

God sufficient

Mark 6.1-13

Many people are impressed by Jesus' teaching and deeds. Some, however, question his authority and appear to reject him and his ministry. Jesus sends out the disciples to extend his ministry, telling them that they will be received well by some but rejected by others – just as he himself was. It proved to be a risk worth taking.

Now read **Mark 6.1-13** see p.2 for text.

A note on the passage

The disciples learn by observation that following Jesus is not without risk, even though they trust him. Jesus implies that they may not always be well received. To do what Jesus asks, they have to make themselves vulnerable and take risks. Are we willing to take risks to spread the good news of the gospel?



Ask yourself: What might help you to remain in the right place to grow?

Morning Reflection

Each morning, think about what lies ahead that day. Ask yourself: Will I be in any challenging situations? Am I prepared to meet them with courage? How can I feel more prepared to meet those challenges? Risk is part of life, we cannot avoid it altogether; but perhaps we can anticipate and prepare for its likely impact. Jesus promised to be with his disciples, and with us, by his Spirit. Ask God to give you a true sense of his presence, in order to be courageous and strong in any difficulties today.

ROLE PLAY

People attending a church for the first time are often discouraged because nobody spoke to them. Regular attenders sometimes fear they will offend someone by doing so (e.g. by not recognising a longstanding church member). Explore this by acting it out with a few others (in person or online, as appropriate). Try to imagine different ways in which people may be approached and how they might react. Does this give you confidence to risk saying 'hello' to any newcomers you meet in future?



Make a spider diagram with the word 'risk!' at the centre, and feelings associated with risky behaviour on the legs. This could be a good activity to do together; people of all ages can express how it feels to attempt something scary. There may be a range of contrasting emotions such as fear, excitement, anxiety, exhilaration. Add as many legs as you wish.



We have become more accustomed to living with risk during the pandemic. However, it is often said that society gets ever more 'risk averse', perhaps from fear of blame or litigation. Those who plan activities now expect to carry out risk assessments. Imagine you are going out – e.g. to a theme park or to the seaside. Write a list of possible risks and how you can minimise them. Does doing this make you feel more anxious or less so?

How do you think the disciples felt as they set out on the challenge Jesus gave them? Do you think it helped them to have a good idea of what lay ahead, or might it have put them off? What risks will you take to reach out to others this week? Think of practical and achievable examples that you might try – e.g. start with giving a smile or a hello to someone you don't (yet) know.

LISTEN

Listen to a version of 'Who would true valour see', perhaps that by Maddy Prior. Think about people who live and work in dangerous occupations and those who live risky lives, either through their own behaviour or through the actions of others, and ask God to protect them today.

www.youtube.com/watch?v=EiSxSZ0s0AQ



Choose a version of the passage to read. The first is the ROOTS version for children, the second is the NRSV text which may be suitable for older children, young people and adults.

Jesus came to his home town of Nazareth. On the sabbath, he began to teach in the synagogue and many people who heard him were amazed at what he was saying. They said to each other, 'Isn't this the carpenter? Mary's son? His brothers and sisters are here too. How did he get wisdom from God? And how can he do miracles?' They were angry with Jesus for coming to the synagogue to teach them.

Jesus said, 'People who speak God's truth are respected, but not in their home town or even in their own family.' And he could do no miracles there, except he did lay his hands on a few sick people and cure them. And he was amazed at their unbelief.

Jesus went out into the villages to teach people. He called his twelve disciples together and sent them out, two by two, to the villages. He gave them authority over the unclean spirits. He told them to take nothing extra with them to make their journey easier – like bread, or a bag, or money – but to rely on the people they stayed with to look after them.



He said, 'Whenever you enter a house, stay there until you leave the place. If any place will not welcome you, if they refuse to listen, as you leave, shake off the dust that is on your feet as a sign that they have ignored you.' So they went out and proclaimed that all should repent. They cast out many unclean spirits, and anointed many sick people with oil and cured them.

Mark 6.1-13

Did you know?

- Sabbath is a day of rest and prayer for Jews from Friday night to Saturday night; a synagogue is a Jewish place of worship.
- Repent means saying sorry to God for what you have done; having a change of heart.

Mark 6.1-13 (NRSV)

Jesus left that place and came to his home town, and his disciples followed him. On the sabbath he began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard him were astounded. They said, 'Where did this man get all this? What is this wisdom that has been given to him? What deeds of power are being done by his hands! Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary and brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon, and are not his sisters here with us?' And they took offence at him. Then Jesus said to them, 'Prophets are not without honour, except in their home town, and among their own kin, and in their own house.' And he could do no deed of power there, except that he laid his hands on a few sick people and cured them. And he was amazed at their unbelief.

Then he went about among the villages teaching. He called the twelve and began to send them out two by two, and gave them authority over the unclean spirits. He ordered them to take nothing for their journey except a staff; no bread, no bag, no money in their belts; but to wear sandals and not to put on two tunics. He said to them, 'Wherever you enter a house, stay there until you leave the place. If any place will not welcome you and they refuse to hear you, as you leave, shake off the dust that is on your feet as a testimony against them.' So they went out and proclaimed that all should repent. They cast out many demons, and anointed with oil many who were sick and cured them.