

6TH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY – PROPER 9

07/08/18

Mount Calvary, West View

EZEKIEL 2: 1-5, II CORINTHIANS 12: 1-10, MARK 6: 1-13

HYMNS: ALLELUIA! LET PRAISES RING LSB #822,

O CHRIST, OUR TRUE AND ONLY LIGHT LSB #839,

O GOD OF LOVE, O KING OF PEACE LSB #751,

GOD BLESS OUR NATIVE LAND LSB #965

Theme: Strong Unbelief Meets Strong Faith

+ Grace be to you and peace from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. AMEN +

Our Text is from St. Mark's Gospel, the 6th Chapter:

He marveled because of their unbelief

Sometimes, I feel like Jesus.

Here in our text we see the very human emotion of Jesus marveling at the unbelief of the people. Sometimes I marvel at the unbelief that I encounter on a fairly regular basis. Whether it be from the news reports, or a second-hand account from a fellow parishioner fighting for the faith, or my very own face-to-face with a person claiming to be a believer, yet when faced with the properness of God's Word, they tell me I'm wrong, call me ignorant, heartless, or any other colorful attributes they assign to myself. Yes, I marvel at the unbelief, and the mental leaps necessary to come up with a belief that is contrary to God's Word. Many times, it takes far more faith to trust in the wrong thing, like say

evolution, than it does to simply take God at His Word, and believe in the six days of creation.

The reaction Jesus is getting in our text is no different than much of the reactions one faces when presenting God's Word today, but there is a little something we might want to notice before we go on. In our text, the people are familiar with Jesus for it is His hometown. When we travel to see Nikkie's dad, there is a modest sign in Wellsburg, mentioning it is the hometown of Lou Holtz. Now I ask, how do you think Mr. Holtz would be received if he were to perform his talent to the masses of Wellsburg? Or better yet, for the Brooke County High School football team? I think many would come and receive him warmly, perhaps even paying an entry fee if necessary to watch him do his God-given talent of molding children into men. Jesus comes to His hometown, where people know Him, and at first, they were in awe at his words, yes, in the same way as the people did when Jesus first started His preaching and teaching. As Mark tells us, *“Many who heard Him were astonished, saying, “Where did this man get these things? What is the wisdom given to Him? How are such mighty works done by His hands?”* When Jesus made the demon come out of the man in the very first chapter of Mark, after He emerged from the wilderness and after choosing His disciples, the people received His miracle as proof that God is among us! They were spreading His fame far and wide!

But the reaction is different with these people. You can't even just say, "Well, that's the pharisees for you," for this is the entire synagogue. Everybody is reacting the

same way! The thing is, they do not reject Jesus because of persecution, as some have done. Nor do they reject Jesus because of difficulties in their daily lives ó no one is threatening them if they accept Jesus as Savior. There is not even a condition of worldly needs to dismiss Jesus, like when the pigs went over the cliff, and they begged Him to leave them alone. No, they just reject Him because they know his family. They reject Him because they expect more from a Savior. They reject the Word of God, simply because it is *Him*. In return, Jesus rejects the people, with the wonderful insight, ***“A prophet is not without honor, except in his hometown and among his relatives and in his own household.”*** He doesn’t get mad, He doesn’t smite them for their unbelief. Jesus came not to condemn the world, but to save it through Him ó through His death and resurrection. Which is why He still ministers to those who did believe and trust in His Words, and were able to receive some healing.

There is a lesson here. Even if there is great opposition to the work of the Gospel, that does not stop you from doing the proper ministry and preaching that Word still. In fact, I encourage you that when faced with strong unbelief, meet it with strong faith! You who are baptized and trusts in the Word presented for you this day, will be able to minister to the fallen, to the misguided, to the world that does not understand the compassion Jesus has to save the lost and condemned. Hear again the words of God to the prophet Ezekiel, ***“And he said to me, “Son of man, I send you to the people of Israel, to nations of rebels, who have rebelled against me. They and their fathers have transgressed against me to this very day. The descendants also are impudent and stubborn: I***

*send you to them, and you shall say to them, 'Thus says the Lord GOD.' And whether they hear or refuse to hear (for they are a rebellious house) they will know that a prophet has been among them.*ö How is this any different from today? We have rebellious and stiff-necked people everywhere, but they still need to hear the comfort that Jesus died on the cross to save them from themselves, and that there is a way to turn from their sinful selves and trust in God above all human reason and strength.

Which is all we really do in living the faith. We do not boast in our ögreatnessö, for we are sinners as much as anyone else. We do boast in the salvation we have in Christ Jesus, Who makes us free from sin and its guilt by the washing of our crimson robes in the blood of the Lamb slain upon the cross. Washing them again as we partake of His very blood to take away all sins and allow us to live a boastful life in His Name!

This world as much as Jesusøhome town needs to hear the wonderful Word of God that He is as forgiving now as He has always been. If there was any doubt, then hear the Word again, ö*And He called the twelve and began to send them out two by two and gave them authority over the unclean spirits.*ö Yes, those who trust in God do have a strong abode! They have authority over the demons that wish to remove you from Godø's mighty care! ö*So, they went out and proclaimed that people should repent. And they cast out many demons and anointed with oil many who were sick and healed them.*ö Strong faith overcomes the strongest of unbelief, for God is in the Word, not me, not you. We do not overcome, God does. Offer Christ Crucified,

and the forgiveness from the cross of Calvary, and you have given all. In our Triune God's Name we pray. **AMEN.**

+ AND NOW MAY THE PEACE OF GOD WHICH SURPASSES ALL UNDERSTANDING KEEP YOUR HEARTS AND MINDS IN UNION WITH CHRIST JESUS OUR LORD. AMEN+

There are only two days on my calendar...today and the day of judgment