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WHERE JESUS COULD DO *NO* MIGHTY WORK?
Mark 6:1-6; Proper 9B; Pentecost 7B; July 6-7, 2024

[Jesus] ...came to His hometown... And He could do no mighty work there, except that He laid His hands on a few sick people and healed them. And He marveled because of their unbelief.

Why couldn't Jesus do any mighty work in His hometown, healing there only a few sick people in contrast to the other places Jesus healed many? It was not that Jesus had an off day in doing miracles. Jesus did not lose His ability to do mighty works while visiting His hometown. Jesus went home to help them, but very few ended up receiving help. He wanted to do more for them, so what prevented Him from it? This reflected a serious spiritual problem.

Are there spiritual issues that could prevent Jesus from doing mighty works among us? Many people need Jesus' help right now. Will He be unable to help them for some reason? The answer to that is, Yes. Jesus could do no mighty work among them, and He could be prevented from doing any mighty work among us.

Does this have anything to do with a weakness on Jesus' part? No. Jesus Christ, the Son of God and Mary's Son, true God and true man, always has the power and ability to do mighty works. Jesus is not like Sampson, who, when his hair was cut, lost his great strength. Jesus is not Superman, who, in the presence of kryptonite, becomes weak. Jesus is God's Christ even when people do not believe in Him and reject Him as such, like they did in Nazareth.

“Where did this man get these things? What is the wisdom given to Him? How are such mighty works 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.

Despite recognizing that Jesus' teaching had great wisdom, wisdom clearly from God, and that He was able to do miracles that no ordinary carpenter could do, they despised Him for being a carpenter and the family He came from.

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We just got done celebrating Independence Day, the Fourth of July. In the time leading up to our nation's founding, the founding fathers were looked down upon by the British elites because they were of common birth. Not one of them was of royal birth or had received titles from the British king. This made the founding fathers nobodies. Their ideas of democracy establishing a republic were rejected because of who they were. "Four score and seven years" later, President Lincoln, a common man doing great things, reminded his fellow Americans of what makes this nation great: "a government of the people, by the people, for the people."

As we give thanks to God for the blessings we have as Americans, I find it disturbing that people these days are so enamored with those considered the royalty and aristocracy of our day: the rich and powerful, celebrities from entertainment and sports, the educated elite and TV talking heads. If we don't think like and join the herd following what is popular, we are considered ignorant nobodies. In a similar way, the folks in Nazareth rejected Jesus because He seemed so common and humble, a nobody to them.

Before we look at how the humble Jesus is rejected these days, let's consider the mighty works He still does among us. Jesus still imparts God's wisdom through His Word. Jesus still comes among us healing our diseases, casting out demons, and even raising the dead. Jesus still does mighty works even though most people in the world don't recognize them as such.

Take, for example, the words you are hearing me preach right now. If these are simply my words, then you should consider their source and reject or accept them for what they are: the words of a sinful man, full of weaknesses and faults, words no better than any others. But if I am preaching to you the Word of God, then my words have God's power and authority in them doing great things.

When we confessed our sins at the beginning of the service, it was the Holy Spirit working through God's Word of law that brought us to the realization that we are sinners, doomed to death and destruction if not forgiven by God. We confessed our sin and then listened in faith for God's Word of forgiveness in Christ. You heard me speak those words, which weren't actually mine but the words of Christ.

We came to church sinners and now our sins are forgiven by Jesus. How we feel about ourselves might not have changed much, but that is not the important thing. God no longer sees us as sinners, but saints, holy ones in Jesus without any sin. That is a mighty work of God Jesus does for us.

Consider what happens at a baptism. Whether an infant or an adult, the person comes to the font dead in his or her trespasses and sins, destined to die and doomed to hell forever. By Word and water, God brings us to faith in Him and washes away our sins. God raises us from the spiritual death of unbelief and gives us a clean heart and right spirit that lives in us. Sin still clings to these bodies we live and die in, but because we have been spiritually raised from the dead by faith in Christ, we have the promise that these mortal bodies will be raised on the Last Day to live with Him forever. That is a mighty work of God Jesus does for us.

Consider what happens at Communion, the Lord's Supper. A little bit of bread and a sip of wine seem outwardly insignificant, yet by God's Word in Christ we eat and drink Jesus' true body and blood, given and shed on the cross for the forgiveness of our sins, life, and salvation. Washed of our sinful uncleanness and made holy, royal priests in God's house, we come into the holy of holies to feast with God. That is a mighty work of God Jesus does for us.

Why couldn't Jesus do any mighty work in Nazareth? Mark tells us: **because of their unbelief.** What about here today? People still reject Jesus as common, a nobody. They reject His mighty works as insignificant or unimportant to them.

People reject their need to hear God's Word through the pastor God called to serve them.

People forget that God in Christ spiritually raised them from the dead in their baptisms and promises to raise them physically from the dead. They live as if still dead in their sins.

People confess their sins without remorse and without considering that they deserved eternal condemnation, not God's forgiveness, and remain ungrateful that God still wants to forgive them as shown in Jesus' suffering, death, and resurrection.

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People come to the Lord's Table treating it as something common, or reject their desperate need for it and stay away from it for long periods of time.

People despise their fellow church members, the mission of the Church, and are content to live their own lives apart from their brothers and sisters in Christ. They don't serve and love them in word and deed. They don't give offerings from what God has given them to help and support people in need and the mission of the Church.

People still take offense at Jesus and the things of Jesus, and what is the result? **Jesus could not do mighty work there.**

Jesus was crucified as someone judged to be common, a nobody by the world's standards, not as God working among us. Jesus does not want us to reject Him and His Words so He cannot do mighty works among us. Jesus wants us to repent of our sins. Despite our sinfulness, God still works to forgive our sin and save us. May Jesus do His mighty work among us! Amen.