

Fourteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time B – 2018
Eze.2.2-5///2Cor.12.7-10///Mark 6.1-6

→Before he returned to Nazareth...he had driven out demons...silenced a storm...healed a woman who touched his robe....and [as we heard that last week] raised Jairus' daughter from the dead.

→He matched wits with the Pharisees...amazed the crowds...and fed a multitude of people....and then he gathered a group of devoted disciples and had large crowds following him to listen to his message.

→And so, you would think upon returning home....he would get the warmest of welcomes.....instead, when he returned to his own home town, this miracle worker was unable to perform any mighty deeds.

Is he not the carpenter....the son of Mary?....Don't we know him?...they asked
Where did he get all of this?...they wondered

→In other words, just who does this Jesus think he is?

→And they took offense at him.....they rejected him...they shunned him

PAUSE

→We sometimes use this passage to show **how** a lack of faith or our own blindness can cut us off or keep us from recognizing God's messenger and those sent to bring it to us, EVEN when they are walking right beside us.

---Sometimes our stubbornness prevents us from hearing the Gospel or even worse from proclaiming the Gospel to the people we know the best.

---And the unique thing about this gospel passage is that.....the story it tells **even though it happened two thousand years ago**can also happen today----- right in front of us.

PAUSE

---how many friends or family members or even ourselves manage to leave things about our past behind us—everywhere except at home. ...

---how often do many of us forgive everyone around us but have a terribly hard time forgiving ourselves?

---[and] how often will many of us listen to **everyone** but we refuse to accept or hear the advice from those who care for us the most...I am reminded of when I was a teenager remembering and thinking that everyone in the world was right ----except my parents.

---or how many of us will pray constantly and hope daily for a miracle, but remain blind to the ordinary gifts of life...the blessings and good things that are right before us.

→this Gospel passage today reminds us that God shares his message, his goodness, his love, with us each and every day of our lives, even when we are too afraid or too obstinate hear and recognize it

---that God longs to heal us, even when we are too stubborn to know we are broken.

---[And] that God also continues to send messengers to us, even when we are too blind to see them clearly.

PAUSE

--→today as we hear ---the people of Nazareth were suffering from a particular form of blindness----a blindness that sometimes affects us, as well.

→They didn't recognize the holiness of Jesus, because they had never really accepted their own holiness.

--They didn't honor his relationship with God because they had never fully explored their own relationship with the God.

---and they couldn't see Jesus as the Messiah standing right in front of them, because they never recognized the presence of the Lord in their own lives.

PAUSE

Isn't he one of us?, they muttered.

Don't we know him? They asked

How, then, could he be special?...they pondered

---They couldn't accept and recognize what was in front of their very own eyes because they failed to accept and recognize themselves as a gift from God...as good and worthy people.

->it's a message that is echoed in that great and wonderful movie...the Wizard of OZ when, that most of us watched this past Lent...and Friar JP spoke of during our Lenten mission...recall at the very end of the movie...Dorothy realizes [the timeless lesson] that all she ever wanted...all that she ever needed...all that she ever desired...was right there before her very own eyes...in her own back yard

-----.....our belief of the Gospel message depends, on this same type of recognition and acceptance in our very own lives

->it is our acceptance and recognition that we ourselves...are a creation of God, a gift and a blessing from God, --worthy not only to receive the Gospel message-- but worthy to also live it and share it with one another.

---i.o.w. until we see the light of God in each one of us

->until we see ourselves as someone loved by God,

→and until we recognize the presence and the goodness and blessings of God in our own backyard....in our own lives

----miracles will seem scarce, prophets and messengers who rise among us will struggle to be heard,

-----and the gospel message will go unheeded.

PAUSE

-----That day in Nazareth, Jesus stood in the synagogue to proclaim freedom for the captives and release of prisoners.

→His life, death, and resurrection testify to the power of that freedom....[the kind of freedom we just celebrate this past week

→and His message continues to free us, not only from prisons built by others, but from the barriers we build ourselves in our own lives.

Don't we know him? Isn't he one of us? Where did he get all this?

→In the end, maybe by asking these questions it shows not so much a lack of faith---but rather.....the beginnings of a great and abundant faith.