

Lent Day 13
Wednesday February 24, 2016

Reading: Mark 6.1-6

Jesus left there and went to his hometown, 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? What are these remarkable miracles he is performing? 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 they took offense at him. Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not without honor except in his own town, among his relatives and in his own home." He could not do any miracles there, except lay his hands on a few sick people and heal them. He was amazed at their lack of faith. Then Jesus went around teaching from village to village.

Reflection

They say the technology that comes out today is already outdated before it's out. For this reason our culture has become junkies of the newest thing. People line up for the newest iPhone because their old one isn't the new one. The old saying, "familiarity breeds contempt," is certainly true of us. The shadow side of this pursuit of the new is the disdain for the old. Old, customary, tradition have become suspect and put aside as irrelevant and unhelpful.

I think this parallels our attitude around Christian practices. We have bought into this newest thing mentality in our churches where the old is ejected because it's old. This perspective bleeds into our daily Christian lives. How can anything that was done 2,000 years ago be helpful to us today?! We still want our lives transformed and conformed but God must use ever new means to do it by!

Jesus' home town people are ready for a hero, ready for God's Messiah. What they get though is a local boy – they know this kid. He comes from ordinary stock. He comes from here! How can he be what they have been hoping for? No, the real Messiah's are from more important places, with better backgrounds and classier families. Jesus wasn't limited in what he could do because they didn't believe. Rather, because they didn't believe they didn't come to him except for a few who were willing to believe him.

If we want our lives transformed and conformed we have to untie God's hands. John Wesley, founder of the Methodist renewal movement kept going back to Scripture and the early church to learn what practices were helpful for real transformations in the life of his people. His conclusion was anything new is heretical, only what was there from the beginning is good. God has given us a whole world of practices: Corporate worship, public preaching, regular communion, Scripture reading, prayer, fasting, caring for the poor, etc. If we want true transformation we need to receive the old gifts of God with joy rather than taking offense at them.

Prayer

God of old, save us from the idolatry from the new and give us the wisdom to look for good in the old. Let us make use of the treasures old and new. In all this transform us to be your people and receive you with joy so we might be saved. Amen.