

## Wesley United Methodist Church

July 5, 2015

"Rejected at Home."

Mark 6:1-6

A true story: many years ago there was a young girl who heard the call of God early in her life and, since there were no female pastors, she decided to become a nun. When she questioned her pastor about it, he only replied that she couldn't be a nun as she was not catholic. However, a professor of archaeology who lived in her small town and in whom she confided in, encouraged her to become a missionary. So, the two went off to solicit the approval and support of her parents. That was shot down quick as her father decided that her missionary years were to be fulfilled in the family's cow barn.

Six years were a long time to serve as a missionary in the family's cow barn... And during those years she enjoyed life in that small town where girls were supposed to do girls' things...she did everything she wasn't supposed to do as a girl. Such as, going swimming in the creek, taking up gymnastics, track and field and winning more than one fast track award, and riding her brother's motorcycle. She developed an attitude that said, "What's good for the gander is good for the goose." and she lived it. Well, she raised a little hell, put the bloomin town on the map and people took notice, of course.

As God is in control, he found ways to keep that call in front of her and years later he made sure that she had the chance to serve him. Fast forward about twenty-five years and the girl came back to her home town for a visit. People learned that she was now a pastor serving a church. The question that was asked often, "What! You're, a pastor? How did that happen? ha

It's hard to impress the people at home, isn't it? The whole world may be singing your praises, but at home, folks see you as the kid with the two left feet or the wild and crazy girl who changed her little world by being herself.

Jesus was enjoying unparalleled success all around Galilee. Large crowds were coming to hear him teach and to experience his healing power. But it was time for a little R&R. So he headed back to his hometown of Nazareth, accompanied by his disciples. When the Sabbath came, he began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard him were amazed. "Where did this man get these things?" they asked. "What's this wisdom that has been given him, and that he even does miracles! Isn't this the carpenter? Isn't this Mary's son and the brother of James, Joseph, Judas and Simon? Aren't his sisters here with us?" And, Mark tells us, "they took offense at him." Jesus said to them, "Only in his hometown, among his relatives and in his own house is a prophet without honor." He could not do a miracle there, Mark continues, "except lay his hands on a few sick people and heal them. And he was amazed at their lack of faith."

Jesus was an embarrassment not only to his hometown, but also to his own family. Earlier in Mark's Gospel we read these words, "Then Jesus entered a house, and again a crowd gathered, so that he and his disciples were not even able to eat. When his family heard about this, they went to take charge of him, for they said, 'He is out of his mind.'" (Mark 3:20-21)

Think your family doesn't appreciate you? Welcome to the club. Jesus wasn't appreciated either. His own family thought he was out of his mind. After his death and resurrection Jesus' mother and brothers were very active in the leadership of the church, but when he first began his ministry, they were not supportive.

Comedian Rodney Dangerfield made a career out of not getting any respect--from his wife, from his kids, from his parents. He said, "I don't get any respect. My father carries around the picture of the kid who came with his wallet." It happens in families, in communities, in the workplace, in churches. No respect.

Some time ago when I was trying to fix a little glass angel, I glued my right index finger to the wing with the super-adhesive glue I was using. I tried to free it by tugging and waving it, but I couldn't budge my finger. Soon I located some solvent that did the job and ended my moment of crisis.

When I served a small church in Michigan I visited a new family and the father of the family introduced his children: 'This is Pete. He's the clumsy one of the lot.' 'That's Kathy coming in with mud on her shoes. She's the sloppy one.' 'As always, Mike is last. He'll be late for his own funeral, I promise you.'

I was thinking about this introduction and realized that the dad did a thorough job of gluing his children to their faults and mistakes. People do it all the time. They remind us of our failures, our errors, our sins, and they won't let us live them down. There are people who try desperately to free themselves from their past. They would love a chance to begin again. When we don't let people forget their past, when we don't forgive,

we glue them to their mistakes and refuse to see them as more than something they have done. We need to realize that the past is the past...just that...over and done with.

Jesus obviously didn't have anything that needed forgiving...but the people in his community would not let him forget that he was the carpenter's son. In their minds he was still one of the neighborhood brats...not somebody to be taken seriously.

We understand that, don't we? What is it they say? An expert is someone who's fifty miles from home. The interesting thing is that Jesus could not do any miracles there...except lay his hands on a few sick people and heal them. But that did not deter him from achieving his purpose in life. He "was amazed at their lack of faith," but it did not slow him down. He knew who he was. He knew why he was there...to serve God...and he gave himself completely to the task at hand.

Henry Ford once said something quite encouraging to those of us who may not feel appreciated. He was speaking of his car, the Model-T, all of which came in the same color and style. His words still ring true. He said, "All Fords are exactly alike, but no two [people] are just alike. Every new life is a new thing under the sun; there has never been anything just like it before, and never will be again. A young [person] ought to get that idea about himself; he should look for the single spark of individuality that makes him different from other folks, and develop that for all he's worth. Society and schools may try to iron it out of him; their tendency is to put us all in the same mold, but I say, 'Don't let that spark be lost, it's your only real claim to importance.'"

That's a good word for us all. We may not be getting the positive strokes at home that we feel we deserve, but that need not keep us from being all we can be. There's a man hanging on a cross who was rejected by his own family, his own town, his own nation. But he saved the world. And he says to us, "Keep the faith. You are a unique creation of the living God. Let no one tell you that you are of little worth. You are of ultimate value to my Father. You are so valuable that I died to save you."