

Jesus Goes Home

Pentecost 5

St. Francis of Assisi Episcopal Church

Written and preached by the Rev. Susan D. Parsons

In the Gospel today

Jesus returns triumphant

To his home in Nazareth

From his Middle Eastern tour shall we say

He has healed the sick he has raised the dead

He has taught in all the big synagogues

Played all the big venues and

Now he returns home

It doesn't say why

Maybe for the Fourth of July weekend

Just like Father Phil has gone back to his home in Ohio

Maybe not

I like to think Jesus went home because

He wanted to take his message and

His great powers

Back to the people who

Loved him best

It's a funny thing about home

The word itself evokes powerful emotions  
It ought to mean the place where we are  
Safe and loved and cared for  
Where we are loved almost unconditionally and  
Though few of us have ever  
Experienced that kind of ideal home  
We kind of expect that Jesus would have that kind of home  
After all his mother and brothers were all saints

But Jesus isn't a big hit with the folks back home  
Certainly they notice he's picked up some  
Smarts along the way and  
They've heard about his powerful abilities to  
Heal and perform miracles but  
Instead of being pleased and proud as punch  
They condemn him for getting above himself

Now to be fair  
We have to remember that  
In the 1<sup>st</sup> century Middle East it was not done for  
A carpenter's son to  
Step out of his role as a carpenter's son  
He would have had a place in society that was well  
Set in wood shall we say

He could not even dream of being something else  
Of being 'more than he could be'  
He was stuck being a carpenter and  
For him to do anything else  
Brought great shame on the family

Still

Jesus at least has the wisdom  
Of a great prophet and  
Prophets can come from anywhere  
But as Jesus says  
Prophets get recognition for their work everywhere -  
Except in their own home

But the hometown folks  
They don't see the God in him  
They don't see someone whose mere touch is healing  
They still see a buck toothed kid who was hard on his little brothers  
They don't see someone who brought a little girl back to life  
They apparently are apparently seeing  
The kid who was always running around with skinned knees  
himself  
Sometimes the hometown folks are impressed when you go back and  
they throw you a parade and

They name buildings after you or at least  
Your family is tickled to death when you show up and  
They couldn't be prouder of who you are but  
I think lots of us have the experience of Jesus

Part of what the Gospel is telling us today is that  
God comes to us as the ordinary  
As a relative  
As a childhood acquaintance  
As someone who we just don't see as God  
So we don't listen  
Because that can't possibly be God

We've already have to wrestle with the idea that  
God comes to us as  
People we encounter who are  
Unusual or difficult or off-putting or even disturbing  
Now we have to deal with the idea that  
God comes to us as a relative  
The only thing more difficult than imagining  
God speaking to you as your spouse or  
Your mother-in-law or  
Your teenager

*Pause*

The danger here really is not just that  
We're going to miss the message but  
We're going to miss the healing  
We're going to miss the chance to be resurrected  
We're going to miss the opportunity to  
Be sent out like all the other disciples  
With important work to do  
It's not just a message we're going to miss  
It's a whole lot more

And there is something to be learned too  
From what Jesus experiences in this story  
I had a somewhat similar experience when  
I was first ordained and  
It continues to be a very good lesson for me

It actually happened the day I was ordained  
It had been an unbelievably powerful day  
We had all gathered at the Cathedral and  
Before the service started  
Those of us being ordained gathered privately  
With the Bishop to have our hands blessed for healing

I had been up there in the front and  
I had been consecrated as a priest and  
I had set the table at communion and  
Pointed the book for the Bishop and  
I had pronounced the final blessing with  
The Bishop of California kneeling at my feet and  
I had done it all without spilling wine or  
Tripping and falling or doing anything embarrassing  
A magnificent day  
The experience was really beyond words

Afterwards you probably remember there was a reception and  
I was happily greeting people for quite awhile and  
My two daughters who were to drive me home  
Grew bored watching me hug people and  
Asked if they could take the car and  
Make a quick run to get something  
They'd be right back  
I was startled but agreed  
I continued greeting people and chatting for ages  
Then finally I changed out of my vestments and  
Went outside the Cathedral to  
Where the girls were to be waiting with the car  
Except they weren't there

Naturally I was immediately concerned for their safety but  
A quick cell phone call assured me  
They were fine  
They had gone to Gap to pick up a coat  
One of them had put on hold  
They were headed back now and  
Going through McDonalds  
Did I want anything

It was a humbling experience and  
As I stood there alone on the sidewalk  
Arms heavy with silk and brocade vestments  
A priest in the Episcopal Church  
Still glowing with the emotion and energy of the day  
I realized that perhaps God was speaking to me  
Through my 20-something daughters  
To them I still was mom and  
Making me wait out on the sidewalk  
While they picked up something at Gap and  
Getting a hamburger at McDonalds  
After all the excitement and glory of the morning  
Did not seem the slightest bit odd

Whatever role in this story we find ourselves in

Whether we are Jesus returning home  
Loaded with gifts to share  
Only to find that  
Instead we are going to be loaded down with some humility or  
We are the welcoming relatives blind to  
Power and vision of someone  
We are sure we know so well

We are all struggling to  
Hear and respond to that call from Jesus  
To go out there and heal the world and  
We can't really take a chance on ignoring anyone

In the end of our story today  
Jesus sends out the disciples and  
His family and the people of Nazareth aren't  
Among them just yet  
But they will be  
Eventually Jesus' whole family joins him  
This is the great thing about  
Home and about family and about calls from God  
When we are listening to the voice of God and  
Following where God is truly leading us  
The joy and peace in our heart and soul

Makes others want to join us and  
They become our home and family  
Whether it is the family we grew up in or  
It's a family we create as adults or  
It's our church or  
It's a whole new great nation we create

Home is where we are whole and safe and at peace and  
Where after we have gone out there  
We can return to and be fully loved  
I don't think this place exists  
Not yet anyway  
That's why we are listening so hard to everyone  
Because it is all the voices together  
Listening and creating  
That will ultimately make us all a home

Lord God Almighty, in whose name the founders of this country won liberty for themselves and for us and lit the torch of freedom for nations then unborn, grant that we and all the people of this land might have grace to maintain our liberties in righteousness and peace through Jesus Christ our Lord who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God forever and ever. Amen.

**OLD TESTAMENT: 2 Samuel 5: 1 - 5, 9 - 10 (RCL)**

(NRSV) Then all the tribes of Israel came to David at He'bron, and said, "Look, we are your bone and flesh. 2 For some time, while Saul was king over us, it was you who led out Israel and brought it in. The LORD said to you: It is you who shall be shepherd of my people Israel, you who shall be ruler over Israel." 3 So all the elders of Israel came to the king at He'bron; and King David made a covenant with them at He'bron before the LORD, and they anointed David king over Israel. 4 David was thirty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned forty years. 5 At He'bron he reigned over Judah seven years and six months; and at Jerusalem he reigned over all Israel and Judah thirty-three years. 9 David occupied the stronghold, and named it the city of David. David built the city all around from the Mil'lo inward. 10 And David became greater and greater, for the LORD, the God of hosts, was with him.

**PSALM 48 (RCL)**

Psal 48:1 (NRSV) Great is the LORD and greatly to be praised  
in the city of our God.  
His holy mountain, 2 beautiful in elevation,  
is the joy of all the earth,  
Mount Zion, in the far north,  
the city of the great King.  
3 Within its citadels God  
has shown himself a sure defense.  
4 Then the kings assembled,  
they came on together.  
5 As soon as they saw it, they were astounded;  
they were in panic, they took to flight;  
6 trembling took hold of them there,  
pains as of a woman in labor,  
7 as when an east wind shatters  
the ships of Tar'shish.  
8 As we have heard, so have we seen  
in the city of the LORD of hosts,  
in the city of our God,  
which God establishes forever. [Se'lah]  
9 We ponder your steadfast love, O God,

in the midst of your temple.  
10 Your name, O God, like your praise,  
reaches to the ends of the earth.  
Your right hand is filled with victory.  
11 Let Mount Zion be glad,  
let the towns of Judah rejoice  
because of your judgments.  
12 Walk about Zion, go all around it,  
count its towers,  
13 consider well its ramparts;  
go through its citadels,  
that you may tell the next generation  
14 that this is God,  
our God forever and ever.  
He will be our guide forever.

**48 *Magnus Dominus* (ECUSA BCP)**

- 1 Great is the LORD, and highly to be praised; \*  
in the city of our God is his holy hill.
- 2 Beautiful and lofty, the joy of all the earth, is the  
hill of Zion, \*  
the very center of the world and the city of the great King.
- 3 God is in her citadels; \*  
he is known to be her sure refuge.
- 4 Behold, the kings of the earth assembled \*  
and marched forward together.
- 5 They looked and were astounded; \*  
they retreated and fled in terror.
- 6 Trembling seized them there; \*  
they writhed like a woman in childbirth,  
like ships of the sea when the east wind shatters them.
- 7 As we have heard, so have we seen,  
in the city of the LORD of hosts, in the city of our God; \*  
God has established her for ever.
- 8 We have waited in silence on your loving-kindness, O God, \*  
in the midst of your temple.
- 9 Your praise, like your Name, O God, reaches to  
the world's end; \*

your right hand is full of justice.

10 Let Mount Zion be glad  
and the cities of Judah rejoice, \*  
because of your judgments.

11 Make the circuit of Zion;  
walk round about her; \*  
count the number of her towers.

12 Consider well her bulwarks;  
examine her strongholds; \*  
that you may tell those who come after.

13 This God is our God for ever and ever; \*  
he shall be our guide for evermore.

### **NEW TESTAMENT: 2 Corinthians 12: 2 - 10 (RCL)**

(NRSV) It is necessary to boast; nothing is to be gained by it, but I will go on to visions and revelations of the Lord. 2 I know a person in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven--whether in the body or out of the body I do not know; God knows. 3 And I know that such a person--whether in the body or out of the body I do not know; God knows-- 4 was caught up into Paradise and heard things that are not to be told, that no mortal is permitted to repeat. 5 On behalf of such a one I will boast, but on my own behalf I will not boast, except of my weaknesses. 6 But if I wish to boast, I will not be a fool, for I will be speaking the truth. But I refrain from it, so that no one may think better of me than what is seen in me or heard from me, 7 even considering the exceptional character of the revelations. Therefore, to keep me from being too elated, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to torment me, to keep me from being too elated. 8 Three times I appealed to the Lord about this, that it would leave me, 9 but he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness." So, I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. 10 Therefore I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities for the sake of Christ; for whenever I am weak, then I am strong.

### **GOSPEL: Mark 6: 1 - 13 (RCL)**

(NRSV) He left that place and came to his hometown, and his disciples followed him. 2 On 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! 3 Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary and brother of James and Jo'ses and Judas and Simon, and are not his sisters here with us?" And they took offense at him. 4 Then Jesus said to them, "Prophets are not without honor, except in their hometown, and among their own kin, and in their own house." 5 And he could do no deed of power there, except that he laid his hands on a few sick people and cured them. 6 And he was amazed at their unbelief. Then he went about among the villages teaching. 7 He called the twelve and began to send them out two by two, and gave them authority over the unclean spirits. 8 He ordered them

to take nothing for their journey except a staff; no bread, no bag, no money in their belts; 9 but to wear sandals and not to put on two tunics. 10 He said to them, "Wherever you enter a house, stay there until you leave the place. 11 If 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." 12 So they went out and proclaimed that all should repent. 13 They cast out many demons, and anointed with oil many who were sick and cured them.