

SHOW AND SHARE: RIGHT NOW...NO MATTER WHAT

Mark 6:1-13

Intro

Jesus has been making waves...or as the case may be, calming them. In the previous chapter and change, we hear stories of Jesus calming the waters of the sea, healing a man who was possessed with demons, having a woman touch his cloak and be healed of 12 years of bleeding (bleeding which made her 'unclean', and therefore an outcast in her culture), and then resurrect the daughter of a leader of a local congregation.

Yup, Jesus is getting it done.

Which is why the story that comes next, the one we are about to hear, feels so...sad. Jesus has clearly been doing the work of God, and yet when he enters into his hometown of Nazareth, they are unable to celebrate him or his work. In fact, scripture tells us that the vocal portion of Nazareth 'took offense at him, the son of the carpenter and of Mary'. They took offense at him. I hear that, and through my current day prism what I hear are people who are struggling to give Jesus (and ultimately and more importantly God) his due because they feel that they will end up feeling diminished in their particular standing. Have you ever had someone try and make themselves feel better by tearing down someone else? Yeah, like that. Except in this case, they are also trying to tear down the power of God as well.

It is on the heels of this event that we are then told how Jesus responds: he keeps doing the work of God...and then sends his disciples out to do the same thing! What Jesus went through becomes the example for his followers to follow. And what is that example? Make sure that you pay attention to the second half of verse 5. The scripture reads this way.

Mark 6:1-13

⁶He left that place and came to his home town, and his disciples followed him. ²On 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! ³Is 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 offence at him.

⁴Then Jesus said to them, 'Prophets are not without honor, except in their home town, and among their own kin, and in their own house.' ⁵And he could do no deed of power there, except that he laid his hands on a few sick people and cured them. ⁶And he was amazed at their unbelief.

Then he went about among the villages teaching. ⁷He called the twelve and began to send them out two by two, and gave them authority over the unclean spirits. ⁸He 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. ¹⁰He said to them, 'Wherever you enter a house, stay there until you leave the place. ¹¹If 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.' ¹²So they went out and proclaimed that all should repent. ¹³They cast out many demons, and anointed with oil many who were sick and cured them.

'Show and Share: Right Now...No Matter What'

So between the weather (I don't know if you noticed, but apparently it was kind of hot and humid this past week?), and Austin feeling a little under the weather (see what I did there?), my family was not able to get out to see as many fireworks displays as we would normally head to in and around the 4th. That doesn't mean that there weren't more than a few that were shot off in and around the neighborhood (because there were quite a few!) but it wasn't the normal, looking up into the sky seeing how one explosion feeds into the next and into the next. When you get a good display that is exactly what is able to transpire: what is seen, heard, and felt, leads you into what you will see, hear, and feel next and all the way to the percussive ending that tends to leave me in a state of cognitive overload (because that's a whole lot of information that the gray matter needs to deal with...and that's with the backdrop of a blackened nighttime sky). One illumination leading into the next, which affects what comes after.

As I read this passage, that was the visual that kept coming to my mind...and here's why: Jesus actions and reactions and not just for him. They are for his disciples. They are for his detractors (which in this story means (some of) the people whom he grew up around). They are for us.

Think about it: as was mentioned prior to the reading (and this is very much meant in the framework of how we think of ourselves and others in our current cultural context), Jesus is on a roll. 'His' power has been displayed in several different ways. 'His' message is getting out there. The people are responding to 'him' in an affirmative way. There had to have been a feeling that was akin to a high tide where the water is coming in and there is nothing that you can do about it beyond riding it all the way in...or walking away from it so that you don't get wet.

Well, the village that helped to raise him, or at least a few vocal voices, decide to walk away from the rising tide while proceeding to talk about how it was nicer when the tide didn't come in ('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 offence at him.). Jesus is there, in the town that helped to raise him, preaching and teaching with authority and displaying acts of God's power...and the people say, 'no, we're good.' Because, people being people, if Jesus is going 'up' then that means that those voices of negativity feel like they are getting bumped down a rung or two in terms of their self-perceived level of importance. Jesus' elevation is making them feel not so great about themselves and in order to counteract that they try and knock Jesus down a peg or two by taking a swipe at the rest of his family (and I believe that because of how the voices take down Jesus by saying, 'look at the rest of the family! They aren't special: he can't be either').

So there's the context.

Now what happens next? Yes, we hear that Jesus was amazed at their unbelief and that he wasn't able to perform any acts of power. But that isn't the whole story is it?

I don't think so. And I am sure that the 'few sick people' whom he laid hands on and cured wouldn't think so either. Jesus is getting serious shade thrown at him...and he responds by...continuing to love and care. He doesn't swipe back. He's hurt (which is how I hear the word 'amazed' in 'he was amazed at their disbelief'), but he doesn't respond with anything that resembles an 'eye for an eye' mentality. He continues to display...love. That is what he continues to show and share even after he and his family is insulted. 'He laid hands on a few sick people and healed them.' That's what he showed to his

disciples, to his neighbors, to us: keep showing and sharing love (however that may show up in your life). Share that gift of God...no matter what.

That reality is then expanded upon as Jesus sends his disciples out to share in the work that he had initiated. Now I have no problem admitting that many of us hear that sending out and what we end up focusing on Jesus' last statement: '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.'

But what is that last statement?

There are some who absolutely look at the statement as a point of condemnation...and that's it. Knocking off the dust was symbolic that the land from which you were coming was ritually unclean. So that explanation certainly has merit.

But I ultimately cannot abide in that line of thought. Why?

Because as Jesus is being crucified, as his clothing is being gambled for, as he is being derided and humiliated (wait, didn't that just happen in Nazareth?), Jesus calls out from between the two guilty criminals, 'forgive them Father, for they know not what they do.' That's what Jesus showed. That's what Jesus shared.

And because of that, I look at the statement of shake the dust from your feet, not as a call to condemn, but a reminder to not take the negative that the world will throw at you with you...even to the point of shaking the dust from your sandals. If people will not accept the love of God that you show and share, then that's on them. What you did in showing and sharing that love is still incredibly valuable, but if it's not reciprocated, that's just the way it is...for right now. Walk away knowing that even God's son was rejected...and that even in a place where he was rejected lives were still changed forever because he showed and shared the love of his Father.

Look, I get that there's no water mentioned in this story, (the exact opposite in fact as dust is spoken about), but the analogous truth of the matter is that as people of faith, we need to allow that negative water, whatever it is and however it may come, and let it roll off our back like a duck for if we carry it with us the devil begins to invade our thoughts and makes us want to look for ways to condemn another, even to the point of doubting that the next group will be willing to hear, thus creating a self-fulfilling prophecy: we sarcastically doubt that people will receive God's love for what it is...which is able to be felt subconsciously by the one who is receiving the love...and then they end up rejecting us, and seemingly God's love as well, which makes us doubt all the more.

Again, look at the example that Jesus set: he showed and shared God's love; he was rejected; he was amazed at their unbelief; he kept showing and sharing God's love (as we are told that he healed several people who were there). Jesus did not let the dust remain upon him. He brushed it off. He kept showing and sharing: right then and there...no matter what. And people's lives were changed forever!

So, a few questions for you to reflect upon.

First off, what are you showing and sharing with the world? Because like those fireworks that we talked about when we first started chatting, you are necessarily leading in to what comes next in regard to your family, friends, coworkers, and absolutely those people who you will never know their name.

What are you sharing and showing?

Let it be God's love, right now, no matter what.

Which leads into the second question: how is the world's response to you affecting how you share and show with the world? We all know that there are more than a few people who are going to take a smile or a kind word or a helpful gesture and turn it into, 'what are you smiling about?' Happened in Nazareth and it happens today.

Don't let that negativity, that lie of the devil wrap around you and dilute and diffuse what you share and show. Like water off a duck, shake the negative dust off even your feet and keep sharing and showing God's love: it will take root somewhere, somehow, with someone ('...except that he laid his hands on a few sick people and cured them'). Those lives were changed forever...and it feels like an afterthought in the midst of these verses. It's not: it's at the very heart of the thought!

Jesus kept showing and sharing, right then and there, no matter what. That's what he showed to those who rejected him. That's what he instructed his disciples to do...and that's what we are called to do.

So what are you showing and sharing? Let it be of God right here and right now and don't let the negativity stop you: because that love will cascade into the life of someone somewhere allowing their life to shine that much brighter in a world that can feel as dark as the night sky.

Sow and share the love of God right here, right now and don't let anything stop you. God will change the lives of people around you...even though you may never know.

After Sermon Prayer

Holy God, it can be so easy to operate out of a place of bitterness, brokenness and upset. And yet, that is not the example that we were shown by the one whom we know as Lord and Savior. Help us to follow the example he set and share and show Your love right now, no matter what. It is in his name that we do pray. Amen.