

Wednesday 03.02.21

Mark 6, 1-6

May I speak in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

In our gospel reading today, Jesus has returned home and is teaching in his local synagogue. Those who hear Him are amazed at His wisdom and His works. And their response? They take offence. They acknowledge His great wisdom, and His power to perform miracles, but this does not stop them mocking His lowly status. Really? *His* lowly status? They refer to Him as “the carpenter” and “the Son of Mary.”

They were calling into doubt his legitimacy, which was particularly insulting in those days. Now we know that Jesus was in his 30's when this happened – it is possible that Mary expected to be talked about until the next scandal happened than everyone would forget all about Jesus' unique conception. Here we are, 3 decades later, and Jesus is *Mary's* son.

They saw Jesus as an illegitimate manual worker, and the facts were not going to get in the way of their opinions!

Mark tells us “He could do no miracles there but healed the few who came to Him.” So, He healed those who came to him, but that wasn't a miracle? Possibly the hostility towards Jesus affected Mark, too, so that he downplayed the healings.

We are told, “Because of their unbelief, He could do no miracles there” and that statement is open to mis-interpretation. Jesus miraculously healed everyone who came to Him..... In Nazareth, that was very few people. Our unbelief does not affect Jesus' ability to heal, it affects our willingness to go to Jesus in humility and ask for healing. If we do not believe that God is, and is a

rewarder of those who seek Him, as Hebrews 11 v 6 tell us, then we are not going to pray to Him.

We can approach Jesus in prayer having the wrong opinion of Him, like the men in the synagogue who “knew” Jesus was a manual labourer of doubtful parentage who did amazing healing and delivering miracles. James ch 4 v 3 warns “when you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives,, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.” This is using God like a celestial vending machine, you put a set number of prayers in, and the situation of your choice falls into your lap. We can be selfish without having the self-realisation to recognize our own selfishness. Our shortcomings do not alter the relationship that God wants to have with us.

Sometimes our relationship with our Heavenly Father reflects the relationship we had with our human fathers – this can be spiritually damaging, as the Childrens’ Society and the N S P C C can attest to some very negligent parenting techniques. A lot of people believe that God exists and that it is better to not bother Him, because He is busy!