

Humility and Familiarity

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Preacher: Matthew Capone

[0 : 00] Good morning. My name is Matthew Capone and I'm the pastor here at Cheyenne Mountain Presbyterian Church and it's my joy to bring God's Word to you today. A special welcome if you're new or visiting with us. We're glad that you're here.

And we're glad that you're here not because we're trying to fill seats, but because we're following Jesus together. And as we follow Jesus together, we become convinced that there's no one so good, they don't need God's grace, and no one so bad that they can't have it. Which means that everyone has something to hear from God's Word. And that's why we come back to God's Word week after week to study it together. We're continuing our series in the Gospel of Mark.

You'll remember that the Gospels tell the story of Jesus and His life and His death and His resurrection. And as we study the Gospel of Mark specifically, we ask the questions that the Gospel itself asks.

First, who is Jesus? And second, how do we respond to Him? We're leaving behind the twin stories that we had the last couple weeks, showing Jesus a power over evil and His power to heal.

[1 : 10] We're moving forward with the beginning of chapter 6, and as we come to this passage, we have one problem and one question. Our problem is this. In verse 5, we have this surprising or difficult statement which tells us that Jesus could do no mighty work there.

Meaning He could do no mighty work in Nazareth. And that raises a problem. Is Jesus limited somehow in His power? Is Jesus facing limitations here, even though we're told that He's the Son of God, that He is God Himself?

So that's our problem. Our question is this. If Jesus came and visited Colorado Springs, would He be able to do a mighty work in your life?

If Jesus came to Colorado Springs, would He be able to do a mighty work in your life? In other words, what keeps us from coming to Jesus? And what is it that prevents us from experiencing true and deep and substantial change and healing in our lives?

It's with that that we come to Mark chapter 6. I invite you to turn there with me. You can turn in your worship guide. You can turn on your phone. You can turn in your Bible.

[2 : 27] No matter where you return, remember that this is God's Word. And God tells us that His Word is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path. Which means that God has not left us to stumble alone in the dark.

But instead, He's given us His Word to show us the way to go. And so that's why we read together now Mark chapter 6, starting at verse 1. He went away from there and came to His hometown. And His disciples followed Him. And on the Sabbath He began to teach in the synagogue. And 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? Verse 3. Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, and brother of James, and Joseph, and Judas, and Simon? And are not His sisters here with us? And they took offense at Him. And Jesus said to them, A prophet is not without honor, except in his hometown, and among his relatives, and in his own household.

[3 : 33] And he could do no mighty work there, except that he laid his hands on a few sick people and healed them. And he marveled because of their unbelief.

And he went about among the villages teaching. I invite you to pray with me as we come to this portion of God's Word. Our Father in Heaven, we thank you again for your Word.

That they're not just words on a page, but that you promise that they have power. And that you use them to give life. We ask that you would do that this morning.

That you would use your words to give us life. That you'd use it to stir up our hearts. Use it to convict us and encourage us. You'd use it to sustain us. And most of all, you'd use it to show us Jesus Christ. That we would know Him more and more. And that we would love Him more and more. We ask you all these things grateful that we don't have to earn them or deserve them.

[4 : 32] But instead we ask them in the mighty name of Jesus Christ. Amen. So I've noticed over the years, if someone who's 20 years older than you gives you advice.

Maybe they have to correct you. You can tell yourself, nothing's wrong with me. I just haven't lived long enough. If someone from a different culture gives you advice, has to correct you, you can say to yourself, nothing's wrong with me.

It's the fault of my culture. I would have known that if I'd grown up there. But if someone who is your age and is from your culture has to correct you, well, then maybe it's something you should have already known.

Maybe you missed something important that everyone else got. I've noticed the same difficulty when it comes to promotions. If someone who has the exact same job as you gets promoted over you, they become your boss.

Well, that raises some questions, right? That can be harder than having a new boss brought in from the outside. Why weren't you chosen? What's lacking in you?

[5 : 53] What's wrong with you? That they picked the guy next to you. We might even say that you would take offense at that person. Now, if your boss is brought in from the outside, that makes sense, right?

They probably have different experiences. Maybe they have a higher skill level. Maybe they have something from another industry that they're able to bring in. I'm not saying everyone feels this way. What I am saying is that part of the human heart, and the way that it works is it always looks for someone else to blame. It's difficult to admit that it's not just what's outside of you that's holding you back, not just your age or circumstances.

It's difficult to admit that it might also be what's inside that's holding you back. And that's actually the problem that we encounter in this story. In verse 1, we find out that Jesus is back in his hometown of Nazareth, and it looks like we're about to have a repeat of chapter 1.

You may remember from chapter 1 that Jesus had come to the city of Capernaum, and we see this exact same situation. When he came to Capernaum, on the Sabbath day, he went into the synagogue.

[6 : 58] He started teaching. He does that here. It's a Sabbath day. He goes into the synagogue. He starts teaching. Chapter 1, you remember the word that we used. They were astonished at Jesus' teaching. Here, what do we find out?

Chapter 6, they're astonished at Jesus' teaching. It seems like we're watching a rerun of the Jesus show, except there's one thing that's different. If you're tracking with chapter 1, you know after these things happen, Jesus casts out a demon.

And so we should be expecting here as careful readers of the story that we're going to see Jesus do something great and miraculous again. Except it's the opposite that happens.

They take offense at him. Verse 5, Jesus is not able to do any mighty work. And in verse 3, we're told why. Jesus is the hometown boy.

They ask this question, is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary? Now, there's probably a subtle dig going on here. We would expect them to say that Jesus is not the son of Mary, but to name the father, that he's the son of Joseph.

[7 : 59] And so they're alluding here to the fact that maybe there's still some suspicion about the origin of Jesus. There's some questions about whether he's really up to the quality and the snuff of everyone else in this town.

What's fascinating, though, is in verse 2, it's not that they deny Jesus' power. They actually recognize it. They know he teaches with wisdom. They know that he's doing mighty works. They see all of those things.

They just can't handle it. It's not that they believe he's incapable. It's just they don't want to see it. And Jesus names what's going on for us here in verse 4.

A prophet is not without honor except in his hometown and among his relatives and in his own household. In other words, it is hard to submit to someone that you grew up with.

It is hard to take advice and correction from a peer. And this is just another angle on the neediness that we've been talking about as we've walked through the Gospel of Mark.

[9 : 05] Jesus' power and wisdom here, they see it, and it's an assault on their pride. To admit that Jesus has something that they don't is also to confess that there is something lacking in them.

There is something that they need. If Jesus is wise, then they are foolish. If he does mighty works, then they are limited and finite and weak. And so the opposite for us is what is necessary.

If we want Jesus to be at work in our lives, if we want to see him do a mighty work, we have to do the opposite of these people. We have to admit we are actually foolish and flawed.

Last week, we saw two positive examples of faith. We saw Jairus and this woman. This week, we're presented with the other side of the coin. We're given a negative example of faith.

These people are confronted with this question of, what is wrong with me? Why is it that someone from our town is able to come back with this wisdom? And if we come up against that question as we ask, what is wrong with us?

[10 : 07] The answer is, well, quite a lot, to be honest. That's the answer that's necessary for Jesus to be at work.

I need to learn something from this man who has the same background as me. I know that he has this great wisdom, and that shows me in ways I didn't realize before how foolish I actually am.

I see that Jesus here is doing mighty works, and it shows me in ways I didn't realize before how weak and finite and fragile and sinful I am. Jesus' strength shows me my weakness.

And so we can understand the threat that these people feel. It would be much easier to accept someone they had never met before than to realize they'd been surpassed by their peer.

In his book, Hidden Christmas, Tim Keller gives this phenomenal illustration that I've included for you on page 7 of your worship guide, talking about the nature of receiving gifts.

[11 : 07] And he says this, Some gifts, by their very nature, make you swallow your pride. Imagine opening a present on Christmas morning from a friend, and it is a dieting book.

Then you take off another ribbon and wrapper, and you find it is another book from another friend overcoming selfishness. If you say to them, Thank you so much, you are in a sense admitting, for indeed I am fat and obnoxious.

In other words, some gifts are hard to receive because to do so is to admit you have flaws and weaknesses, and you need help.

Brothers and sisters, that is how Christianity works. Christianity is looking and seeing how needy we are. Accepting the gift means admitting how bad off you are, not just problems outside of you, problems inside of you.

That is the challenge that Jesus is hitting up against here, that these people are unable to accept his gift. They're unable to receive the mighty work that he has to offer them because to do so would be to admit they have flaws and weaknesses, and they need help.

[12 : 21] The fact that they grew up with him only magnifies how bad off they are. Now we still have this challenge of verse 5 that tells us that Jesus could do no mighty work.

Does that mean that Jesus' power was limited in some way? Had he lost some of his divinity between last week and this week? No, this is not a statement about Jesus' power and ability.

It's a statement about these people's openness and receptivity. Not a statement about Jesus' power and ability. It's a statement about their openness and their receptivity.

So I want you to think about it like this. Let's say that I went to Chick-fil-A yesterday and I ordered a spicy Southwest chicken salad with avocado lime ranch dressing. Okay?

And then I ate it. It's a wonderful thing to do. Now let's say that I go back to Chick-fil-A today and I want to order a spicy Southwest chicken salad with avocado lime ranch dressing.

[13 : 25] Will I be able to do that? Why not? It's not because my power has changed in some way.

It's not that yesterday I was able to afford a \$10 salad, which used to be an \$8 salad, and today I am no longer able to afford that same salad. I have not had some great financial disruption.

It's not that suddenly all of my wealth has been stolen. No, it actually doesn't matter how powerful I am, right? I could be a billionaire. Chick-fil-A will not accept my money.

They are not open to me. In other words, I cannot perform the mighty work of ordering and eating a spicy Southwest chicken salad with avocado lime ranch dressing.

No matter how rich I am, right? Jesus was able to perform a great healing last week. He raised someone from the dead.

[14 : 25] We see in this passage that he's not able to perform mighty works. Why? Has Jesus' power changed in any way? No. Has Jesus' divinity changed in any way?

No. What has changed? No matter how much power Jesus has, they are not willing to receive it. They are not open to what Jesus has to offer.

Jesus cannot heal in the sense that these people are closed. I am incapable of buying a spicy Southwest chicken salad today with avocado lime ranch dressing because Chick-fil-A is closed. And so it helps us understand what Jesus said last week. Mark chapter five, verse 34. He says, Daughter, your faith has made you well. Is he saying that this woman that he healed had some great power that she was able to muster up and exercise so that her bleeding stopped?

No, the power is in Jesus. What he is saying is that you were open and able and willing to receive what I had to offer. You believed that I was able to do it and so you experienced my mighty work.

[15 : 37] Brothers and sisters, faith is not the power but the instrument. Faith is this posture of receiving and being willing to accept. We talk about the glory of salvation and how great of a gift it is.

And that's true. And it's incredibly difficult to receive. Salvation is a wonderful and glorious gift. And it is incredibly difficult to receive because to do it is to admit you have flaws and weaknesses and you need help.

It's what I said last week. It is hard, if not impossible, to both be in control and for Jesus to be at work in your life at the same time.

It is hard, if not impossible, for you to be in control on the one hand and for Jesus to do a mighty work in your life on the other hand.

[16 : 40] Those two things do not go together. And so there's this beauty, there's this wonder, there's this glory to the gift of salvation and the natural man, the natural woman, the man and woman without God's spirit at work in their lives will not be able to receive it, is not willing to receive it because it requires supernatural power for someone's heart and mind and life to be changed and transformed by the Holy Spirit.

And so, if Jesus came to Colorado Springs, would you be needy enough and desperate enough to receive his help?

If Jesus came to Colorado Springs, if he visited us here at Cheyenne Mountain, would you be needy enough or desperate enough to receive his help?

It takes a lot of humility to truly come to Jesus. It takes a lot of humility to repent. It takes a lot of humility to not just list your children's failures, but to list your failures and to ask for forgiveness. It takes a lot of humility to admit that you're a lot harder to live with than you realized. It takes a lot of humility to name how much damage your anger and your temper have caused.

[18 : 15] It takes a lot of humility to confess your sexual addiction out loud to a brother or sister. And that's what it takes.

One way or another, humility has to come into play. If Jesus came to Colorado Springs, would he be able to do a mighty work in your life?

You couldn't blame other people for all the problems in your life, maybe some of them. And you'd have to admit how bad things really are. That's what you'd have to do for Jesus to do a mighty work in your life.

Many people say they want Jesus to do great things. They may not want it that badly. They don't want it badly enough to admit true need.

And the good news is this. Jesus still does mighty works in the lives of those who come to him for help. Jesus still does mighty works in the lives of those who come to him for help.

[19 : 27] So we return to our characters from last week. We have our negative example in this crowd who can't be brought to receive what Jesus has to offer.

And so we want to follow what we saw last week from Jairus and this woman. Remember Jesus' words. Mark chapter five, verse 34. Daughter, your faith has made you well. Mark chapter five, verse 36.

What does Jesus say to Jairus? Do not fear, only believe. We see at least three things from our characters from last week. First, they know and admit their need.

Remember we talked about how desperate they were. In their situations in life, in their social standings, they were radically different. In their need, they were radically similar. And they brought that need to Jesus.

One of them confidently, the other hesitantly. So they knew their need. They actually believed that Jesus would be able to meet it. Remember neither of them expressed doubt.

[20 : 27] Jairus comes and just says, hey, you need to touch my daughter. She'll be great. The woman who's been bleeding knows if she can just come behind Jesus and touch the rope, things are gonna change. And it's not just that they believe, it's that they act on it.

They reveal what they think is true by what they actually do. They know their need. They believe Jesus can meet it. And they bring it to him. Brothers and sisters, that encouragement is the same for us.

If we want to see Jesus do a mighty work, we have to know and admit how great our need is. We have to know how desperate and hopeless we are apart from Jesus Christ.

If you've been with us the last couple of weeks, you've heard the vows that our members take. And I believe it's vow two that says we're without hope, saving God's sovereign mercy. You have to know how much you need him.

Two, you have to know and believe that Jesus can actually help you and heal you. And then three, you have to come to him, asking him to be with you and to help you.

[21 : 34] That's what this passage shows us. If we want Jesus to do a mighty work, that is what's required of us. And Jesus still does mighty works.

Jesus still does mighty works in Colorado Springs in 2022. Jesus still comes to people who know how needy and desperate they are and he changes hearts and minds and lives.

Jesus still shows up with people who need mercy and admit that the problems in their lives are not simply outside of them, but also inside of them. That is the place where Jesus shows up and changes things.

And so we can understand his sorrow here at the very end of this passage, verse six. He marveled because of their unbelief.

I'm here. I can heal people. I can raise people from the dead. I just did it with this girl. And you're not willing to receive it.

[22 : 38] Jesus is amazed by their unwillingness to come to him. There are different types of giving and receiving help.

It's one thing for someone to help you fix your car. It is quite another thing to receive someone's help to use the bathroom.

One of those is normal. The other one requires humility and powerlessness. One of those, we might think, I need a little help.

The other one, we realize how dependent and needy we are. Brothers and sisters, receiving Jesus' help is a lot less like someone helping you fix your car.

And it is a lot more like someone helping you use the bathroom. That is how bad off you are. You need help with the most basic realities of life.

[23 : 52] You need Jesus to help you with the most elementary things. It is not that Jesus needed to give up a few hours for you on a Saturday afternoon. It is that Jesus had to die for you.

That is how bad things are. It is not just that Jesus had to give up a few hours on a Saturday afternoon to help you out a little bit. It is that Jesus had to die for you.

Jesus offers to give us life. Jesus offers real, true, deep, transformative change. Jesus offers substantial healing.

Will you receive it? who is Jesus? Jesus is the one who has great wisdom and mighty works.

How do we respond to him? We have to be humble enough to receive his wisdom and receive his works. We have to be willing to admit how bad things are.

[25 : 03] chapter 6, verse 4, and Jesus said to them, a prophet is not without honor except in his hometown and among his relatives and in his own household.

Let's pray. Father in heaven, we thank you for your word that you've given to us and we thank you that today you continue to do mighty works in the lives of those who come to you with their need, admitting that it's not just problems that are outside of them but problems that are inside of them.

We ask that you would give us that humility, that heart posture that we would come to you confessing our need that you would be able to do a mighty work in our lives and not just in our lives but in this church and as in this church, in this community.

We ask these things in the mighty name of Jesus Christ. Amen.