

Closing Prayer

God of the prophets,
in every age you send the word of truth,
familiar yet new,
a sign of contradiction.

Let us not be counted among those who lack faith,
but give us the vision to see Christ in our midst
and to welcome your saving word.

Grant this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God for ever and ever.

Opening prayers · Ordinary Time 14, Year B²

CPL • LBC Year B Proper 09.odt • 2022-12-12

² *Opening prayers : scripture-related collects for the years A, B and C from the sacramentary* / International Commission on English in the Liturgy. – Norwich : Canterbury Press, 1999.

Proper 9

*Sunday between 3 and 9 July, inclusive · Fourteenth Sunday
in Ordinary Time*

Principal Service readings

Ezekiel 2.1-5	Ezekiel's vision of his calling to prophesy
Psalm 123	Prayer in distress
2 Corinthians 12.2-10	Paul speaks of a vision of paradise
Mark 6.1-13	Jesus is unaccepted in his home town; he sends out the twelve

Opening Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ,
speak to our hearts in the stillness,
keep us steadfast in the foundation that cannot be shaken,
lift up our eyes to behold the vision of your glory;
and perfect our faith, now and always. Amen.

Society of Saint Francis

Gospel Reading

Jesus in his home town

¹Jesus came to his home town, and his disciples followed him. ²On the sabbath he began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard him were astounded. They said, 'Where did this man get all this? What is this wisdom that has been given to him? What deeds of power are being done by his hands! ³Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary and brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon, and are not his sisters here with us?' And they took offence at him. ⁴Then Jesus said to them, 'Prophets are not without honour, except in their home town, and among their own kin, and in their own house.' ⁵And he could do no deed of power there, except that he laid his hands on a few sick people and cured them. ⁶And he was amazed at their unbelief.

Jesus sends out the twelve

Then he went about among the villages teaching. ⁷He called the twelve and began to send them out two by two, and gave them authority over the unclean spirits. ⁸He ordered them to take nothing for their journey except a staff; no bread, no bag, no money in their belts; ⁹but to wear sandals and not to put on two tunics. ¹⁰He said to them, 'Wherever you enter a house, stay there until you

leave the place. ¹¹If any place will not welcome you and they refuse to hear you, as you leave, shake off the dust that is on your feet as a testimony against them.' ¹²So they went out and proclaimed that all should repent. ¹³They cast out many demons, and anointed with oil many who were sick and cured them.

Mark 6.1-13 NRSV'

Comments and Questions

Many of the Christians of the time Mark was writing couldn't understand why Jesus, the Jewish Messiah, hadn't been accepted by the Jews. Mark shows that this was not a deficiency in the message, but the sinfulness of those who heard. There is a contrast between the people who believed and who were fed and healed, and those whose hearts were hardened, such as those from Jesus' home town (6.5).

Jesus is described as a carpenter – the word could also mean smith or mason. Whatever his trade it was manual work. 6.3 tells us that Jesus had brothers and sisters. These were probably born after Jesus. Those who think Mary continued to be a virgin suggest these could be siblings from a previous marriage of Joseph, or possibly cousins, as the word 'brother' could be used for other relatives in Palestine (as it is in many countries in Asia and Africa today).

At first the people listening to Jesus are astonished then they take offence (6.3). What was that? Were they jealous of him? Or were they annoyed that he had something that they didn't have? Was he too familiar to them? Could that be a problem for us today? Do you think Jesus was discouraged by the lack of faith he encountered in people?

Jesus sends out the twelve disciples on a mission and gives them guidance. This would have been very relevant to the Christians of Mark's time, as it is today. Can we take such advice seriously? Of course, we must make allowances for the climate – the advice to wear sandals can't be applied to all countries. Are there any other adaptations we should make?

¹ *New Revised Standard Version Bible* is copyright © 1989 Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America.

Quotations

1

Since no man is excluded from calling upon God the gate of salvation is open to all. There is nothing else to hinder us from entering, but our own unbelief.

John Calvin, 1509–1564

2

Christ never failed to distinguish between doubt and unbelief. Doubt is can't believe. Unbelief is won't believe. Doubt is honesty. Unbelief is obstinacy. Doubt is looking for light. Unbelief is content with darkness.

Henry Drummond, 1851–1897

3

As a society of unbelief, Western culture is devoid of a sense of journey, of adventure, because it lacks belief in much more than the cultivation of an ever-shrinking horizon of self-preservation and self-expression.

Resident aliens: life in the Christian colony / Stanley Hauerwas. 1989

Related topics

For further study:

Faith; Christology; paschal mystery; discipleship; prophets; baptismal anointing; priest, prophet and king; conversion; call of discipleship; mission of Christ; evangelisation; sacraments