

**St Michael's Woburn Sands - Sermon for
Sunday 5 July 2021 – 2 Samuel 5: 1 – 5, 9 – 10;
Mark 6: 1 -13**

I wonder what it means to you to come home? Or what it might have meant when you were younger? Perhaps there was an expectation of welcome, security, familiarity, acceptance - of a warm interest in whatever you had been doing away. Perhaps that expectation was met – or perhaps it was not. Having been away at boarding school, then at University, and then moving away to work, I have many memories of homecomings as a child and young adult. But as my parents got older, I realized that when I got home there was no point in rushing in with my agenda, the things I wanted to talk about. I had to fit in with my parents' interests. At least at first, I had to let them tell me what had been happening in their world. They couldn't quite adjust to my very different life. For them, in some ways, I was always the child. Now when my own grown up children come home I try hard to give them the space to be the adults that they are.

Jesus had come home, and He was disappointed. Not necessarily by his close family. But certainly by others who knew him in Nazareth. He too probably met with unspoken assumptions that he would fit into the old life, be who he used to be. Because they thought they knew Him so well, people couldn't accept or digest who He had become. For them, He was Jesus the carpenter, the son of Mary. But Jesus had moved on. He had been affirmed by God at His baptism as 'the beloved', the Son of God. He had started a new life proclaiming the kingdom of God and was pursuing it with power and with urgency. Jesus refuses to be the person he used to be and is amazed that they can't accept who He now is. It must have been a low moment for Him.

So, how does Jesus react to His disappointment in his home town? He moves on, continuing to teach in the villages in Galilee around the town of Nazareth. And He also moves His ministry to a new stage. The twelve have heard him teach, have seen the miracles and the healings. Now it's their turn. Time to move from watching and

learning to action and trying it for themselves. They were far from perfect. They were very ordinary people – several of them fishermen from Lake Galilee. They didn't have degrees in theology or medicine or anything much beyond their skills as working men. And they were far from perfect disciples as Mark's Gospel has already showed. They didn't understand his teaching (Mark 4:10), but needed extra explanation of the parables. They didn't trust in His power to keep them safe in stormy waters (Mark 4: 38 – 40). They didn't recognize that he had extraordinary extra powers of perception (Mark 5: 31) – that he knew when healing power has gone out from him. Of course they didn't know the end of the story of His life, death and resurrection as we do. And yet, Jesus sends them out to tell people to say sorry to God for their sins, to heal and to cast out demons.

There comes a moment for all of us when the training and the theory stage is over and we need to put things into practice for real. It's when the trainer wheels come off and you have

the exhilaration of 'going solo'. I didn't have trainer wheels on my bike, but I do remember the first time I drove – on my own - after passing my test. I only went a mile down the road to the park. I could have walked! But I was terrified. And what a sense of elation, achievement and relief when I got safely home again! I'm sure you all have your own memories of scary first-time experiences. Those 'fly or die' moments when the baby bird jumps – or is pushed – out of the nest.

Jesus doesn't send out the disciples with very much in terms of resources – in fact He specifically tells them not to take much with them. He gives them authority for their task, and they are to rely on Him. They obey and they go out with the message. The tangible sign that God's power is with them as they speak is that they also cast out many demons and cure many sick people. Despite all their failings, despite all that they do not know or fully understand they are faithful to Jesus; their mission succeeds; and how much their faith and confidence must have grown.

Our collect this morning which we prayed at the beginning of the service contains these words: “hear our prayer which we offer for all your faithful people, that in their vocation and ministry they may serve you in holiness and truth to the glory of your name;”

“all your faithful people”. We all have a vocation and ministry to serve God. Jesus sends us all out, just as he sent out the 12. We’re not all called to do the same things or to be exactly like the 12. Thank goodness we’re not all alike! But we all have a calling to fulfil. It may not always be the same. These things can change over time. I wonder what yours is right now?

And, as we think about St Michael’s mission to the community around us here – how do we unlock all that power? God wants to work through us, his body on earth. It’s our job now to spread the kingdom. We’ll never feel good enough or clever enough or ready – so maybe it’s time to just be bold and get the trainer

wheels off! Ask God what He wants you to do – this week!

I’m going to finish with a little poem.

“Come to the edge,” he said.

“We can’t, we’re afraid!” they responded.

“Come to the edge,” he said.

“We can’t, We will fall!” they responded.

“Come to the edge,” he said.

And so they came.

And he pushed them.

And they flew.”

Amen

Revd Diana Young 2 July 2021