

Mark 6:1-13

Read Mark 4:26-34

After what seems like months of work and planning, we can finally say we're here. With being the "**New Kid on the Block**", I'm not sure how many of you have done a lot of moving, however I do know that from what I'm seeing is that you have a number individuals that have spent numerous years, 30, 40, 50 plus years as members here. You are to be commended for your dedication and remaining faithful to Peniel. While you have spent years here, over the past 8 years, my wife Terri and I have moved 5 times over the past 8 years. It's interesting the things you think about when you're moving and getting settled into a new place. You look at what you have accumulated, what's important, what do you want to keep, what can be disposed of, what can be used by others, are there things that have any value and is worth keeping. You have the opportunity to reflect on the trials you've faced, remember your youth and experience the good and challenging times. Sometime you may even think what it would be like to go back to one of those times or places. However, you have to stop and remember what it is that has brought you where you are today, and where you're going.

If we stop and look at today's scripture, we see that Jesus has the opportunity to return home and see those who knew him as a child. The welcome that he received was not as warm as Pastor Terri and I have received from you. For you have opened your arms and worked tirelessly to ensure that we felt welcomed. However, Jesus didn't receive that same welcome. Here was a young man that everyone knew. They knew his mother and earthly father. They knew his brothers and sisters, watched him grow, and knew what type of child he was. It's not written; however, I believe that as a child, Jesus was like most youth, learning the responsibilities that he was expected to do, but also allowed to be a boy.

This time, when he talked, they heard things differently. This was not the young boy that they knew, but someone who spoke with authority as he taught them in the synagogue. Many were amazed. They didn't understand where he obtained all this wisdom, that it wasn't just that little boy anymore, but a young man that they knew was someone whom God anointed, that he was God in the flesh speaking to them. They even took offense to what he was saying and trying to teach them. Teaching them the ways that extended back to the times of King David, on listening to what God has in store for each of us.

It doesn't matter who you are, or where you come from, God can and will use you in ways that you never dreamed possible. As you get to know me, you'll see how true this statement is. I'm no one special. I'm an individual that has finally said that I was going to listen to what God was telling me, and follow his calling, and go make my home where he calls us to go. Now, I'm ready to make our home here in Newport. I'm ready to become involved within this community, let people know who I am, and have everyone know that when I walk down the street, they'll say, "There goes that new Pastor from Peniel". It's my desire to work for God and Peniel while I'm here.

You see I've worked in a number of jobs, a number of them in direct communication with the public. I served as a Police Officer for 5 years, I volunteered with the local Fire Department serving as a front-line officer. I've seen what it's take to try and remain calm while helping those in need during critical times. It was during those times, that I strived to be the person that individuals called when they needed assistance. One of the most challenging situations in working within your home town in those situations, is individuals don't always respect you when time got tough. They kept remembering that snot-nose little kid that they knew growing up, that they saw riding a bicycle down the street, playing little league, getting into mischief with his cousins. They don't understand that you have a job to do. And that it doesn't matter who they think they see, the person that they see now was the one who has been called to do a job. And that's what Jesus faced when he returned to his home town. Those who knew him as a young boy, didn't respect or understand the words that he was teaching.

The words that Jesus taught were the same words that had been taught for years. Some of the teaching may have included our Old Testament reading of how David became King over Israel. But the story of David's ascent to authority was different. Instead of being badgered like Jesus and rejecting the words, David was approached as being one of their own. The one they were turning to for leadership. For the tribes of the northern kingdom of Israel came to David, the newly established king of Judah. They asked him to include them under his leadership and authority. Even though they already had a king, King Saul, it was now they called on their kinship with David that "**We are your flesh and blood**". They desired to be under the rule of David, but they did understand how could David refuse to unite them and to rule over them? For they saw that they were family, and they were

asking to go home. They wanted and searched for comfort and security of being together as family.

When we return home, we do so for different reasons. We may want to go back and reflect on past events, remembering what life was like growing up. We may have had success within our careers, and want to share them with those who we know and love. There's a pull towards home in the best of situations as well and the worst. We go to celebrate and rejoice, yet we also go for comfort during difficult times. We're like the birds who baffle scientists with their ability to find their way home. Or the salmon who swim upstream for miles to get to the spawning grounds, they all need to get home and so do we.

There was a scene in the original Jaws movie that strikes home. In one scene, Chief Martin Brody, Matt Hooper, and Capt. Quint are out in the ocean on the boat Orca and it's approaching dusk. It's perhaps a comic scene with great underlying tones. It's getting late as they have been in the ocean for hours with limited success in finding the Great White Shark. They start to sing a song that was written in 1925 and performed by renowned singers such as The Andrews Sisters, Kathy Kirby, Freddy Quinn, and Emerson Lake and Palmer, **"Show Me the Way to Go Home"**. It's a silly moment in the midst of a great horror film. Its strange lyrics are;

Show me the way to go home, I'm tired and I want to go to bed. I had a little drink about an hour ago and it's gone right to my head. Everywhere I roam, over land or sea or foam. You can always hear me singing this song, show me the way to go home. During this movie, is it perhaps that it wasn't a little distracting, nonsense ditty, but in fact was more of a plea? The veteran shark hunter Quint, the marine scientist Hooper, and the landlubber Police Chief might have giving words to what was in the back of their minds, "Get me out of here!" When things look bleak, when options run out, when enemies threaten, we want to go home. It's a natural impulse. Home is a place of safety, a place of peace.

Jesus goes home. We can imagine why Jesus went home because he is like us. He goes home for the same reasons that we go home. He goes for comfort, identity's sake, or just to be around those whom he knows. Maybe he is going home to try and heal what might have been broken by a misunderstanding. Let's remember that it was just a few weeks ago when

he was talking with a group of individuals that his family came and tried to get him to eat, and some at that time thought he was crazy. For it was also in Mark Chapter 3 that he heals a man with withered hands and gets into a fight with the authorities who wished he had waited another day to do this work. But the crowds loved him and came by the hundreds.

Jesus took time to teach, and when he did, they thought he was crazy. He upset the powers that be and drew attention to himself in all sorts of ways. He must be off his rocker. But when he spoke in the synagogue, they were astounded by him. At least for a moment. They were swept up in his vision. They leaned into his promise. But then they turned away from him because they thought he should stay in his place. But that was it, it wasn't what they thought, but Jesus was doing what he had been called to do.

When Jesus went home, his home didn't take him in. His friends rejected him and failed to follow his teachings. And for each of us here today, Peniel and Newport is our home. Many of you have grown up in this area, and seen many changes. Some of you have been instrumental in making some of those changes, and seen changes to the changes you made before. Just as Jesus called the twelve disciples together and sent them out two by two, we are also being called here to go out into our community to make disciples for Christ. This community may not understand us, but we can go forward with a vision of service. We will not be separated, but we shall remain a figure and integral part for everyone to see in our quest of winning souls in the great commandment of making disciples throughout the world.

On this historical holiday weekend, we are blessed, for we are the ones who are called today. We who have hope for equality and justice for all, regardless of race, creed, color, sex, or nationality. For we do hold these truths to be self-evident. This is true of every nation, no doubt. We all want to be a part of a community and country that feels like home, which means we need people, all the people – of the people, by the people, and for the people – to show us the way to go home. Let us show and share the way to be home, a home for all God's children. For those whom we reach out to are our brothers and sisters, our bone and flesh, of whom we are called to serve. I'm ready for the task at hand, are you ready to join me and reach out to help share God's love with our little part of his world?