

## Mark 6:1-13

1 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 Joses 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.

The vulnerable. Is it a catch phrase for the people who are down and out? Is it a term that allows us to “sort out” and separate us from specific groups? Is it a term we can use to profile people?

*Who are the vulnerable?*

Students at PCC who have no place to sleep, except their car? The family parent (mother or father) who approach the border with their child, fleeing the violent activities that threaten their safety and life in Nicaragua? The Bishop of the Southwest California Synod? The president of a Fortune 500 company? A widower who is addressing the issues of Alzheimer’s, Parkinson’s, or Stage four of cancer? A young couple relocating to Wisconsin to “start over” in a better economic climate?

Who are the vulnerable? We are all vulnerable.

- Central to our parable today is the vulnerability of the three characters and,



- even more, Jesus' response to that vulnerability – his touch – Jesus touches the vulnerable. He touches you and me.

Here are three characters that Jesus touches. Each one is in their own way vulnerable, each in their own way desperate.

Do you identify with any one of them?

- The leader of the religious community, who finds that all the usual advantages and experience that go with his office suddenly avail him nothing? (Jairus)
- The lady who has endured much and isn't sure she can bear any more? (the suffering woman)
- Or the child who is helpless, utterly dependent on others? (the 12-year-old)

Which one do you identify with? Which one rings a bell in your life? Which story is a piece of your history?

We are all vulnerable. The point of this lesson from Jesus is that He exposes the enormous capacity of God's grace. Regardless of circumstance or condition of vulnerability ... God's undeserved love and favor is offered to each of the three ... without condition, without rationale of circumstance or explanation of experience ... Jesus touches the vulnerable. His touch continues to be effective in the lives of every person on earth.

We strive to live safe and comfortable lives.

While safe is nice and comfortable, we dare not forget our human vulnerabilities ... *We cannot get so short-sighted* that we think God's grace is only for those of us who gather inside the four walls of the church. It is not bad or wrong or awful to acknowledge our vulnerabilities – for none of us (save Jesus) is perfect. God will use our brokenness to establish the Kingdom's Wholeness. That is part of God's plan.



While we receive grace and forgiveness, that does not alleviate our humanness and our weakness to fall under the bus of sin and temptation. We are sinners, who are touched by Jesus in our vulnerable (wounded) moments. We are saved by our faith in Jesus, we are not saved by our personal actions.

***We are the walking wounded*** ... vulnerable sinners of this world who have been affected by the actions of three people in today's Gospel.

The church leader whose daughter was ill and dead or dying;

The community lady who did not belong to the church, but believed;

And the child who was being raised in the faith community ... they are the walking wounded of Jesus' day

Do not be afraid of your spiritual, mental, physical or moral wounds.

Reach out to Jesus.

Turn to Jesus ... faith in Him will put you into the healing process.

The walking wounded have spread the word of God for centuries ... believe that God can and will use you and this congregation and your new pastor into the future. We are obliged, called (if you will) to help the vulnerable of the world.

We, like the three very different persons, from different stations in life, in our Gospel lesson

- A leader of the synagogue
- A lady from the fringes of the community and life, sick and worn
- A young girl sick unto death

Are all united in an extreme vulnerability.

Jesus responds to each of them with compassion.

Jesus responds to the vulnerability of these three different characters in the Gospel, (and to us) by restoring them to health, life, and wholeness... because he ***always*** responds to vulnerability, offering health, life, and wholeness to those in need of them.



His mission for everyone is the same – to seek out, heal, and restore those who are most vulnerable: he is everywhere and always notices, cares for, and responds to those who are most vulnerable.

Imagine, if you will, a picture of the vulnerable Messiah who responds **instinctively** to human need. Remember it is this outreaching savior, who calls his disciples to do the same alongside a world where safety seems all too often privileged over

- compassion and
- fear and
- hate

All are welcome. The door is open. The vulnerable, the walking wounded are present. God welcomes you, receive and accept his grace. That is what people of faith do.



