

## Have we misjudged Jesus?

First Trinity Lutheran Church  
Mark 6: 1-13  
Fifth Sunday in Pentecost

Have you ever made serious misjudgments about something or someone? There are some very famous and successful people in life who have made serious misjudgments along the way. Here are just a few of them. Ken Olson the president of Digital Equipment in 1977 said, "There is no reason that anyone would want a computer in their home. In 1859 Edwin Drake tried to enlist workers to help him drill for oil. This is the response he got, Drill for oil? You mean drill into the ground and try to find oil? You're crazy. Bill Gates said in 1981 640K ought to be enough for anybody. These are some pretty bad misjudgments. But they are insignificant compared to the misjudgment that Mark reports in Mark 6:1-6. In today's reading from Mark the community from Jesus hometown of Galilee misjudged Jesus. The familiarity with Jesus and his family displaced their sense of awe. Isn't this Jesus the carpenter we know? Where did he get all this scriptural knowledge. Where did he learn how to do these miracles? He is just a carpenter's son. The people of his hometown misjudged Jesus and rejected his Lordship.

How about us today. Have we lost that sense of Jesus' majesty and holiness? Is worship for us just a time to go through the ritual or do the words and phrases really mean something. What about prayer. When we pray have we lost the sense of humility and inner awe for the holiness of Christ. In our speech do we use the Name of Jesus or things about him in a dishonoring way? If so then we have lost the Jesus of majesty and holiness.

This Gospel reading today is a show and tell kind of message. Despite being misjudged and rejected Jesus is teaching his disciples how to do the work of the ministry. And now, he's taking them to the next level. He's saying, "Alright. You've watched me preach. You've seen me do healings. You've observed me driving out demons. You've watched me love people that have never

been loved before. Now it's time for YOU to do it! I didn't pick 12 apostles so that you could stand around and watch me do all the work! It's time for YOU to get some experience!"

Today we read that Jesus gives them tools for ministry. First, he gives them a model for ministry. Verse six says, "Jesus went around teaching from village to village." Here Jesus leads by example. Before he tells the disciples to go out there and do the work of the ministry, he was out there doing it first! Jesus didn't hide up in heaven and tell us what to do from a distance. He showed us what to do! And notice that Jesus doesn't wait around for the people to come to Him. He left Nazareth and goes to them!

I think there's a lesson here. Here at First Trinity we talk a lot about getting people to come to our church. But we don't talk enough about getting our church to go to the people. That's what Jesus is talking about here! He doesn't say, "Wait in the sanctuary, and pray for people to come in and fill the pews." He's saying, "I want the people in the pews to go to them!"

I am convinced that most of the ministry that God calls us to do is outside the church. It happens when we reach out with God's word to the people in our own community. When we teach our kids right from wrong. When we discuss Bible stories around the dinner table. When we reach out in Christian friendship to coworkers that God has placed in our lives. Reaching out with the love of God beyond the walls of this building. That's our model for ministry.

The second thing that Jesus gives us is companionship for ministry. Verse seven says "Calling the Twelve to him, he sent them out two by two." It was customary in both Jewish and Greek culture to send messengers in groups of two. That way, if something were to go wrong, there would be two witnesses to testify on behalf of the sender. But the bottom line is that God never intended you and I to do the work of the ministry by ourselves. We need help! We need encouragement! Look at the apostle Paul. As great as he was, when the church sent him out on his first missionary journey in Acts 13, they didn't send him out there all alone. Paul went with a friend

named, Barnabas! Do you know what the name 'Barnabas' means? It means Son of Encouragement! We all need encouragement in our lives. We all need people who will love us. People who will build us up when life gets tough.

So Jesus gives his disciples a model for ministry, companionship for ministry, and also the provisions for ministry. Verse eight says "These were his instructions: "Take nothing for the journey except a staff - no bread, no bag, no money in your belts." Galilee was a very hilly and rocky place. So no traveler would be without his staff. The staff was a very useful stick. It helped you to steady yourself when you climbed up a rocky hill. And if a wild animal or a thief attacked you, you could use it as protection. So for a traveler, the staff was an indispensable item.

And according to verse nine, they could take the clothes on their back and a pair of sandals. And that was about it! Jesus said 'Travel light!' For a couple of reasons. Number one: To teach the disciples that if they're ever in a situation like this, they will always be able to count on God to take care of them. And Jesus wants them to know early on that God's would never let them go without everything they needed. In fact, two years later, Jesus has the disciples look back on this experience. In Luke 22:35: Jesus said, "When I sent you without purse, bag, or sandals, did you lack anything?" And the disciples said, "Nothing." In other words, "there was never a time when they didn't have what they needed. God always provided. "

And another reason why Jesus told the apostles to travel light was so that they would be totally committed to their mission, and not preoccupied with material things. In the 21st century, we live such comfortably posh lives that it's easy to forget that we're supposed to be here on a mission! We're supposed to be here to win people for Christ! We're supposed to be here to minister to the needs in people's lives! Would it make any sense for God to put us on this earth to accumulate lots of things only to leave them here for someone else when you die?

Then in verse ten, Jesus said, "Whenever you enter a house, stay there until you leave that town." In other words, "don't go running around looking for the nicest possible accommodations. Stay wherever you are welcomed." Back then, there were a lot of traveling philosophers wandering around Galilee. And they would stay the night with whoever would take them in. But when someone with a nicer house made them a better offer, they would ditch the first host and stay at the nicer place. And Jesus is telling his disciples here, "Don't do that. Don't leave these people with the impression that your ministry is all about you rather than all about God. Don't lead them to believe that you're in this only for yourself."

There's nothing wrong with experiencing the finer things in life. But when this becomes the main reason why you live your life and why you serve the Lord, then there's a problem. And then in verse eleven, Jesus says "if any place will not welcome you or listen to you, shake the dust off your feet when you leave, as a testimony against them."

We all know people that we would love to see come to Christ. But for whatever reason, they are not open to spiritual things. Maybe there is a sin in their life that they don't want to give up. Maybe they're just not ready. Keep them in your prayers. God's not through with them yet. But if they get hostile, shake the dust off. Say, "Lord, I have fulfilled my responsibility to do what you wanted me to do. Now I hand this person over to you and ask that you take it from here."

So far, we've seen that Jesus gives us a model for ministry. Companionship for ministry, provisions for ministry. And lastly, he gives us practice for ministry. Verse twelve says that the disciples "went out and preached that people should repent." The word "repent" that is used here means 'to change your mind.' So the disciples were preaching that people need to change their minds about their sin. They need to change their minds about the way they've been living their lives. And they need to change their minds about Jesus Christ! And accept him as their personal

Lord and Savior!

It's not too hard to see how this kind of preaching could cause a problem. Some people don't like being told that there are things in their lives that need to change. They don't like being told that all have sinned and have fallen short of the glory of God. They don't like hearing that they need someone greater than themselves to save them. But praise God, this apostolic training session turned to be a big success! Verse thirteen says that "They drove out many demons and anointed many sick people with oil and healed them."

I want you to notice that the disciples did two things. In verse twelve, we see them ministering to people's eternal needs. And in verse thirteen, we see them ministering to people's felt needs. The message is that God calls us to minister to the whole person! He's not just concerned about our eternal destiny. He's concerned about our immediate situation. He's concerned about the problems we have right now! And just as Jesus sent his disciples to help the hurting people of Galilee, He is sending us to help the hurting people of the Gulf Coast, Indonesia, and Darfur.

The point is that God never intended for us to be spectator Christians. We all need to be involved in some kind of ministry. Whether it's Bible study, or evangelism, or visiting the elderly, or encouraging other believers. Each one of us needs hands on practical experience. If you're not using what God gave you, then you're not really a disciple of Jesus.

**CONCLUSION:** A lady in a worn dress and a man in a homespun threadbare suit walked into the office and asked to see the president of Harvard University. The receptionist thought that such backwoods hicks did not need to be in such a place. She told them, "he is busy all day." They said, "we'll wait." After several hours, she finally called the president and asked if he would give them a few minutes just to get rid of them. He agreed. The couple sheepishly walked into the office as the president got up in a huff and strutted toward them. The lady said, "we had a son who

attended Harvard for a year and loved it. But about a year ago, he was killed in an accident. My husband and I would like to erect a memorial to him somewhere on campus." The president was shocked. He said gruffly, "we cannot erect statues for everyone who attended Harvard and died. The place would look like a cemetery." "Oh no," the lady quickly explained. "We don't want to give a statue, we want to give a building." The president rolled his eyes. He looked at them in their unsophisticated clothing and said, "A building! Do you have any idea how much that costs? We have over seven million dollars in the physical plant here at Harvard." Now this was back in 1884. The lady was silent. The president was pleased. The lady turned to her husband and said, "Is that all it costs to start a university? Why don't we just start our own?" Her husband nodded. The president looked bewildered. At that point, Mr. & Mrs. Leland Stanford walked away from Harvard and went to Palo Alto CA where they established Stanford University as a memorial to a son that Harvard no longer cared about.

Someone here today may not think Jesus is all that the Bible says He is. You may look with skepticism on the uniqueness of Christ, his virgin birth, his miracles, and his sacrificial death. You may think that the story of Jesus is an old, worn out tradition that has no relevance to your life. But think twice before you write him off. If you do, you will forfeit a gift so valuable that money cannot buy - eternal life and a personal relationship with the God of the universe.