with the Spirit of Jesus  
It is the spark to ignite  
our vision  
our enthusiasm  
our excitement  
for Ministry and for Mission

We share the experience of the first disciples  
we have seen what God can do - out of his compassion  
we share the compassion of Jesus for a world of hurting people  
and we are eager and ready to be SENT and used in his Kingdom work.

Like the first disciples of Jesus  
**BUT** never fail to snatch the *given* moment with Jesus ,  
as we travel from one human need to another,  
because it is in the 'space apart' with him where the ignition spark is kept alight.

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**Year B Ordinary 17**      Ephesians 3: 14 - 21

## ***Pray for Love - the greatest Power***

*Ephesians 3: 16    I ask God ..... to give you power*

## **At Prayer**

There are different postures which may be adopted for prayer.  
Mostly we assume an attitude which is convenient to our situation and maybe our mood.  
There are times when a sense of divine glory will require that we stand - even raise our hands in prayer.  
There are moments when it seems more appropriate to sit quietly in God's presence.  
There are experiences and revelations which give us such a sense of God's majesty and greatness that the only place to be is on our knees, daring to look up.

It was the latter for Paul on this occasion

He has been marveling at the unfathomable riches of Christ  
- the height, depth, length and breadth of God's love in Jesus  
thrilling at God's wisdom being revealed to him at every turn of his life  
his mind blown by the miracle of grace by which he - even he - has been called  
to be a child and servant of God  
- the best, wisest and most loving parent of all people on earth and in heaven

And suddenly he is on his knees pleading with God for all his people to share with him the glory and wonder of LOVE  
Love which is the principle behind the universe - the power which drives the cosmos and everything in it and beyond it.

**For all God's People**

What a prayer!

It was written down to share with Christian groups across Asia Minor

**but it is for all people**

*I want you all to have the power of God's Spirit in you  
strengthening you - enabling you to live for his Kingdom and his glory  
- giving you all the rich blessings of life in Christ which I know ..  
AND that power which I am asking God to give you is LOVE!*

**I want you to receive God's love**

*To let Christ make his home in your hearts by believing in him  
- letting him into every part of your life.*

**I want you to know God's love**

*To experience Christ as Love  
- to prove it in everyday encounters, experiences, testimony, scripture ....  
it is the foundation on which your life is based  
the soil into which your roots dig deep for nourishment of body, mind and spirit*

**I want you to share God's love**

*To thrill together with all God's people in the wonder of it  
in the overwhelming glory which brings us to our knees  
in realising (even though it is impossible to fully know) that his love is the whole of life  
- its whole meaning and purpose of life is found in sharing  
the height, depth, breadth, length of God's love*

**I want you to be God's love**

*To be completely filled with the nature of God*

*Like the branches of the vine of which Jesus spoke  
with all his life of love flowing through you (Jn15)  
- to bear fruit of love  
through godly living and through Kingdom values  
To be as Christ in the world!  
Sharing and fulfilling his ministry - serving - caring - teaching - hurting - sacrificing*

**Wow!**

I wonder if we have really grasped our calling in Jesus  
Paul had begun to  
and his greatest desire was that we share it with him

**Not too late**

We are told that sound waves do not go on forever, but weaken until they are no longer audible.  
I like to think that is **not** true of prayers!  
On the other hand Paul's prayer has been and is still kept going by constant use!

*Lord, answer Paul's prayer in me today and every day!*