

(B14) SUNDAY 14 OF THE YEAR

(JULY 4<sup>TH</sup>, 2021)

**Readings:** *Ezekiel 2: 2 – 5; Psalm 122 (123); 2 Corinthians 12: 7 – 10; Mark 6: 1 – 6.*

Today's Gospel Reading brings to an end a section of Mark in which the wisdom and the power of Jesus have been demonstrated. He has taught about the Kingdom of God in parables, and he has performed mighty works. Now he returns to his home town, which Mark understands to be Nazareth, and is invited to teach in the synagogue. It's like a young priest being invited back to preach in the parish where he was brought up.

At first the congregation are rather excited – they've heard of the things Mark has recorded in the earlier chapters, and they wonder where the young rabbi gained his wisdom and the power to work miracles. But then they grow critical: who does he think he is? He's the local builder, whose mother, brothers and sisters still live here. So, despite what they've heard, *they would not accept him*. Jesus is following a long line of rejected prophets: the Old Testament is full of stories of those whose words from God have been rejected by their hearers. Today's Old Testament reading tells of the experience of just one – Ezekiel – and today's psalm is the prayer of a good man who sees those like him met with *the scorn of the rich* and the *disdain of the proud*.

The result is that here, *in his own country, among his own relations and in his own house*, Jesus is unable to exercise his power. Those whose healing has been recorded in the earlier chapters have all responded to Jesus in faith. Here he meets such a deep lack of faith that – despite the experience of earlier prophets – he is *amazed*.

From this point it seems that Jesus gave up the attempt to convince the people by teaching in the synagogues. Instead, he goes about the countryside teaching wherever he can. And – as we shall hear next week – he sends his twelve closest followers out to extend as widely as possible the teaching and the healing, which are the signs of the Kingdom of God.

So, this event brings one stage of the ministry of Jesus to an end and prepares us for the next, which continues until the middle of chapter 8. (*As our reading of Mark will be interrupted for six weeks by John's account of the feeding of 5000 and the teaching on the Bread of Life, we shan't reach chapter 8 until September*)

Pray for the strengthening of our faith in the wisdom and power of Jesus.