

Sermon 4 July 2021

Good Morning All;

I trust you all keeping well. We have just heard that Iven's wife has Covid and is in the Modimole hospital. Please pray for all those who have Covid and also for those who have lost loved ones.

As you all know the President has closed us down for two weeks after which it will be re-evaluated. The Limpopo Synod has said we will be closed till the end of July after which they will make a decision of when to re open the churches.

The Two Kinds Of People

Mark 6:1-13

The Bible tells us that there are really two kinds of people in this world. Those who are lost and those who have been found. Those living in darkness and those who are living in the light. Those who are God's enemies and those who are His friends. Those who are dead and those who have been made alive. From the outside we may not be able to see to which of these groups a person belongs to, but God looks into our hearts. God knows our deepest thoughts and can see to which group we belong.

The Bible tell us that which group a person is in, is determined by their response to Jesus Christ. John's gospel high lights this when it says “He was in the world, and though the world was made through Him, the world did not recognise Him. He came to that which was his own, but His own did not receive Him. To those who believed in His name, He gave the right to become the children of God – children born not of natural descent, or of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.” What a disappointment it must have been to Jesus, that so many simply rejected Him.

In Mark 6:1 “Jesus left there and went to his home town, accompanied by his disciples. When the Sabbath came, he began to teach in the Synagogue, and many who heard him were amazed.” But not amazed enough to put their trust in Him. Because there in His Home town of Nazareth, those people thought they new everything about Him. They were too blind to see. And it is the same today. Some people know the Bible stories. They have come to church every week, they have become theologians and still end up rejecting Him. It is possible to know all about Jesus without ever having a relationship with Him as Lord and Saviour.

“Where did this man get these things?” they asked. “What's this wisdom that he has been given, that he even does miracles!” Those people in Nazareth recognised His power, His wisdom, His authority. But they failed to recognise who Jesus really was. Maybe they were actually refusing to recognise Him as the Son of God. They refused to recognise that Jesus' wisdom and power came from God. Like people today who acknowledge Jesus to be a great moral teacher but ignore the claims He was made to be much more than that. To be the light of the world and to be the resurrected Son of

God. Claims like “I am the way, the truth and the life. No-one comes to the Father except through me.” Some of the people asked if this was the carpenter. Some of Jesus' neighbours dismissed His teaching because he wasn't an educated Rabbi. He was after all only a carpenter. “Isn't this Mary's son and the brother of James, Joseph, Judas and Simon? Aren't His sisters here with us?” Perhaps here are signs of envy. People who couldn't believe their childhood friend had turned out to be so much more Perhaps it was pride, people were too proud to admit that they needed saving by Mary's son , the carpenter. Jesus said to them, “Only in His home town, among his relatives and in his own house is a prophet without honour.” He could not do any miracles there, except lay His hands on a few sick people to heal them. He was amazed at their lack of faith. How could anyone reject God's love and mercy? How could they reject the Saviour of the world.

Jesus left Nazareth and never went back again. The people of Nazareth had had their opportunity to accept Him, but had refused to believe in Him. He went around teaching from village to village. “He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him.”

The People Who Receive Jesus.

Verse 12 says “Yet to all who receive him, to those who believe in his name, he gave the right to become the children of God, children not born of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.” When we receive Jesus, God gives so many blessings. God forgives our sins and takes our guilt away. He turns us from being enemies to be His friends. God gives us eternal life, life in all its fullness. All these blessings are for those who receive Him and believe in His name.

In Mark's Gospel the twelve show us what it is like when people put their trust in Jesus. This passage shows us four marks of people who receive Jesus as Saviour and Lord.

1 They Obey God

In Verse 7 He calls the 12 disciples to Him and sends them out two by two and gives them authority over the evil spirits.

So many people spend their lives running away from God and hoping He does not exist. So many people ignore the things God has revealed in his word, the Bible like the 10 Commandments, The great commandment, “Love the Lord your God with your heart and with your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind” and, “love your neighbour as yourself” . So many people want to live their lives their own way. If we are following Jesus what we want, must come second and what God wants must come first. This meant that the apostles were being sent out on a dangerous mission to preach the gospel. God calls Christians to step out of their comfort zones and to take His love into a hurting world. People who have received Jesus will obey that call, whatever the cost and that takes faith.

2. They Trust God

The disciples received the following instructions: “Take nothing for the journey except a staff, no bread, no bag, no money in your belts. Wear sandals but not an extra tunic. Whenever you enter a house, stay there until you leave that town. And 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.”

In stepping out in faith the disciples were trusting God to provide everything they would need. So many people in today’s world spend their lives chasing after luxuries. Bigger cars, the newest iPhone etc. and in the end, end up disillusioned. Jesus promises to give his followers “Life in all its fullness” which comes in the love and joy and peace of knowing God. God does not promise us luxuries, but does invite us to trust Him for all necessities of life.

Ps 37 says “Trust in the Lord and do good; dwell in the land and enjoy safe pastures. Delight yourself in the Lord and he will give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to the Lord; trust in him”. In obedience to Jesus the disciples stepped out in faith, And here is the third mark of those who have received Jesus as Saviour and Lord.

3. They Preach The Gospel

Verse 12 tell us that the disciples went out and preached that the people should repent. They had a life and death message. While the people in Nazareth had rejected Jesus there were other villages that had not yet heard the good news of Jesus, the Saviour of the world. The gospel is an announcement, its not an offer, it not a debate. The gospel Is an announcement that Jesus has come, and that Christ is the Lord of all. The announcement is so earthly shattering that it demands a response from every one of us who hear it. Jesus is the Christ , the son of the living Lord. So repent and believe. Repentance is the only suitable response to the gospel of Jesus Christ. Peter was still preaching the same message on the day of Pentecost. In Acts 2:38 Peter replied, “ Repent and be baptised, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.” God promises forgiveness and eternal life and the gift of the indwelling Holy Spirit. This is the gospel the church still preaches today. It is God gift of rescuing men and woman from death and judgement. This is a life transforming message for all of us who have received Jesus, to continue to proclaim.

The story is told of an eye surgeon who set up his practice in London but had no clients. One day he met a blind man who was poor and would never be able to pay for the simple eye operation he needed. The surgeon operated anyway and that the man regained his sight. “How can I ever repay you?” the man asked. “I don’t want money” the surgeon replied, “Just tell everybody you meet who it was that made you able to see again” In the same way, Christians want to tell everybody about Jesus because we

are so grateful for all He has done for us. We obey God, we trust God, we preach the gospel This brings us to the fourth point which is true of the people who have received Jesus is this,

4. God works in their Lives.

Verse 13 says, “They drove out many demons and anointed many sick people with oil and healed them.” This is what the disciples did. We can call upon the name of Jesus Christ to still drive out demons and to set people free from the grip of evil. In the name of Jesus sick people are still healed in mind body and spirit. Every believer can pray to God in Jesus' name and expect God to answer their prayers. God works in amazing ways in the lives of those who receive Jesus and believe in His name.

The Bible tells us that there are two kinds of people. Those who believe in Jesus and those who reject Him. Which group are you in? God's free gift of eternal life which Jesus offers, is not just some optional extra to make life a bit more exciting or a bit more comfortable. What Jesus offers is God's way to escape judgement which everyone of us face if we reject God. Jesus is like the ladder at the window of the blazing building. Jesus is the lifeboat from the sinking ship. If we do not take the way of escape we are doomed. This is the message the disciples went out and preached. This is the message which all of us who have received Jesus as Lord and Saviour must take out to all those around us.

Amen