

Sermon preached by Rev. Chris Moroney at the Healing Service at St. Andrew's Cathedral, Sydney on
Wednesday 24th January 2007. Reading: Mark 6:1-13
Topic: "Trust Jesus with Your Life"

It is hard to know who to trust in life. Often it will depend on how we have grown up. If we have had a family of trustworthy, reliable people around us, we will probably find it easy to trust people. And from time to time we may be disappointed, but in the end, our hope springs eternal because of our childhood experiences. On the other hand if we have grown up in a family where people did not keep their promises, they betrayed us and hurt us deeply, then we will find it very difficult to trust people at all. From time to time we may be pleasantly surprised that people have kept their word, or gone out of their way to be faithful to us. But even that will not stop us being suspicious of people in general. And the more outlandish or extreme the promises that people make to us, the more suspicious we will be naturally. If someone offered to pay off all your debts in one fell swoop, no questions asked, you would want to know: what's the catch?

If someone told you about a person who could forgive all your sins and give you eternal life, you would want to know: what's the catch.

But that is exactly the claim that we make about the Lord Jesus Christ. And people still ask: but what's the catch?

How can I really know that I can trust Jesus with my life? Friends, it has much more to do with the character of Jesus, than it does even with our trust levels.

It doesn't really matter if you believe in Jesus just a little or with absolute unshakeable faith, what matters is that you trust Jesus with your life.

But how can you do that? By coming to grips with who Jesus is, not just from a worldly point of view, but more importantly, from God's point of view.

1 WHO IS JESUS?

This passage in Mark's gospel gives us a number of instances of different responses to Jesus, or different assessments of who he appeared to be a number of people. This passage puts the question to us: what do we think of Jesus? What difference will that make to your life, to your prayers and to your health and to your eternal destiny. Jesus had been away from home for some time. In Mark 1:9 we read that Jesus had left his hometown of Nazareth in the region of Galilee. He had grown up there. When he was around 30 years old, he left home and started his ministry.

He preached and taught God's word about the coming Kingdom of God. He gathered around him 12 apostles. He healed many people and drove demons out of stacks of people. He was bringing in the kingdom and driving back the forces of evil. Everywhere he went people were glad to hear him.

They brought their friends and relatives with sicknesses and demons to Jesus and he healed them they did not always know who he really was, but they were willing to ask for his help till they figured out a little more. IN chapter 5 he healed a demon possessed man, and brought about a dramatic change in that man's life. He healed a woman who had a flow of blood for 12 years and he raised Jairus' daughter from the dead.

- **Being at home** But when he goes back to Nazareth with his new group of followers, the 12 apostles, there is no parade and there is no adulation from the crowd.

You would think that when the English cricket team left to come to Australia for the Ashes tour some weeks ago, someone would have had the job of making a booking for a double decker bus with an open top, for a sunny day in early February. Because would have been celebrating their victory had they won the Ashes all preparations would have been undertaken. I understand that any temporary bookings have since been cancelled.

Jesus comes home to Nazareth after his successful tour with his cricket team of 12 apostles and what is the result?

- **Teaching** It is important to note how Jesus operates.

His regular and first priority is to teach people.

We honour him best when we sit at his feet too and learn from him through the scriptures.

Jesus undertakes his regular pattern of attending the synagogue and expounding the scriptures. People are both impressed and puzzled.

- **Reaction** Jesus always provokes a reaction from people. It is very hard to know something about Jesus and remain neutral. He is either the one who you learn to love or the one you love to hate. In the same way that people reacted to Jesus then, we should not be surprised that people have the same strong reactions today.

- **Positive (V2)** They could not argue with his teaching. It was pretty good. They wondered if he had got someone else's notes. Maybe he had learnt a few tricks while he was away. They could not or would not believe that he himself was the source of such wisdom and power to heal. They rejected the idea that he was the king in God's kingdom, driving back the forces of evil in terms of both teaching the truth and bringing restoration. They refused to accept him as the promised Messiah, even the very positive evidence was staring them in the face.

- **Negative (V3)** Here we have some of the most interesting and controversial verses in the New Testament. The basic issue is that he is just a man, behaving like he is God's answer to man's dilemma. He could not have come down from heaven. He is the one who repaired my roof. He is the one who built my house. He is under B for Builder in the Yellow Pages. He is the Carpenter! He is just like us. He is one of us. I went to school with his brothers and sisters. See how human he is. How can he be God's son, the Messiah, the promised king. Jesus is the eldest son of Mary and Joseph. They had many other children. Notice too what it says about Mary. Jesus was her first born son. The virgin Mary was only a virgin for the conception of the Lord Jesus, by the Holy Spirit. Joseph her husband was the father of the other children in the normal way. Mary was not a perpetual virgin, and should not be worshipped as such. As we read here that they misunderstood the person of Jesus as both God and Man, so many people today have misunderstood Mary as much more than the mother of Jesus and the mother of James and Joseph and Judas and Simon as well as the sisters in the family.

- **General (V4)** Jesus tells them the general proverbial saying. It has been common practice, that prophets speak the word of God and most people take them seriously, except at home. In his own region, among his relatives and in his own immediate family. We would say that familiarity breeds contempt. Even here in Australia we have the tall poppy syndrome.

We find it difficult if one of our number, gets too big for his own boots. Jesus is rejected by those who were closest to him when he was growing up.

It was ever thus.

- **Result (V5)** Their rejection of Jesus did not mean that he could not do any mighty works there. It was his decision. They lacked faith in Jesus. They would not have come forward and asked for his help. They say him as just a man, so why should they expect anything special from him. Jesus had already said and done enough for them to believe in him. He was staggered that they would not and could not take him at his word. He should not be surprised. He knew that he had come and would be rejected. We need to be aware ourselves, that there are people still today who know about Jesus, but regard him only as a man. Therefore they will not join us in praying to him or singing him praises. We must not take it personally. If people were not persuaded by Jesus himself don't be surprised that there are still those around us who also fail to believe. It always takes the work of the Holy Spirit to break through our stubbornness and bring us to faith, once we have looked at the evidence.

We ourselves should be people who put our faith in the Lord Jesus as we look to him for forgiveness and for healing in various ways. But notice that Jesus did not throw in the towel.

And he went about among the villages teaching. As we began this section, we end this section with Jesus teaching.

2 WHAT IS THE MISSION?

In verses 7-13 Jesus sends out his 12 disciples on a mission.

It is to announce the coming of the King in God's kingdom.

It is a demonstration of the power that is coming with the king. It is a call to change allegiances.

- **The time?** WE must remember that this is not an Aesop's fable. It does not begin with once upon a time. It is the mission to the lost sheep of Israel. It is an urgent mission to help people know that the Messiah has arrived. It is a little like to call of John the Baptist in calling people to repent and be baptized as preparation for the coming judgement of God in the person of the Messiah. The authority comes from Jesus. (V7) authority over unclean spirits. The judgement of Satan has begun.

- **The urgency** It is to be a short term mission. They are to travel lightly. (V 8-9)

- **The responses** Jesus anticipates that there will be those who accept and those who reject the messengers of the King (V10) those who accept the messengers will put them up while they do their mission in that place. (V11) Those who reject the messengers will bring God's judgement on themselves. This is the situation where no-one in the town will take them in and give them food and clothing and bed and breakfast. Not one family. They are to treat them like a part of a pagan territory, even though they are in Jewish territory. The dirt of a pagan land was regarded as unclean and would make you unclean. IN shaking off the dust you are saying symbolically that the town is a pagan town. This would be a great insult to a Jewish town as you can imagine.

But once again we have the theme coming through: people will make up their minds about Jesus, one way or another. And even to be neutral, to do nothing, is to show a lack of faith, to reject the messenger and to reject the saving work of the Lord Jesus.

- **The message** (V12)

So they went out and proclaimed that people should repent. It was a simple message, a common message among the prophets. Turn around. Turn back to God. You know the way you should be living. And you know the way you are living now. Make the change. Do the maths. You are under his judgement. The king has come to bring God's judgement and remove the power of Satan and condemn all those who persist in following him. Repentance is still the message today.

God shows his love for us in this while we were still sinners Christ died for us. We are all under God's condemnation. Out of his love for us God the Father sent his son into the world, that we might be saved through him, but we need to change sides and put our faith him Jesus and his death in our place. Then we can know God's forgiveness and his grace in our lives.

Have you given up your life of sin and self and turned to God in repentance and faith?

If you are looking for God to do a mighty work in your life you have to come in repentance first.

And even though we may have become Christians many years ago there are always things in our lives that need to be brought before our Heavenly Father as part of our ongoing repentance.

What are the things you and I need to turn away from tonight?

What areas in our lives need to be more committed to God's pattern for us day by day?

- **The impact**

See how they showed the power of Jesus as part of their mission in (V13). This demonstration of the character of the Messiah pointed people to put their faith in him. His kingdom was breaking in to this world and showing his love and grace.

Most of all it pointed to the person of Jesus as the promised Messiah

Now that we know that Jesus has come among us, we can still pray to God through our lord Jesus Christ for him to be at work in our lives, driving back the forces of evil and the ravages of Satan day by day. We will never be free from the effects of the Sin and Satan in this fallen world. But we can always pray to God for his will to be done in our lives. We look to him to do far more than we can ask or imagine.